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B Corporations: Do the barriers to getting certified outweigh the benefits of being a Certified B Corporation?

A comparison between certified and non-certified companies

Author: Rosalie Alsberge
Supervisor: Yves De Rongé
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Abstract

Today's society faces a lot of challenges, and running a business has never been such a complex task. Namely, businesses need to deal with the environmental challenges and be concerned with social issues. A way for companies to show their commitments to respond to the social and environmental issue is getting the B Corporation Certification, a certification granted to for-profit organizations meeting social and environmental requirements. B Corp knows an increasing success and the amount of companies getting certified is increasing every day. In spite of the infatuation of the phenomenon, there are many fair and responsible businesses that do not show sign of interest towards the certification. Hence, there should exist different barriers and risks related to the B Corporation Certification that would dissuade companies to undergo the process of getting the certification.

Through an empirical research and cases studies with both B Corps and non-B Corps, many aspects of the B Corp Certification have been analyzed. Mainly, the benefits of B Corp have been analyzed: it is a worldwide recognition having a holistic approach that also provides guidance on how to improve a company's practices. Being certified has a positive impact on stakeholders; it also allows accompanies to join an inspirational network, and certified organizations have the opportunity to lead by example. However, regarding the barriers to the certification, mainly, the fact that the certification procedure takes time, and that B Corp is not well known have been mentioned. However, this should not generally not dissuade companies to enter the process. Indeed, not only does the amount of benefits surpass the number of barriers but these barriers can also be relatively easily overcome.

All in all, through analyzes, it can be concluded that the B Corporation Certification is a growing movement that is mostly perceived as very positive, both when looking at empirical studies and at companies. Hence, B Corp has a lot of potential. However, it should evolve more in Europe, in order to create a more positive impact. Companies should thus be encouraged to start the process if it comes from and internal desire and if it aligns with their values.

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General Introduction

Todays' society faces a lot of challenges, and running a business today has never been such a complex task. Namely, companies must comply with a lot of different regulations; they have to understand customers and answer their needs, and they are encouraged to take employees' expectations into account. Also, organizations need to master the new technologies, they must grow in a rapid changing environment, deal with the environmental challenges, and be concerned with social issues. In addition, there is a growing demand for shifting companies' goal from satisfying shareholders through profit maximization to satisfying all stakeholders by being fairer and more responsible. Indeed, a major change happened a year ago. In August 2019, Business Roundtable, an association regrouping the most important CEOs of American companies, released a new statement on the purpose of a corporation: "*While each of our individual companies serves its own corporate purpose, we share a fundamental commitment to all of our stakeholders"* (Business Roundtable, 2019b). In a nutshell, all these rising trends add complexities for companies, especially in the field of corporate responsibility.

A way for companies to show that they are taking concrete actions to respond to the social and environmental issues is the certification. Indeed, in order to reward and support organizations that take environmentally and socially responsible measures, certifications have been created and are increasingly common. One of them is the B Corporation Certification (BCC) , granted to for profit companies meeting *"the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose"* (B Lab, 2019b).

The B Corporation Certification gained a lot of recognition in the past decade and the number of companies getting certified is surging at a rapid pace. However, we see that not all of the fair and responsible companies are becoming B Corp certified, which may lead to the idea that some firms might be reluctant to undergo the process of obtaining this certification.
In that sense, it would be interesting to attempt to understand the reasons behind this reluctance. This reasoning has led to the research question:

"Do the barriers to getting certified outweigh the benefits of being a Certified B Corporation?"

Mainly, the purpose of this thesis is to understand what drives companies to follow the process of obtaining the certification and compare it with companies that are not B Corp, even though they may take several actions for being fair and responsible.

In order to do so, this thesis will be divided in two distinct sections. First, a theoretical part will provide a broad literature review. In this section, the drivers of being a fair and responsible business will be briefly described. Then, a greater emphasis will be put on sustainability and corporate social responsibility, as both topics are addressed in the B Corp Certification. Afterwards, before digging deeper into the B Corp topic, an overview of the concept of the certification will be provided, as it is interesting to understand what it is and what are the drivers and pitfalls of getting certified. The most important part will be the last one, where a major focus will be put on the B Corporation Certification and on B Lab, the non-profit organization behind the certification.

The second part will have a practical approach. Both certified companies and organizations that do not have the certification will be examined. Emphasis will mainly be put on trying to understand the drivers leading companies to undergo the process of getting certified, on discovering the positive and adverse points of the B Corp Certification, and on understanding the certification procedure in a more practical way. Through discussions, the purpose is also to understand the various barriers that would hold companies back from getting the certification, and discover to what extent these barriers outweigh the benefits of being a socially and environmentally certified company.
Through these case studies, the goal is to be able to make an interesting analysis, and from there, draw conclusions aimed at answering the main research question of this thesis.

Part 1: Literature Review

Introduction

As mentioned above, the primary goal of the first part of this thesis is to complete a critical review of the literature on responsible businesses and the B Corporation Certification.

The first part of this chapter will explore the main challenges of the 21st century. Because these challenges are also the drivers having led companies to become fairer and more responsible, they must be briefly described here. The second part of this chapter is dedicated to the two major concepts of this thesis: Corporate Social Responsibility, and Sustainability: these are the two main concepts introduced by the B Corp Certification.

The second chapter pertains to the concept of certification. The term will be defined, and drivers and pitfalls of being certified will be studied. Besides, an overview of the different existing certification will be completed.

While the first two chapters really are intended to set the context and provide explanations about the main concepts addressed in this thesis, the third chapter will have as main aim to dig deeper into the main topic of this thesis – the B Corporation Certification. First, the background of the B Corp will be provided. Namely, the emergence of the movement will be disclosed, as well as the new economic system and new type of organization related to it. Second, more in-depth information about the certification itself will be provided. In this section, emphasis will be put on the reasons leading companies to get certified, and on the certification procedure. Third, a comparison will be made between the B Corporation Certification and other initiatives encouraging companies to be more socially responsible. The last part of this chapter will detail the main critics towards the B Corporation Certification encountered in literature.

Chapter 1: Challenges of the 21st century

Section 1: Challenges but drivers of becoming a responsible and fair business

Running a business today is rather different than doing so a few decades ago. There are a lot of emerging trends forcing companies to innovate and to be more responsible; if they didn't, they would face the risk of lagging behind. In this section, some of the main crucial drivers of being a fairer and more responsible will be briefly explained. Indeed, not only is this new emerging trend demanded by key stakeholders, including consumers, customers, investors and employees, but there are some key factors leading companies to take actions in this direction (Kückelhaus & Tomoff, 2015).

1.1 The environmental troubles

Although the environmental issue is not new, it is still an important challenge for companies. Mass production and mass consumption of goods have resulted in levels of pollution never seen before in cities. Besides, the overexploitation of ecosystems has a huge negative impact on them, and resource scarcity is increasing daily (Kückelhaus & Tomoff, 2015, p. 3).

To tackle this issue, not only is there a growing demand from customers and shareholders to become "greener", but governments are also drastically increasing the amount of regulations. New regulations drive companies to be fairer and more responsible, which represents a challenge for them as it is rather hard to change working habits in place for years. Organizations must face this rising challenge by understanding the meaning of all these regulations and their implications, and they need to develop the right skills to deal with these new principles accordingly (Conner, 2013).

Additionally, because sustainable development is a megatrend and how organizations will respond to it will affect their competitiveness, it is paramount that they understand how to integrate sustainable development into their strategies. However, in practice, it can be seen that most of the executives fail at implementing an adequate sustainable strategy and rather implement random initiatives (Lubin & Esty, 2010).

Hence, the main challenges for companies are understanding the need for developing a real and concrete sustainable strategy, being able to respect regulations, integrating sustainable actions in their business and operations, and having measures and tracking systems in place to see the impact of their strategy and initiatives. (Williams, n.d).

1.2 Innovation and technology

Companies also need remain current with technological changes. They should be innovation-driven and able to use and master the new technologies. Companies must be able to collect data, process it and use it to find key insights that would help their business to move forward. A challenge is for them to be able to use the new technologies, namely digital tools, the Internet of Things, but also Artificial Intelligence. However, the real issue is not only to know how to deal with these new tools, but more importantly, understand their limitations (Lufkin, 2017). Besides, mastering new technologies and big data is paramount, as it can be used as a tool to connect societies; it enables companies to be more transparent towards their stakeholders and it can help them becoming more sustainable (Kückelhaus & Tomoff, 2015). Lastly, it is important to mention that it is of crucial importance for companies to be proactive and innovative in order to be able to always meet the changing consumers' habits and tastes, as well as their employees' expectations.

1.3 Rapidly changing business environment and societies

The business environment has never had to adjust to a pace like this before. In particular, technology (especially digitalization) and societal developments (the increasing information processing power) expose the world we live in to a lot of changes. What worked yesterday, might do not work today and could cause catastrophes tomorrow. Evolving in this rapidly changing environment has had great impacts on management. Whereas the twentieth century was marked by a fixed model where the company "owned the customer", the twenty-first century is evolving towards a more flexible model where an organization should adapt itself to the customer's needs and habits. One of the main examples is that there is a growing demand from consumers for more responsible and fairer products and for more transparency from companies (Kückelhaus & Tomoff, 2015, pp. 3-7). Hence, this rapidly changing society can drive companies to become more sustainable. However, in order to be able to make this shift - from a fixed to a flexible model, companies should foster innovation, have highly adaptative skills, be focused on the customer, and provide customizable products and/or services while maintaining the integrity of the business (Chan, 2013).

1.4 Social Challenge

Increasingly, a shift is happening from profit-driven towards purpose-driven companies. Organizations need to *"keep their customers, employees, shareholders and communities happy"* (Williams, n.d). Indeed, many studies show that being more socially responsible has a

positive impact on the company. As an example, an important survey ran by Gerhart and Scott (2003) showed that there is an important relationship between being "*a great place to work*" and the companies' performance. Improved reputation, increased market share, enhanced company's attractiveness for employees are some of the many benefits of being socially responsible (Klein, 2012). However, it is hard to change old habits that have been established in an organization for years, and many companies are still trying to master the combination of implementing social changes while achieving the company's strategic objectives. Eventually, the real value comes when the organization understands its social purpose and profit comes from making social change (Klein, 2012).

In addition to these broad drivers, so many others can also be cited but will not be further detailed in the frame of this study. Namely, there is the issue of uncertainty, globalization, ethics in business, energy issue and so forth.

In this thesis, the focus will be on the social and environmental challenge that companies are facing. Indeed, the aim is to analyze the different certifications that companies can obtain by being committed in sustainability and social responsibility. Additionally, we want to analyze in more detail one of those certifications: The B Corp certification.

Section 2: Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability

2.1 Evolution of the terms and definitions

When one talks about Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility, it can be thought that these terms have different meanings, while they are actually correlated and interrelated. Indeed, when looking closer at their meanings, it is quite complicated and rather incorrect to envision them separately because they all refer, to some extent, to the same broad topic.

Looking into the past, E. Merrick Dodd, a Harvard Professor, was the first to mention the wide subject of Corporate Social Responsibility in 1932 (Cochran, 2007, p. 449). Indeed, he believed that firms have a responsibility not only towards their shareholders but also towards to the society at large because *"business is permitted and encouraged by the law primarily because it is of service to the community rather than because it is a source of profit to its owners"* (Dodd, 1932, p. 1149). Bowen was also one of the first to talk about CSR in 1952 by stating that companies should also take into account society's value when making their business strategy (Tekin, Ertürk, & Tozan, 2015).

Since then, there has clearly been a colossal evolution in the way the concept was understood and tackled by businesses. According to Murphy, it is possible to split its evolution into different eras (philanthropy, awareness, issue and responsiveness) (Murphy, 1978; Carrol, 2008, pp. 24-25). According to the latter, until 1950, it was the "*philanthropic*" era, where organizations would donate money as a way to be responsible. From the 50's until the late 60's, the "*awareness*" era emerged, and companies acknowledged their overall business responsibilities. Then, in the early 1970s, the "*issue*" era arose, where companies would define the most important issues and work on them (e.g. discrimination, pollution). The last era is "*responsiveness*" in which companies would take concrete actions to address the main CSR issues and challenges (Murphy, 1978; Carrol, 2008, pp. 24-25).

Whereas the evolution of the concept might be relatively clear, its definition remains quite ambiguous and variable. Indeed, Corporate Social Responsibility is a concept for which it is hard to have only one accurate definition. Some also say that it is a context-dependent concept, which means that it would be unnecessary to define it since it is understood differently among organizations (Wan Jan, 2006, p. 182). However, it is still interesting to see how people interpreted and defined the term and how it has evolved over time.

In 1970, Milton Friedman talked about the social responsibility of business by saying that it "*is to maximize its profits"* (Friedman, 1970). Indeed, according to him, the only responsibility that managers have is to their employers and to the conduct of business in accordance with the desire of the firm, which is usually to make as much profit as possible while complying to the basic rules of society (Friedman, 1970, pp. 1-2). This view is opposed to the one of Carroll who later developed the CSR pyramid. Indeed, he claims that *"Corporate Social Responsibility encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary (philanthropic) expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time"* (Carroll, 1979).

After Carroll's definition of CSR, the next interpretations of this concept include another topic in it: sustainability. The environmental movement had mainly begun with the publication of the book *Silent Spring* by biologist Rachael Carson in 1962 (Cochran, 2007, p. 459). As awareness for the importance of the environment was growing, the concept of sustainability emerged. At the end of the twentieth century, the first definition of sustainable development was provided by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) as the *"development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to*

meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 41). They also acknowledged that sustainability integrates economic, social and environmental responsibilities (Gimenez, Vicenta, & Rodon, 2012, pp. 149-150),

In addition, according to the report of the WCED, it was important to state that "*sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs. We do not pretend that the process is easy or straightforward. Painful choices have to be made"* (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 17).

Furthermore, in 1997, John Elkington wrote a book titled *"Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*" where he articulates the Triple Bottom Line approach to sustainability. In his book, Elkington points out three important lines that a company needs to tackle simultaneously: the economic, the social, and the environmental lines. According to him, in order to be a sustainable society, three conditions need to be met: society's *"rates of use of renewable resources should not exceed their rates of regeneration; its rates of use of non-renewable resources should not exceed the rate at which sustainable renewable substitutes are developed; and its rates of pollution of emission should not exceed the assimilative capacity of the environment"* (Elkington, 1997, p. 55). This framework is known as very useful as it can be used by businesses in order to measure their performance and the success of their business organization (Alhaddi, 2015, p. 8).

As a matter of fact, the concepts of sustainability and of Corporate Social Responsibility have emerged and evolved separately. Historically, the first referred primarily to environmental issues, whereas the latter referred to social concerns. However, more often both concepts have merged in literature on management, and corporate responsibility henceforth includes sustainability (Tekin, Ertürk, & Tozan, 2015).

Therefore, as of the end of the twentieth century, several definitions of Corporate Social Responsibility integrating sustainability and environmental consciousness have emerged. In 2007, Hopkins gives a new definition, stating that CSR means *"treating the stakeholders of the firm ethically or in a responsible manner"* (Hopkins, 2007, p. 15).

The European Commission has provided another major and more recent definition of CSR. It is a simple but broad definition that states that Corporate Social Responsibility is *"the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society and outlines what an enterprise should do to meet that responsibility"* (European Commission, 2011). Although the European Commission believes that adopting and engaging in CSR practices is not a "one-size-fits-all" process, complying with legislation and collective agreements is one of the basic requirements to meet social responsibility. In addition to this, the commission also states that enterprises should have *"a process in place to integrate social, environmental, ethical human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close cooperation with their stakeholders"* (European Commission, 2011). Under this definition, the European Commission wants enterprises to recognize the importance of a core business strategy, develop the concept of Creating Shared Value, and recognize Human Rights and ethical consideration in addition to social, environmental and consumer matters (European Commission, 2011).

Even though the awareness of CSR and sustainability was expanding, it was not widely acknowledged by companies and/or businessmen. Indeed, until 2019, Business Roundtable, a nonprofit organization regrouping CEOs of major US companies, still endorsed principles of shareholder primacy in its periodic publication titled Principles of a Corporate Governance. However, on August 19, 2019, it released a new statement on the Purpose of a Corporation that includes not only shareholders, but all stakeholders: *"while each of our individual companies serves its own corporate purpose, we share a fundamental commitment to all of our stakeholders"* (Business Roundtable, 2019b). This statement is crucial, as it was signed by 181 CEOs of major US companies (Business Roundtable, 2019a). More details on the statement and its commitments can be found in Appendix n°1.

Through the years, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility continued to evolve, and some new terms emerged to show even more commitment in this field. One of them is the concept of Fair and Responsible Businesses. These businesses operate based on the belief that "*doing well comes from doing good"* (Kückelhaus & Tomoff, 2015, p. 4). They consider themselves an evolution of CSR as the concept is now *"part of the core value creation process, resulting in the generation of new revenue streams that ensure value is shared by all stakeholders"* (Kückelhaus & Tomoff, 2015, p. 4). Both terms are useful, although one goes further than the other. For more detailed explanation, a table comparing the traditional

Corporate Social Responsibility and Fair and Responsible Businesses can be found in Appendix n°2.

To sum up, the concept of social responsibility first emerged in the first half of the twentieth century, where CSR meant focusing only on social issues. However, few decades later, environmental awareness increased, in which changed the way people perceived CSR. Instead of focusing only on social matters, companies have a societal responsibility that includes both social and environmental accountability. Furthermore, new definitions of CSR have emerged with new concepts such as Fair and Responsible Businesses. However, even though the definitions of the concept might differ to some extent, the broad understanding of CSR is unanimous.

2.2 Advantages of implementing CSR

Leaders often perceive Corporate Social Responsibility as a cost, a burden to bear. However, studies show that it should be rather considered as an investment that will most likely positively contribute to the company's competitiveness and growth.

Indeed, according to the European Commission, having a strategic approach to CSR will benefit companies in terms of "*risk management, cost savings, access to capital, customer relationships, human resource management, and innovation capacity. It also encourages more social and environmental responsibility from the corporate sector at a time when the crisis has damaged consumer confidence and the levels of trust in business"* (European Commission, 2011). Also, another study ran by Orlitzky, Schmidt, and Rynes (2003, p. 427) revealed that corporate social and environmental performance has a significantly positive effect on a firm's corporate financial performance. Hence, it is interesting to analyze all the potential advantages of implementing CSR practices in a company.

First, implementing such initiatives increase a firm's visibility and reputation. It attracts media attention; positive communication is shared, and there is a better brand recognition. In addition, it lets a company differentiate itself from the others and it has a positive impact on customer loyalty, which, in turn, improves sales and thus financial performance (Keys, Malnight, & van der Graaf, 2009; Rakowski, 2010).

Second, according to Porter and Kramer (2002), it also makes sense for businesses to pursue social goals, as those can be inherently connected to the economic goals. In fact, they state that many economic investments can have social returns and vice versa. Hence, instead of pursuing either social goals or economic goals, companies should seek objectives that provide both financial and social returns (Cochran, 2007, p. 449).

Third, when a company implements CSR actions, it fosters engagement with internal and external stakeholders, which enables the company to anticipate trends and expectations: this has precious value (European Commission, 2011). Additionally, because CSR also means taking initiatives without being restricted by regulations, it means taking good initiatives based on expectations, and thus having first-mover advantage. Furthermore, engaging in CSR can drive the development of new markets and create real opportunities for growth (European Commission, 2011).

Fourth, when tackling their social responsibility, companies can build a long-term relationship with suppliers, consumers, employees, and any other stakeholders. With a trusting relationship, they can create a prosperous an innovative environment that benefits enterprises (European Commission, 2011). Also, working in a company applying CSR principles increases the motivation and involvement of the personnel, and it helps retaining staff within the organization.

Fifth, it has also been proven that investing in CSR increases the level of safety and helps preventing and mitigating the effect of crises (European Commission, 2011). When talking about economic crises or environmental disasters that have huge impacts on companies, if a company has implemented measures beyond legal obligations, it creates satisfaction and fosters sustained productivity in the company (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports of Romania, 2012).

Lastly, it is also widely acknowledged that all companies should implement CSR policies and practices in their organization, to comply with regulations, but also to meet stakeholders' expectations.

2.3 Difficulties and challenges while implementing CSR measures

Implementing Corporate Social Responsibility can be tough, especially because it is not a straightforward or linear process. Hereunder are some of the main barriers that companies encounter when trying to implement CSR practices in their organizations.

2.3.1 Economic factor

Implementing CSR policies is undeniably an investment, which always carries risk. Besides, the higher the cost of the investment, the least it will be widely accepted, except if it ensures significant, proven return. This is precisely the issue when investing in CSR policies. Implementing a new project is always based on its financial efficiency. However, with the implementation of a CSR policy, financial efficiency cannot be the main argument. First, because the impacts of CSR policies are more than just financial: it has effects on employee satisfaction, customer loyalty, transparency of supplier-consumer relations, environmental protection and so on, all concepts that are hard to quantify. Second, since the main objective of implementing CSR policies is not to make money, the financial factor has little relevance here (Valkovicova, 2018, pp. 2-3).

2.3.2 Lack of resources and strategic vision

Often, management teams do not really know how to take actions when trying to implement Corporate Social Responsibility in their organization. They mostly lack resources such as finance, human capital, knowledge, and expertise. Organizations have specific budgets allocated to various projects, and the budget for CSR implementation finds it hard to compete with other budgets allocated to projects with significant Return on Investment. In addition, even though there is increasingly more awareness of the need for CSR practices, it is still a relatively new concern. Hence, there is a shortage of people with adequate experience and knowledge to tackle this topic. In addition, implementing CSR often lacks strategic vision. Such a project should be introduced from the top of the organizational chart; however, in many cases, the management is not fully committed in their project and this impedes efficient strategic project implementation (Yuen & Lim, 2016, pp. 50-51).

2.3.3 Lack of measurement systems

Usually, when implementing a new project, there is always a need to have a measurement system that would evaluate the project, track the progress and the benefits of it. However, since CSR practices are quite fuzzy and hard to quantify, having such a system is quite complicated.

Consequently, the management can hardly identify whether the investment made is worthy (Yuen & Lim, 2016, p. 51).

2.3.4 Social barriers

Social barriers can have huge effects on the business. Fortunately, those are the most easily removable. Some stakeholders in the company may be suspicious of CSR policies implementation by the management; others might mistrust the actions the management wants to take. However, effective communication across and throughout the organization is usually sufficient to remove such mistrust (Valkovicova, 2018, pp. 4-6).

It is the responsibility of the management to find the right way to convey their views and message. However, this communication must be done not only internally but also externally. This step is crucial because if the management choose the wrong tools, misunderstanding can occur and impede their efforts (Valkovicova, 2018, pp. 4-6).

2.3.5 Legislative barriers

Legislation can be complicated and difficult. In some countries, the legislation does not really support CSR measures, which can affect companies that truly want to implement them (Valkovicova, 2018, pp. 7-8).

In a nutshell, after understanding and defining Corporate Social Responsibility, this section highlighted the main assets and adverse circumstances of taking initiatives toward CSR. To sum up, the primary benefit is that social goals can lead to economic goals and improved reputation. However, organizations can also find it hard to pursue CSR initiatives due to economic or social barriers or by reason of a lack of strategic vision and measurement systems.

Chapter 2: Certification

After having a broad awareness of what Corporate Social Responsibility is, it is also important to understand what a certification is. Hence, the aim of this section is to discover what this concept is, and what are the drivers and pitfalls of getting certified. The goal of this section is also to undercover other existing certifications in the field of social and environmental responsibility.

Section 1: Definition

According to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (n.da), a certification can be defined as *"the provision by an independent body of written assurance (a certificate) that the product, service, or system in question meets specific requirements"*. Besides, the organization extends the definition of it by adding that *"certification can be a useful tool to add credibility, by demonstrating that your product or service meets the expectations of your customers. For some industries, certification is a legal or contractual requirement"* (International Organization for Standardization, n.da)

In addition, according to a study conducted by Joel Gehman, Ke Cao and Matthew Grimes, certifications *"typically define and codify standards, which organizations then enact through constitutive practices. Second, certifications involve evaluations or assessments aimed at assuring compliance with these standards and practices. Third, certifications often provide badges, labels, or symbols to identify such products. Fourth, although certifications almost always begin as voluntary initiatives, some may become normative or even mandatory within certain fields"* (Gehman, Cao, & Grimes, 2019, p. 97)

Section 2: Drivers and pitfalls of being certified

2.1 Drivers

There are many incentives driving companies to obtain some kind of certification in the social and/or environmental fields, and these should not be underestimated.

Namely, having a certification benefits the company's reputation. Indeed, certifications are used to show to all stakeholders that the company complies to various standards; this is positively viewed (Gehman, Cao, & Grimes, 2019). Being a certified company gives the entity more credibility as it guarantees more transparency towards stakeholders.

Also, the raising awareness about sustainability and social responsibility has made consumers more demanding regarding the ways of doing business. Since being sustainable is becoming critical for value creation in the future, investors are keen to invest in greener and more responsible companies (Bureau Veritas, 2019).

In addition, certifications can be remarkably interesting in the way that they enable corporations to differentiate themselves from other companies. Consequently, having a certification can lead to competitive advantages and bring economic benefits.

2.2 Pitfalls

Even though advantages and drivers for becoming a socially and environmentally certified company are numerous, some pitfalls and drawbacks should be mentioned.

Namely, the process of getting certified, and the certification itself can be very expensive and could be seen as a huge barrier. Also, there is the danger that the investment in socially and environmentally responsible certification could be reactive rather than proactive. This means that the process of getting certified is initiated based on external pressure (institutions, consumers, regulations, etc.) rather than because of a real desire to invest in it. Hence, there is a risk called "greenwashing" phenomenon. This occurs when *"a company positions its products / brands as environment friendly, but at the same time attempts to take actions that are harmful for the environment in other aspects"* (Kubiak, 2016), which is very negatively seen by all stakeholders.

Section 3: Existing certifications

Compiling an exhaustive list of existing certifications is a difficult task due to their large number. Each one has specific restrictions. Some are relevant only to a particular industry or sector, others for a particular geographic area, and some are only valid for one industry or product in a region (Gehman, Cao, & Grimes, 2019, p. 97). However, it is still relevant to describe some of the most important and most renown certifications.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) sets international norms, provides guidance and certifies companies in some specific fields. Two different kinds of families of standards are interesting in the frame of this thesis: the ISO 26000 standard, that tackles the social responsibility of businesses, and the ISO 14001 standard, that pertains to the

environmental responsibility of firms. However, both are not certifications. ISO 26000 is very useful for businesses but is not a certification. The main goal of this category of standards is to provide guidance to businesses on how to manage their firm in a socially responsible way. It defines CSR, helps businesses translate these principles into concrete actions in their business organization, and it also shares some best practices to lead by example. As it is not a certification, it does not include any requirements and thus, any organization, in any industry and in any region in the world can use this standard (International Organization for Standardization, n.dc). ISO 14001, on the other hand, is a certification in the field of environmental responsibility. It provides guidance, criteria and a framework for an adequate environmental management system. Its main purpose is to help companies minimizing their negative environmental impacts and improving their environmental activities (CSR Compass, n.d). In an ISO 14001 certified company, all internal and external stakeholders can be ensured that the environmental impact of the business is tackled and improved (International Organization for Standardization, n.db). Any company in any industry and location is eligible for this certification, provided it meets the specific requirements as described in Appendix n°3.

Another certification, EMAS or Eco Management and Audit Scheme is a *"premium management instrument developed by the European Commission for companies and other organizations to evaluate, report, and improve their environmental performance"* (European Commission, n.d). Open to all entities, their target is to help organizations improve their environmental performance. In order to get the certification, a company must comply with European norms, be audited by an independent certified agency, and register with the competent authority (Wallonie Service Public, n.d). A chart explaining the various steps of becoming EMAS-certified can be found in Appendix n°4. Additionally, for an organization already ISO 14001-certified, it will be easier to obtain the EMAS certification, as all the requirements needed to obtain the ISO 14001 certification are included in the EMAS (Belgium.be, 2020).

SA 8000 is another certification related to CSR. It is granted through Social Accountability International, a multi-stakeholder initiative. With globalization, many companies have outsourced production to less developed countries, which has had negative impacts on the environment and has raised social and reputational issues (Miles & Munilla, 2004). The SA 8000 certification was developed to tackle such issues. It provides a framework helping companies show their commitment in the fair treatment of workers. Valid for three years, this certification addresses 9 different elements in the social accountability area: child labor, forced

or compulsory labor, health and safety, freedom of association and right to collective bargaining, discrimination, disciplinary practices, working hours, remuneration, and Management System (see the standards list in Appendix n°5) (Social Accountability International, 2019a). To get certified, a company must complete an auto-evaluation named "Fingerprint". Once its results are satisfactory, it must contact an accredited certification organism that will verify the business social performance and the management system and provide the certification. To ensure everything is compliant, there are also field controls at the organization's premises (Social Accoutability International, 2019b).

Another interesting agency that certifies companies is Ecocert, a French agency created in 1991. It provides roughly 50 different certifications related to social responsibility and environmental accountability. The exhaustive list of their certifications can be found on their website: https://www.ecocert.com/en/certifications-list. However, this agency is not as well-known as the B Corporation Certification and very few management experts have completed research on this agency. Additionally, this agency differs from B Lab on one important point: whereas B Lab only provides one broad certification, Ecocert provides almost 50 different certifications in specialized areas (Ecocert, n.d).

It is also interesting to look at the Ecolabel Index website that offers a list of more than 460 labels and certifications related to sustainability. This list can be found on their website: http://www.ecolabelindex.com/ecolabels/. Among them, some well-known certifications such as the B Corporation or the Agriculture Biologique (AB) can be found, but some other certifications shown on the list are less-known due to their specificity. This list is useful although it includes both labels and certification, which are not entirely the same concepts. A label provides information about a particular product to reduce information asymmetry, but it may or may not be controlled by a government agency. On the other hand, a certification is a label that an organization can obtain, provided they comply to various standards regulated by an external agency. In short, a certification is a label, but a label is not always a certification (Choi, 2014; Delmas & Grant, 2014).

All in all, after understanding the concept of certification and disclosing the main advantages and pitfalls, the main focus of this chapter was to study different existing certifications. Even though the purpose of this last section was not to draw an exhaustive list of all the existing certifications, it is still interesting to look at similar certifications in order to be able to compare

the B Corporation with the findings. However, according to the research, it is hard to compare one of the above-mentioned certifications with the BCC as none of them are as comprehensive. Besides, it can be assumed that the most important ones have been uncovered, as the research did not disclose any other certification; indeed, if they are well-known, they would have come up in the research.

Chapter 3: The B Corporation Certification (BCC)

Section 1: Background of the B Corporation

In this theoretical part, it is obviously important to emphasize on B Lab and on the B Corporation Certification (BCC), as the whole thesis is based around these topics. Therefore, the primary purpose of this section is to understand the emergence of B Lab and what the BCC concretely is and learn about the new economy behind the system as well as the process of getting certified. Also, the drivers of obtaining the certification will be uncovered and a comparison with other certifications will be made. Lastly, some preliminary critics of the B Corp Certification will be disclosed.

1.1 The emergence of the nonprofit organization: B Lab

Three friends, Jay Coen Gilbert, Bart Houlahan and Andrew Kassoy, are behind the non-profit B Lab. Before creating this organization, they all had a career: Coen Gilbert and Bart Houlahan co-founded the basketball footwear and apparel company AND1 in 1993, and Andrew Kassoy was running a great career in private equity at mSd Real Estate Capital (Cao, Gehman, & Grimes, 2017, p. 5). All of them were enjoying working in environments that were both financially successful and socially responsible (Marquis, Klaber, & Bobbi, 2011, p. 3).

Indeed, AND1 was a company that put great emphasis on being socially responsible: between 5 and 10% of the profits were donated to charities; employees earned a fair wage and could work in a safe environment; yoga classes and childcare where provided; employees were put first, and, all in all, they really did everything to create a great place to work (Marquis, Klaber, & Bobbi, 2011, p. 3; Cao, Gehman, & Grimes, 2017, p.3). Kassoy, in addition to his activity in private equity, was involved in a non-profit organization called Echoing Green. He was a member of the board of the organization and a mentor for social entrepreneurs. By becoming increasingly involved and concerned, he realized that this secondary activity was actually way more relevant to him than investing on Wall Street (Marquis, Klaber, & Bobbi, 2011, pp. 3-4).

Consequently, following a great career, they enjoyed, for their second professional path, the freedom of doing what they really wanted to do: create positive impact. Hence, they realized that they wanted to create an infrastructure promoting a new economy and a new way of doing business. They mainly wanted to promote the principle of using business as a force for good, allowing private enterprises to use their power to create public benefit (Marquis, Klaber, & Bobbi, 2011, pp. 4-5).

When developing the project, and through conversations with various persons, the three co-founders realized that 3 important elements of infrastructure were needed for a better working market. First, several standards should be used by all parties: consumers, investors and policymakers. Second, the tension between maximizing profit to satisfy shareholders and ensuring a positive social impact had to be resolved. Third, there was a need to create a collective voice and a brand supporting all companies joining the movement (Marquis, Klaber, & Bobbi, 2011, p. 4). Based on these necessary infrastructure elements, and with a capital of 1 million $, they founded the non-profit organization B Lab in June 2006 in Berwyn, Pennsylvania, United States of America (Cao, Gehman, & Grimes, 2017, p. 5). Initially, Houlahan was president, responsible for operations and company certifications. Gilbert was in charge of recruiting new companies, and Kassoy was in charge of capital markets. With this structure, the non-profit would focus on the following three interrelated activities (Marquis, Klaber, & Bobbi, 2011, p. 1):

1. *"Building a community of Certified B Corporations that met rigorous standards of social and environmental performance and that legally expanded their corporate responsibilities to include consideration of diverse stakeholder interests to help consumers, investors, employees, and policymakers tell the difference between "good companies" and just good marketing;*
2. *Advancing the public policies necessary to create the legal infrastructure (through a new corporate form called a Benefit Corporation and market incentives (tax, investment, and procurement preferences) to accelerate the growth of this new economy;*
3. *Developing the GIIRS rating system (Global Impact Investing Rating System) to help drive institutional investment capital beyond traditional socially responsible investing to the emerging asset class of "impact investments".*

To have a better picture of the evolution of B Lab, Appendix n°6 shows, in a chronological order, the different steps and evolutions of the nonprofit organization.

Essentially, B Lab is thus the institution that provides the B Corp Certification – the certification for socially and environmentally responsible companies – and that manages the B Impact

Management programs and software – the assessment to be undertaken in order to be eligible for the certification (B Lab, 2019b).

B Lab believes that there is a shift underway, that drives companies to address society's greatest challenges, and they want to support those committed into such actions. By doing so, they want to accelerate this change and create a community of companies that are devoted to use business as a mean for doing something good. They also believe that by having a great shift into the company's culture, and by being more socially and environmentally responsible, the world's biggest issues could be solved (B Lab, 2019b).

In a nutshell, B Lab wants to redefine the role of business in society by changing the traditional trend driving companies to compete for being the best company in the world towards the best for the world. They want to do so by providing a tool, the B Impact Assessment, that enables companies to evaluate their social and environmental impacts, and by rewarding firms that comply with specific requirements through the B Corporation Certification.

1.2 The new system: B Economy

As there is a shift on how to do business, there is subsequently also a shift in the economic system. Indeed, increasingly, people no longer believe in the current capitalistic economy and recognize that a great shift is needed in our society, along with the shift in companies' culture. B Lab strives for building a new economy, the B Economy, that would work for everyone and that would be sustainable in the long term. In this context, there is a need to find the right balance between purpose and profit, and to operate businesses that respect the whole world, including people and nature (B Lab, 2019c). Eventually, B Lab hopes there will not be a need to convince and drive companies toward a specific B Economy. Indeed, their ultimate vision is to have a global economy that *"aligns its activities towards achieving our common purpose of a shared and durable prosperity for all"* (B Lab, 2019d).

1.3 A new type of structure: the hybrid organization

In line with the new economic system, the hybrid organization is a new type of entity that is gaining popularity. Its particularity is that it pursues, in its core strategy, not only economic goals, but also social and/or environmental goals (Haigh, Walker, & Bacq, 2015, pp. 5-6). In this movement, B lab is a key actor as it will help hybrid organizations track their performance

and enable these companies to be part of a new community regrouping a new type of organizations (Battilana, 2018, p. 1290).

Defined as *"enterprises that design their business models based on the alleviation of a particular social or environmental issue.* [...] *Hybrid organization reflects the propensity of such enterprises to blend traditionally for-profit practices with traditionally nonprofit practices*" (Haigh, Walker, & Bacq, 2015, p. 5). For some researchers, a hybrid organization can respond to the environmental and societal issues we experience today due to that fact that they adopt a balanced approach by combining economic, social, and/or environmental objectives. Furthermore, their goal is to minimize the negative impacts they could have on society, the economy and the environment by adjusting their ethical behavior (Villela, Bulgacov, & Morgan, 2019, p. 3).

Even though this new model is not always easy to implement, some governments have been supportive and new legal forms have been drafted to facilitate the creation of such organizations. In the United States, they are called Low-Profit Limited Liability Companies (L3C) or Benefit Organizations; in the United Kingdom, Community Interest Companies (CIC) are emerging and in Belgium, Social Purpose Companies (Villela, Bulgacov, & Morgan, 2019, p. 3) are thriving also.

Section 2: The B Corporation Certification (BCC)

2.1 The B Corp Certification

Because change cannot happen only with the involvement of governments and nonprofit organizations, the B Corp movement wants to certify companies that respect various standards and create a committed community of for-profit organizations to drive change and to work towards a greater end: a more sustainable economy where companies would have a positive impact on society and environment. Indeed, even though the B Lab organization is aware that B Corp might not be the unique solution, it strongly believes that companies have a role to play, alongside with governments, in tackling the greatest challenges and issues of our society and are definitely accountable for driving change (Coen Gilbert, 2018).

Since 2007, the B Corp Certification is granted by the nonprofit organization B Lab to for profit companies that *"meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose"* (B Lab, 2019b).

They also want the certification to develop in a better way every day and hence promote the continuous improvement. Indeed, since its creation in 2007, the certification has evolved and will continue to do so based on the reviews and critics from inside and outside of the community (Coen Gilbert, 2018).

One of the main characteristics of the BCC is that it is one of the rare certifications available to companies in all industries and in all regions (Gehman, Cao, & Grimes, 2019, p. 97). Also, the specificity of the B Corp Certification is that the entire company is evaluated and not only some products or some specific aspects of the corporation. B Lab really wants to award companies that are managed and that operate ethically and responsibly (Ballesteros-Sola, Stickney, & Trejo, 2018, p. 199). In addition, it assesses both the social and environmental performances of a firm, which is also a great particularity of the certification, since it is the only one that is provides such a comprehensive approach (Chen & Kelly, 2015, p. 104).

In terms of strategy, B Corp wants to make change happen by "*building a community of Certified B Corporations; promoting legislation creating a new corporate form that meets higher standards of purpose, accountability, and transparency; accelerating the growth of "impact investing" through the use of B Lab's impact investment rating system; and galvanizing support for the movement by sharing the stories of Certified B Corporations"* (Cao, Gehman, & Grimes, 2017, p. 3). All in all, by implementing and developing standards, they mainly want to target markets, companies and institutions and encourage them to make the shift towards being more responsible (Cao, Gehman, & Grimes, 2017, p. 3).

As mentioned above, the B Corp Certification's main purpose is to work on social and environmental issues. From a social point of view, the community aims at reducing inequalities and poverty, creating higher quality employment, and so forth. It also wants to promote good working practices, good corporate governance, and transparency inside and outside the companies. On the other hand, regarding environmental issues, B Corps are committed into creating real policies to comply with the highest regulations and create innovative responsible corporate structures that will protect the environment (Talsom, 2019).

Other actions of the B Corp include reducing shareholder primacy. This means that it aims at lowering the ingrained idea that shareholders are dominant and that a company's sole obligation is to fulfill their needs by maximizing profit, at the expense of other stakeholders' needs. In the

B Corp community, this idea is reversed and instead, they believe that all stakeholders have a voice, and that the needs and expectations of all stakeholders are to be respected. In addition, instead of talking about shareholder primacy, it is talked about stakeholder capitalism, where returns are shared among all stakeholders (Coen Gilbert, 2018). In this regard, interestingly, the phenomenon of reducing shareholder primacy is an increasingly common topic. Indeed, Business Roundtable, the association regrouping the most important CEOs of American companies has also integrated stakeholder primacy in its last statement on the purpose of a corporation. However, according to many, including Anand Giridharadas, the author of *"Business Take it All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World"* and Democrat Senator Bernie Sanders, what has been stated needs to be proven. Indeed, as for now, what was said is more like a mission than a concrete plan of action, and no real change has happened since its issue (Gelles & Yaffe-Bellany, 2019). Hence, as of today, it is too early to say that a company of which the CEO is a member of Business Roundtable could be considered a B Corporation. Work needs to be done and B Lab is aware of it. Therefore, in a letter signed by 33 B Corp CEOs, they asked them to put their words into actions and invited them to work together (B the Change, 2019).

In addition to the vision of reducing shareholder primacy, the BCC also emphasizes transparency. Indeed, in order to get certified, companies are required to provide relevant information about their business. Thanks to this, consumers can make decisions based on accurate, relevant, and available information (Coen Gilbert, 2018).

To sum up the principles of the BCC, hereunder is their Declaration of Interdependence that clearly defines its vision and mission (Coen Gilbert, 2017):

> *"We envision a global economy that uses business as a force for good. This economy comprises a new type of corporation - the B Corporation - which is purpose-driven and creates benefit for all stakeholders, not just shareholders.*
> *As B Corporations and leaders of this emerging economy, we believe:*
> - *That we must be the change we seek in the world.*
> - *That all business ought to be conducted as if people and place mattered.*
> - *That, through their products, practices, and profits, businesses should aspire to do no harm and benefit all.*
> - *To do so requires that we act with the understanding that we are each dependent upon another and thus responsible for each other and future generations."*

In conclusion, it is important to mention that becoming a Certified B Corporation is a voluntary action. These are not compulsory regulations. Instead, on spontaneous decision, companies decide to tackle the responsibility of their externalities, improve the positive ones and reduce the negative ones, and decide to begin the process of obtaining the certification. They will commit to integrating environmental and CSR policies into their daily activities and operations while balancing their economic, social and environmental responsibilities. Besides, apart from the specific criteria that must be met to be eligible for the certification, companies have to comply to transparency principles (Harjoto, Laksmana, & Yan, 2018, pp. 5-6)

2.2 Why becoming a B Corporation?

The B Corp movement has been growing since its creation in 2007. Indeed, very rapidly, B Corp was very successful; today, there are roughly 3200 B Corporations around the world, in more than 70 countries (B Lab, 2019a). Due to the trend around the certification, it can be assumed that there are some real benefits of becoming a Certified B Corporation.

First, it allows the company to join a movement and a community that is growing every day. B Corp is not only a community, but also a growing movement and a network of people thinking and doing business in the same way (Villela, Bulgacov, & Morgan, 2019, pp. 8-9). In the B Corp Family, everyone is working together, people are on the same page. In addition, together they build greater awareness and best practices are shared among the community. Eventually, all of this can be used to leverage even more growth (Weinreb, 2018).

Second, being a CBC can be used as a way to obtain a competitive advantage. Indeed, being seen as a socially and environmentally responsible firm is a way to differentiate itself from other companies. B Corp has a great international reputation, and, for some companies, this can clearly be used to demonstrate their pursuit of social, environmental and economic goals. Hence, with the B Corp certification, companies can benefit from market differentiation (Villela, Bulgacov, & Morgan, 2019, pp. 8-9). In particular, this certification can be essential for small companies submitted to large corporations and wanting to prove that they are more genuine and authentic. Indeed, the certification will provide small companies with official recognition for their efforts and will help the consumer make a difference between a real CBC and a large corporation that could potentially do “greenwashing” by investing heavily in marketing (Kim, Karlesky, Myers, & Schifeling, 2016). Moreover, companies that undergo the process of getting the certification usually do so because they find market and business

opportunities in being socially and environmentally responsible and want to leverage it by having a certification that proves their commitment (Roth & Ingo, 2018, p. 27).
Related to this, most organizations believe that getting the certification will enable them to communicate their identity, values and ethics to all its stakeholders, which could eventually be beneficial for the company (Roth & Ingo, 2018, p.26; Villela, Bulgacov & Morgan, 2019, p.9). Indeed, customers and vendors are increasingly aware of the importance of being socio- and eco-responsible. Hence, having the B Corp certification would allow companies to be seen as a true green and good business and thus attract customers and vendors (Weinreb, 2018).

Third, there is a growing concern about our current economy; an increasing amount of people have lost confidence in the system nowadays. Becoming a CBC allows corporations to create a new community where success and what is perceived as a good way of doing business would be redefined and reimagined in a more sustainable way (Kim et al, 2016). As the awareness of the concern is growing, so is the media attention and especially the media attention around the B Corp (Appendix n°7 shows the evolution of the media coverage in the last 15 years). Consequently, consumer awareness has grown and so has interest in the BCC. Being committed to the B Corp movement is seen as a highly positive initiative.

Fourth, companies certified as B Corporations will comply to very high standards and commit to certain rules that will allow them to align their internal business practices with their values. Also, the B Corporation certification provides a real way to express these values and enhance the reputation of the firm (Roth & Ingo, 2018, p. 26). Moreover, employee loyalty and satisfaction will be increased because there is pride in working in a responsible company. In addition, being a recognized socio-and eco-responsible company will attract more talent, as it is enjoyable to work is such an environment. Furthermore, it might also attract more investors, as they are increasingly interested into investing in responsible projects (Weinreb, 2018).

To conclude, several reasons drive companies to become Certified B Corporations. Companies understand it is paramount to be seen as green and responsible and take real actions in that direction. Besides, as talent is key in a company, it is crucial to attract the right staff.

2.3 Process of getting the B Corp Certification

Companies wanting to be recognized for their commitment of being socially and environmentally responsible must follow a specific process to obtain the B Corp certification.

When a company decides to follow the procedure to become certified, they must commit themselves to consider their social and environmental impacts as important as their financial returns. In this area, the B Corporation certification can thus be seen as a tool to help the development of a hybrid organization (Villela, Bulgacov, & Morgan, 2019, p. 4).

Concerning the procedure, even though the process and requirements are essentially the same for every organization, some points can differ according to the size and structure of the firm. The following part aims to highlight the main steps of the process.

2.3.1 The B Impact Assessment

The first step of the process is the B Impact Assessment (BIA). This appraisal is a free, comprehensive tool, accessible to every organization that measures the positive impacts of a company on society, its customers, its workers, community and on the environment. In alignment with the will to always strive for improvement, since the creation of the BIA, several updates have been made. Practically, there is a new update every two or three years approximately (Cao, Gehman, & Grimes, 2017, p. 8). Hence, there have been 6 versions of the tool since its beginning in 2007, with the latest version released in January 2019 (B Lab, 2020h; B Lab, 2020h).

While it is mandatory to pass this test in order to be eligible for the B Corp Certification, every company wanting to have an idea of their positive social and environmental impact can take it freely and confidentially. Indeed, the BIA wants to be flexible, adaptable and standardized to enable any firm to understand where they are going and what areas need improvement (Honeyman & Jana, 2019, pp. 61-62).

This BIA is thus an online survey that includes approximately 200 questions on topics such as accountability, employees, consumers, community, and environment. The answers are compared with the ones of thousands of other companies, and guidelines and best practices are provided on how to make further progress and how to improve the social and environmental performances of the given company. In order to pass this first step, a minimum of 80 points out of 200 must be obtained (Chen & Kelly, 2015, p. 104). This score may seem low, however, 51 is the median (Gunther, 2016).

The last section of the BIA is called the disclosure questionnaire. Whereas the first part of the B Impact Assessment is focusing on the positive impacts, the disclosure questionnaire will enable the company to acknowledge the negative aspects. Usually, the answers to these questions do not affect the final score of the company on the BIA because the negative impacts are rather minimal. However, if it appears that these answers are quite serious, the company might be asked to provide further disclosure on the B Corporation website (B Lab, 2019e).

2.3.2 Meeting the legal requirements

Second, in order to get the CBC, not only do companies have to pass the B Impact Assessment, but they also need to meet specific legal requirements. Those requirements differ depending on the region where the company is located, the legal structure of the firm and whether they are publicly traded or wholly owned subsidiary (B Lab, 2019e).

According to B Lab, the legal requirement (B Lab, 2019e):

- *"Gives legal protection to directors and officers to consider the interests of all stakeholders, not just shareholders, when making decisions;*
- *Creates additional rights for shareholders to hold directors and officers accountable to consider these interests; and*
- *Limits these expanded rights to shareholders exclusively."*

To become certified, the eligible companies must sign the B Corp Agreement that commits them to respecting the legal requirements. Sometimes, meeting these requirements might require that the company modifies its corporate structure, statutes or articles of incorporation. However, B Lab understands that these processes can be lengthy. Therefore, companies can be certified and are given some additional time to make those changes (B Lab, 2019e).

2.3.3 Verification and Transparency

After completing the B Impact Assessment and before receiving its final score, the company must undergo a verification and transparency process. Indeed, B Lab wants to ensure all the information provided by the company during the BIA is accurate and true.

In some cases, after submitting the BIA, a review by phone call may be required. Afterwards, to get the Assessment Review, additional documentation must be provided to support the answers given during the BIA. Usually, the accuracy of six to fifteen random questions must be evidenced by supporting documents that are to be uploaded on the B Lab platform. A

downside of this is that a company can expect a waiting time of up to six months, due to high demand. However, once all the documents are uploaded and when the Assessment Review is scheduled, it usually takes around 60 to 90 minutes for both the company and the B Lab Standard Analyst to review the questions and answers that could have been left unclear. The aim of this is to make sure everything is accurate and to adjust the score of the company (B Lab, 2019e).

After the Assessment Review, B Lab wants to ensure that the business model of the company matches the requirements of the Certified B Corporations community. Therefore, up to six questions related to the business model can be selected for further information. Just as in the assessment review, the company must provide supporting documents that will be analyzed by a B Corp Standard Analyst. Besides, B Lab also has the right to ask some additional information based on the first Assessment Review (B Lab, 2019e).

The last step of the verification and transparency process is the background check. This includes *"a review of public records, news sources, and search engines for company names, brands, executives/founders, and other relevant topics"* (B Lab, 2019e).

Eventually, when the process is complete, the company will be given a final score for the B Impact Assessment and its review. If the company obtains at least 80 point out of 200, it successfully passes the test and can continue the process of becoming a Certified B Corporation. The score that must be obtained might seem low as it does not even account for half of the points. However, according to Ryan Honeyman, author of *"The Bcorp Handbook: How You Can Use Business as a Force for Good"* (2014b), most companies score between 40 and 60 out of 200 points and, as mentioned above, the median score only reaches 51 points (Gunther, 2016). Consequently, this means that the requirements are set high and that becoming a B Corp is not achievable for any type of company. Concerning highly ranked companies, they usually score around 160 to 170 points. But, all in all, the median score of all Certified B Corporations, is 95 points (Honeyman, 2014b; B Lab, 2020g).

Concerning the transparency, all certified companies are required to publicly share their B Impact Report – a summary of the company's score on the BIA– on the B Corporation website. Besides, companies having important information in their Disclosure Questionnaires could be asked to give additional information to prove their transparency. On top of that, public

companies and wholly owned subsidiaries are subject to transparency requirements (B Lab, 2019e).

2.3.4 Signature of the agreement and payment of the annual fees

The last step of the certification process is signing the "B Corp Declaration of Interdependence", the "B Corp Agreement", and pay the certification fees. The amount of the fees depends on the company's region and revenues. However, to provide an idea of the cost of getting certified, a table of the various fees in Canada and the United States is included in Appendix n°.8, ranging from €500 to more than €50 000. The cover fees include the verification and standard costs, the technology platform, the licensing fee and the local and global movement building (B Lab, 2019e).

All in all, the process can be long and sometimes very costly. For these reasons, it can be assured that a company that eventually got the certification is truly committed into integrating CSR and environmental practices and policies into their organization, and really comply with all the criteria that must be met in order to be a B Corp (Weinreb, 2018).

2.3.5 Recertification and Site review

Getting the certification is one step, but if a company wants to maintain its status of B Corp, it has to prove that it maintains its efforts to be a socially and ecologically responsible firm and to have a positive impact on all the stakeholders, as well as the community and nature. Hence, every three years, companies must retake the entire B Impact Assessment. The company will thus have to retake the test, provide additional information to guarantee the accuracy of the answers and again, obtain a final score of at least 80 points out of 200. This also gives the company the opportunity to set some objectives to be achieved in order to continuously comply to the highest standards and regulations (B Lab, 2019d). However, according to Mrs. Bardiau, B Lab does not require B Corp companies to have an improved score at every recertifications: as long as a company reaches the 80 required, it can still be a B Corp (personal communication, March 31st, 2020, cfr. Appendix n°15).

Besides this obligatory regular reassessment, every year, ten percent of all B Corporations are subject to a Site Review. Some companies are randomly chosen, while others are subject to this Site Review as part of the terms of the Certification (site review is mandatory for wholly owned subsidiaries and public companies). Obviously, the goal of the review is to ensure that

companies meet the requirements of B Lab, but its main purpose is to verify the accuracy of the answers given by a company during the B Impact Assessment. Usually, the site review takes up to ten hours depending on the company's size and scope and it happens either virtually or on-site (B Lab, 2019d).

Section 3: Global Reporting Initiative, International Organization for Standardization in comparison with the BCC

In the past years, there has been a great emergence of organizations tackling CSR and Sustainability. It has been analyzed in the second chapter that a lot of certifications exist but most of them are very specific, either to a sector or to a geographical place. Some are also specific to the environmental issues, others to particular social issues. Besides, in literature, it appears that the BCC is quite unique because it is the only comprehensive certification that checks out social and environmental performance (Chen & Kelly, 2015, p.104; Marquis, Klaber & Bobbi, 2011, pp.1-3). Indeed, whereas some certifying organizations are focusing on some aspects of a company's sustainable actions or CSR practices, B Corp is the only one that certifies companies that focus on social, environmental and financial performance (Chen & Kelly, 2015, p. 104). Hence, it is hard to compare these other certifications to the BCC as the latter has a broader approach. However, research indicates that two organizations can be compared to the BCC: The Global Reporting Initiative and the International Organization for Standardization. The purpose of this section is thus to understand both organizations and compare them with the BCC.

A study mentions that both the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) have as purpose to provide companies with CSR guidelines; however, they are not as comprehensive as the BCC (Harjoto, Laksmana, & Yan, 2018, p. 6). ISO has been mentioned in the second chapter; it is a non-governmental organization whose main goal is to set and develop norms on international trade to ensure that products and services are safe, reliable and of good quality. It also emphasizes sustainability and CSR standards (International Organization for Standardization, n.da). On the other hand, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is an independent international organization that focuses on sustainability through the Triple Bottom Line (TBL): People, Planet, Profit. It *"helps businesses and governments worldwide understand and communicate their impact on critical sustainability issues such as climate change, human rights, governance and social well-being*" (Global Reporting Initiative, 2019). It creates standards to help companies improve on these fields,

become more sustainable and it guides them to create social, environmental and economic benefit. Hereunder are their 4 focus areas (Global Reporting Initiative, 2019):

1. **"***Create standards and guidance to advance sustainable development*
2. *Harmonize the sustainability landscape*
3. *Lead efficient and effective sustainability reporting*
4. *Drive effective use of sustainability information to improve performance"*

However, unlike the CBC, these two organizations do not provide any tool to measure the company's social and environmental performance, nor any assurance of the information's accuracy given by corporations. Besides, they do not provide any certification in the field of social responsibility. Even though it has been explained in the second chapter that ISO offers the ISO 14001 certification for companies tackling their environmental impacts, there is no existing certification for companies taking their social responsibility into account. Regarding the GRI, their aim is limited to providing guidance and setting standards, but do not certify companies (Global Reporting Initiative, 2019).

Compared to other organizations, it can be said that the BCC is comprehensive and more credible, since the accuracy of the information is verified by the non-profit organization. Also, it is important to mention that the B Corp certification is a useful tool since it allows for an easy comparison between companies' data as all of them must meet the same specific B Lab standards. Lastly, the BCC also goes further because it not only focuses on the positive impacts; it also helps a company identify and address the negative externalities and helps them improve towards being a more socially and environmentally responsible company (Harjoto, Laksmana, & Yan, 2018, p. 6).Lastly, B Corp is also viewed as better since it does not only focus on reporting and transpanrecy, but actually helps a company assess its performance and improve it every day (Villela, Bulgacov, & Morgan, 2019, pp. 9-10).

All in all, the GRI and ISO are both useful tools for any company although they only provide guidance and do not take the extra step of certifying companies. Because no other certification could be really compared to the B Corporation Certification and because ISO and GRI are not as comprehensive as the BCC, it can be assumed that B Corp is to date, the most useful and broadest certification both in sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

Section 4: Preliminary critics

Although many people acknowledge that the B Corp movement is a real improvement and is necessary, others are quite reluctant or critical of it. The main object of this section is to review the various critics made about the B Corporation certification.

First, Anand Giridharadas, author of the book *"Winner takes all: The elite charade of changing the world*" is quite skeptical about the B Corp movement. According to him, the BCC is promising but it does not go far enough and is trapped in the belief that market-driven solutions alone can solve our current issues. However, in his opinion, government-driven solutions are paramount as well and should not be left aside (Coen Gilbert, 2018).

Along with this view, Joseph Stiglitz, winner of the Nobel Prize of Economy states: *"like the dieter who would rather do anything to lose weight than actually eat less, this business elite would save the world through social-impact investing, entrepreneurship, sustainable capitalism, philanthro-capitalism, artificial intelligence, market-driven solutions. They would fund a million of these buzzwordy programs rather than fundamentally question the rules of the game— or even alter their own behavior to reduce the harm of the existing distorted, inefficient and unfair rules"* (Coen Gilbert, 2018). All in all, both Giridharadas and Stiglitz believe B Corps are just another form of businesses pretending to change the world while evidence on such changes is scarce. Additionally, Giridharadas argues that most of the B Corporations truly believe they are tackling the big issues of our current system while, in reality, they might be protecting the system that is the root cause of our problems (Coen Gilbert, 2018).

Second, there are also concerns about the reach of the BCC. Indeed, according to Marc Gunther, editor at *Guardian Sustainable Business,* the interest in the B Corp movement is growing, but it does not mean that there is the same growth in the number of Certified B Corporations. Besides, there are so many companies, that even if the amount of CBC was enormous, it would still account for a small proportion of the total number of companies worldwide. Hence, the impact of the movement would still be little (Honeyman, 2014a).

Some critics also state that companies can be socio- and/or environmentally responsible without necessarily being Certified B Corporations. An example of this is Whole Foods, an American health food grocery store, that at the same time is profitable for its investors and takes actions to be socially and environmentally conscious. By giving part of its profit to charities and by

having all their stakeholders committed through its “Declaration of Interdependence”, Whole Foods is a conscious and respectful business although not a Certified B Corporation. Whole Foods is not the only company that operates like this. Indeed, some other large corporations like Wal-Mart, Starbucks, Google, or General Electric are also companies that are taking concrete actions without finding the need to get certified. Hence, according to the authors, the question of the necessity of the BCC arises (Klemm Verbos & Black, 2017, p. 236).

In addition, the same authors criticize the tendency to perceive CBC as “good” companies merely because they have the certification and non-B Corps as “bad” because they do not have it (Klemm Verbos & Black, 2017, pp. 245-248). Indeed, this point of view is too narrow and does not always reflect reality.

Lastly, there are also some critics directed to the B Corp certification. First, the B Corporation Certification is quite different from the other certifications in the sense that certified companies do not have to meet any specific goals or any requirements. B Corp aims to investigate how a company is doing, and if it is “green” and “good” enough according to the standards, it can get the certification. However, there is a lack of transparency in the standards and it is thus unclear how these can actually lead to improvement or to assess if B Corporations really make a significant change compared to non-B Corporations (Cain, 2019).

Also, it is difficult to understand to what extent companies are reducing their negative impact since they are not required to publish data related to the efforts done or to their BIA. Due to this absence of obligation, companies obviously do not publish their data. Besides, the few reports publicly available differ every year in terms of format and content. Hence, it is rather difficult to make relevant comparisons (Klemm Verbos & Black, 2017, pp. 245-248).

In a nutshell, even though scholars acknowledge positive points about B Corp, there are also critics against the certification that should not be underestimated. Mainly, it is important to understand that being a B Corp might not be the answer to all the issues society is currently facing and that it is not the only way to be socially and environmentally responsible.

Conclusion of the literature review

The purpose of this theoretical part was to focus on the B Corporation, a certification granted to socially and environmentally responsible companies. To do so, the challenges and drivers leading such certifications have been analyzed. Mainly it has been understood that environmental troubles, innovation and technology, the rapidly changing environment and the social challenges have given reasons for such initiatives to emerge.

Afterwards, the two concepts at the heart of this thesis and related to B Corp have been highlighted: Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability. From this second chapter, it is important to remember that the two concepts have arisen individually and eventually merged. Currently, when it is talked about CSR, it includes both societal and environmental responsibility.

To continue, after more in depth descriptions of certifications, the greatest emphasis of the literature review was put on B Lab and the B Corporation Certification. This important part shed light on the emergence of B Lab, the American nonprofit organization behind B Corp founded in 2006, on the B Economy, the economy of the movement, on hybrid organizations, companies having both for and nonprofit practices, and obviously, on the Certified B Corporation, the certification granted to companies meeting *"the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose"* (B Lab, 2019b).

In these analyses, the drivers and pitfalls of being certified as well as the benefits and critics of being a certified B Corp have been analyzed and are important to mention. Therefore, tables summarizing the main ideas are to be found hereunder:

Drivers of being certified	• Enhanced reputation • Enhanced credibility • Positive impact on stakeholders (e.g. investors, customers) • Differentiating tool • Competitive advantage
Pitfalls of being certified	• Hard process • Cost • Investment reactive rather than proactive (external pressure rather than internal desire) • Risk of greenwashing

Table 1: Summary of the drivers and pitfalls of being certified

Why becoming a B Corp?	• Join a Community and Network • Competitive advantage • Differentiating tool • International reputation • Communicate the identity, values, and ethics to stakeholders • Positive impact on stakeholders (due to greater awareness) • B Corp aligns with values • Attract talent and investors
Preliminary Critics	• B Corp does not go far enough. Market-driven solutions is not enough. Need for government-driven solutions • Another form of businesses pretending changing the world. • Concerns about the reach of the BCC. • A company can be responsible without being B Corp • Lack of transparency in the standards setting → unclear how it can lead to improvement • No obligation for companies to publish data

Table 2: Summary of the reasons to become a B Corp and of the preliminary critics of the certification.

All in all, a complete and deep analysis of this relatively new certification and the system around it has been completed. While this theoretical part has put a clear frame to this study, when looking at it with a critical eye, some questions are left unanswered; they will be tackled in the second part of this thesis. Namely, these are: “Are the barriers to getting certified so high that it would prevent companies from going through the process?”; “Does the model go far enough?”; “Does it convince companies to get through the process and pay for it?”; “Are the theoretical benefits of being a CBC materialized in practice?”; “Are there some hidden benefits or drawbacks?”; “Does the B Corporation community really support a better system?”; and lastly, “do the barriers to getting certified outweigh the benefit of being a Certified B Corporation?”.

By taking real-life, concrete examples and by approaching companies having the certification and some that do not have it, the main aim is to try to answer these questions.

Part II: Empirical Research

Introduction

Although the literature review has been particularly useful to create a concrete context and understand the various concepts related to the B Corporation Certification, it also rose several questions as well. Hence, in order to try drawing conclusions and finding an answer to the main research question of this paper: "do the barriers to getting certified outweigh the benefits of being a Certified B Corporation?", the empirical research will take a practical approach where companies' position related to the B Corp certification will be analyzed.

More concretely, first, the methodology of the empirical research will be detailed. Indeed, it is important to understand how the work was done, how the data was collected and analyzed. This first chapter also includes a presentation of the companies we approached and the people we interviewed.

Second, the findings of the interviews ran with the B Corps and non-certified companies will be discussed. The analyzed data will be divided into different categories: the drivers leading companies to get certified, the positive and negative aspects of the certification, companies' experiences with the certification procedure and the barriers and risks of the B Corp certification. Besides, the existence of greenwashing practices within the B Corp community will also be discussed.

Third, after having exposed the results of the interviews, some general analysis will be done. Mainly, the opinions of B Corps and non-B Corps will be studied, a comparison between the theoretical assumptions and the practical revelations will be executed, and the barriers and risks of the certification will be evaluated. Also, through the analysis, the paradoxes that have arisen will be considered.

Lastly, this final chapter will also include general recommendations.

Chapter 1: Methodology

As mentioned above, the main goal of this practical part is to provide an answer to the main research question of this paper: “Do the barriers to getting certified outweigh the benefits of being a Certified B Corporation?”. However, beyond this question, the theoretical part rose other questions that should also be answered. These are: “Are the barriers to getting certified so high that they could prevent companies from going through the process?”, “Does the model go far enough?, “Does it convince companies to go through the process and pay for it?”, “Are the theoretical benefits of being a CBC materialized in practice? Are there some hidden benefits or drawbacks?”, “Does the B Corporation community really supports a better system?”.

To do so, an exploratory research will be run. As a matter of fact, since there has not been any research done in this specific field yet, this method will allow to investigate and have a better understanding of the topic. Afterwards, as the goal of this thesis is to have a thorough comprehension of the situation and the questions that emerged, it has been decided to conduct a qualitative research. Indeed, to find the most accurate answers possible, it is necessary to dig deep into companies’ experiences. A qualitative research will make it possible to approach fewer companies, although in a more complete and in-depth way, which is highly needed in this case.

To conduct this qualitative research, interviews have been run with people working both in B Corps and non-B Corp organizations taking responsible and sustainable initiatives. To do so, interview guides have been established in order to prepare the interviews (cfr. Appendices 9 and 16). B Corp companies are useful as they already have an experience with the certification and its process. However, non-B Corp companies taking CSR initiatives are also interesting because they will provide an understanding of the reasons why they would or, on the contrary, would not start the process.

With regards to the choice of companies, it is important to mention that all of them have been approached on a “random” basis. For this research, the only criterium was that the companies would either hold a B Corp certification, or they would not but would take initiatives in CSR and sustainability. Many organizations have been contacted, and members of eleven of them answered positively to the invitation. Among them, six work in a European B Corp, and five are employed in a European non-B Corp company. The interviews have all been conducted in a semi-structured way. This type of interview allows to follow a red line while enabling a

comprehensive discussion with mostly open-ended questions. Besides, it makes it possible to gather the most qualitative, in-dept data.
To sort and process the information gathered, several Excel tables were created. By categorizing the various arguments by company, it was possible to uncover which were the arguments that came out the most, and which, therefore, were the most relevant. This method was the most straightforward and provided a clear and easy understanding of the data collected.

All in all, following this methodology enabled a clear analysis of the data which, in turn, enabled drawing conclusions and finding answers to the research question of this thesis.

Section 1: Presentation of companies surveyed

This first section targets at briefly presenting the different companies that have been approached in this research.

1.1 B Corp Companies

1.1.1 Kazidomi

Emna Everard is a young Belgian social entrepreneur who has always been interested in nutrition and healthy living. Thanks to her education, she had the chance to understand how important it is to eat good and qualitative products for your health. However, she also understood that it is not easy to find healthy products and especially, that not everyone can afford these commodities. Therefore, in 2016, she decided to launch an eCommerce for healthy products at affordable prices. Together with Alain Etienne, her associate who quickly joined the project, she worked hard to make the project a reality: facilitating customers purchases by providing only high-quality products and democratizing the access to these products that are often less affordable than regular food (Kazidomi, 2016b). In the frame of this study, Mr. Etienne positively answered the interview invitation.

Kazidomi uses an innovative system: customers can subscribe to a membership (100€ a year, currently discounted at 80€ a year) and have access to a wide range of products discounted at 20 to 50% of the regular prices. Their product range is quite large as the mission-based platform offers more than 2.000 products ranging from food products to cosmetics, baby and beauty products, food supplements and cleaning products. Their strategy is rather simple: they make profits on the membership rather than on the product itself and this enables them to offer

products at an affordable price for everyone. In average, customers save roughly 30€ per order which pays for their subscription after 3 orders (Kazidomi, 2016b).

Also, being a socially conscious company, Kazidomi decided to join the B Corp community and was awarded the certification in July 2019 with a score of 87.6 (B Lab, 2020b; Kazidomi, 2019).

1.1.2 StreetwiZe

MobileSchool is a Belgian nonprofit organization that has as main goal to help street children in Paraguay. By working closely with local organizations, they give them educational material, provide trainings to children to work on their self-esteem and make them stronger and capable of taking their life in hand. In 2008, MobileSchool decided not to rely on external funding anymore, but to get their own money, and this is how StreetwiZe started. Funded by Arnoud Raskin, StreetwiZe provides trainings in companies to teach people skills that are needed to survive on the street, but that are also really useful in a business environment. Namely, these are proactivity, positivity, agility, resilience and creativity (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020, cfr. Appendix n°12).

The founder of StreetwiZe, Arnoud Raskin is a member of Ashoka, a global network for social entrepreneurs. Through this network, he came to know the B Corp community and decided to be part of it, because the DNA of B Corp matches closely with that of StreetwiZe. With a score of 122.1, they did not have any difficulty to join the B Corp family in 2016 (B Lab, 2020d). For this company, the Financial and Social Impact Manager, Wim Depickere, was interviewed.

1.1.3 Revive

Nicolas Bearelle always dreamed of drawing dream homes, but he wanted, at the same time, do business and create a better and beautiful future. He met Piet Colruyt who was immediately impressed with the project and its long-term view. Indeed, according to him *"in contrast to the quick-buck philosophy of most property developers, Revive attaches equal importance to social and ecological profitably as it does to financial profitability",* and this is what appeals to him the most (Revive, n.db). Hence, eleven years ago, they found Revive, a Belgian company that wants to *"create sustainable and livable communities in the city, on former brownfields (mostly*

polluted, former industrial, abandoned sites)" (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020, cfr. Appendix n°11).

Rather than being a solely profit-driven company, the Triple Bottom Line is at the heart of the company. Balancing social, ecological, and economic values, Revive aims at creating high-quality, sustainable and affordable residential areas with the lowest possible ecological footprint (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020; Revive, n.d).

CEO and founder of Revive Nicolas Baerelle met one the of founders of B Corp in 2011. As this certification totally aligns with the values of Revive, he loved the idea of a global network of responsible companies and wanted to be part of it. Hence, they decided to follow the process and became B Corp certified in 2012. Today, their score reaches 94.2 points. In this research, Mrs. Susanne Koolhof, Social Impact Developer, has agreed to answer some questions.

1.1.4 Parafina Co.

Two Spanish friends, Alfonso de Luján and Samuel Soria, befriended children in a village in Paraguay and discovered that the access to education was really hard. Together, they decided to build a project in order to help these children and ease the access to education for disadvantaged young people (Parafina & Co., 2020a). This is why in 2014, they founded Parafina Co., an eyewear company that uses recycled materials to produce their glasses. Using recycled PET plastic, rubber tires, cork stoppers, HDPE plastic, soda cans or organic bamboo, they produce eco-friendly, functional and fashionable optical and solar eyewear at attractive prices (E. Novillo Rentero – Parafina, personal communication, March 24th, 2020; Parafina & Co., 2020). In addition to environmental responsibility, they also want to have a social impact and created the Parafina Social Project to which they donate 5% of the turnover. Thanks to these donations, students in Paraguay are given access to primary school, psychological assistance, a hot meal every day, a safe environment, medical assistance, and extracurricular activities (E. Novillo Rentero – Parafina, personal communication, March 24th, 2020, cfr. Appendix 13; Parafina & Co., 2020).

Mrs. Eli Novillo Rentero, responsible of Marketing, has kindly accepted to answer questions about B Corp. Indeed, being socially and environmentally conscious, B Corp is a certification naturally appealing for them. Certified in 2019 with 85.9 points, Parafina Co. was the first eyewear brand in Spain to be certified (B Lab, 2020c).

1.1.5 Too Good To Go

Launched in 2016 in Denmark by Mette Lykke, this for-profit company was born out of the observation that food waste was a real issue that needed to be tackled (Southey, 2019). She decided to launch an application that would enable supermarkets, restaurants, and all food retailers to sell their unsold products to consumers at a reduced price. Indeed, instead of throwing away food at the end of the day, this platform provides a marketplace where consumers can buy "surprise baskets", with the daily unsold products, at a reduced price (in average, 4€ instead of 12€) (S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication, March 31st, 2020, cfr. Appendix 14). Rapidly, the application seduced many food-sellers and consumers. Currently, Too Good To Go exist in 14 countries and plans to expand in the USA within the year (S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication, March 31st, 2020).

Stéphanie Moy, responsible for press relationships, took the time to answer many questions. She believes that for Too Good To Go, it was a logical step to become a B Corporation, and indeed, the whole company became certified in January 2020 with a score of 81.6 (B Lab, 2020f).

1.1.6 The Skateroom

Charles-Antoine Bodson, Belgian CEO of The Skateroom, has always loved art and even owned an art gallery. However, through travels and meetings, he realized that some communities are really disadvantaged, and he wanted to do something about it. As a social entrepreneur with a passion for art, he wanted to combine support for social projects and art, while doing business. Hence, he decided to build a new business model: "*art for social impact*" (The Skateroom, 2020).

The idea was simple: to transform skateboards into real pieces of art and support social projects by selling them. Hence, 5% of the turnover, or 25% of the profit, are being given to support social projects in disfavored environments. Since its creation in 2014, it has raised already $6,450,000 that have been donated to social projects around the world (The Skateroom, 2020). Fitting in the movement, they became certified in July 2019 with a score of 97,4 (B Lab, 2020e). In the frame of this study, Clara Bardiau, Social Impact Manager, responsible for the B Corp certification, agreed to answer questions.

1.2 Non-B Corp Companies

1.2.1 Telos Impact

Telos Impact, founded by Marc Flammang in 2015, is a Belgian company advising entrepreneurs, foundations and families that want to both invest and make an impact (Telos Impact, n.d). According to Mrs. Faris, Venture Philanthropist Associate at Telos Impact, B Corp is a great certification that would totally align the company's values as Telos's *"core business is an ecological and social initiative"* (E. Faris – Telos Impact, email, April 2nd, 2020, cfr. Appendix 21). Indeed, they *"advise foundations and investment funds about their donations with an ecological or social impact. The goal is to maximize their impact on society"* (E. Faris – Telos Impact, email, April 2nd, 2020). They also occasionally take part in volunteering projects and apply as many ecological practices as possible within the firm. Through events, Telos Impact came to know the BCC and began to think about getting it in October 2019. In March 2020, seduced by the movement, they officially began the procedure and are hoping to become a Certified B Corp in June 2020 (E. Faris – Telos Impact, email, April 2nd, 2020).

1.2.2 Sea2See

François van den Abeele, a socially responsible Belgian entrepreneur, has always been involved in projects with social or environmental finalities. Realizing that approximately 50% of the population wear glasses and that the vast majority of these glasses are made of plastic, he thought there was something to do about it. Discovering that fishing activities were terribly contaminating, and that, in this area, nothing or very little is done in terms of recycling, he decided to tackle that issue (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020, cfr. Appendix 18). Henceforth, Sea2See was launched in 2016. Sea2See is a Spanish company selling sun- and optical glasses made of marine plastic waste. The company is responsible of organizing a collection of the waste in 27 different ports around 4 countries (Spain, France, Ghana and Senegal). They collect the plastic waste; they sort it and from this, they create a new raw material that is used to produce the glasses (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

Through his organization, not only do they recycle and create a new raw material, but they also raise awareness among their customers. Furthermore, in addition to their environmental impact, they also have a social dimension: they create jobs in Africa and bring a new source of revenue. Indeed, people in Africa are paid to collect the marine plastic waste, at twice the average wage in Africa (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

Concerning B Corp, Mr. van den Abeele, who answered to the questions for this study, believes he needs the certification as his company totally fits into the movement and does something quite unique. He already began the process of becoming a B Corp, but due to both the modification of B Corp's methodology in January 2019 and time constraints, he has quit the process. However, he still hopes to get the certification soon (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

1.2.3 Coca-Cola

The Coca-Cola Company, one of the largest beverage company selling their products in more than 200 countries and having more than 500 brands, has a long history beginning in the late 19th century in the United States (Coca-Cola Company, 2020). They have long been criticized for not being sustainable or responsible. However, minds are changing, and companies' practices are evolving. Increasingly, they have been working on their sustainability strategy and CSR has becoming one of the most important topics in the company.

According to Mr. Saels, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability Senior Manager, who kindly answered positively to the interview invitation, Coca-Cola has very strict policies and intends to become a leader in sustainability. Already having many certifications and recognitions (namely the Carbon Disclosure Project and the Dow Jones Responsibility Index), their next target could be to obtain the B Corp certification. As a matter of fact, according to Mr. Saels, they are currently looking at the B Corp's requirement and procedure (K. Saels – Coca-Cola, personal communication, March 23rd, 2020, cfr. Appendix 20).

1.2.4 Exki

Founded by 3 Belgian friends passionate about good food, Arnaud de Meeûs, Nicolas Steisel and Frederic Rouvez, opened the first EXKi restaurant in 2001, in Brussels. Conscious that finding quick, good, and healthy food is rather complicated in our society, they decided to innovate and opened the very first "fast-good" restaurant. The principle is quite simple: to offer customers qualitative, healthy, and seasonal products quickly (Exki, 2020).

This eco- and socio-responsible company has grown much with the years. Currently, there are 100 restaurants across 6 countries in Europe (Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany and Italy) (Exki, 2020). Additionally, since its beginning, the company has always been responsible and has taken a lot of measures in that regard. It truly tries to have a sustainable

approach and tackle both social and environmental issues. Hence, it was interesting to interview Camille Navarro, Corporate Social Responsibility Coordinator, to have her views on B Corp.

1.2.5 Responsible 100

Responsible 100 is a tool enabling businesses to measure and improve their performance in terms of responsibility. The creator of this tool wants to help any companies (any size, any sector) identify the key issues that should be tackled and guide them toward being more responsible. He helps understand how an organization perform and how to improve. Besides, they also want that a company's responsibility drives commercial success and financial results. Lastly, they also would like to develop a community of companies that would partner with Responsible 100 (Responsible 100, 2020a).

Michael Solomon is behind this initiative. After 2 years of inactivity, he worked very hard on the project and just relaunched it. Hence, the community is still rather small, but he has high hopes that it all gets back together in the coming weeks and months (M. Solomon – Responsible 100, email, March 8th, 2020, cfr. Appendix 17). Obviously, since Responsible 100 is another kind of recognition, he has no intention to become a B Corp. However, Michael Solomon, who accepted to help with this study by running an interview, has an interesting view on the topic and knows it very well. Hence, his participation in this research was appropriate and value-adding.

Company	Year of formation	Turnover (in €)	Gross Operation Margin (in €, in 2018)	FTE	Date of certificate obtention	Current BIA Score	Person Interviewed	Function
Kazidomi	2016	N/A	25.063	8,3	July 2019	87,6	Alain Etienne	Associate
StreetwiZe	2007	N/A	477.492	3,8	July 2016	122.2	Wim Depickere	Financial & Social Impact Manager
Revive	2009	N/A	2.557.113	21,8	December 2012	94.2	Susanne Koolhof	Social Impact Developer
Parafina Co.	2014	N/A	No info.	No info.	December 2019	85.9	Eli Novillo Rentero	Head of Marketing
TooGoodToGo	2016	N/A	-489.490,74 *	14	December 2019	81.6	Social Impact Manager	Press Relationships
The Skateroom	2006	N/A	929.122	7,6	July 2019	97.4	Clara Bardiau	Social Impact Manager
Telos Impact	2015	N/A	373.170	5,1	N/A	N/A	Heloïse Faris	Venture Philanthropist Associate
Sea2See	2016	N/A	No info.	No info.	N/A	N/A	François van den Abeele	Founder and CEO
Coca-Cola	1983	1.272.712.006	N/A	2099,6	N/A	N/A	Koen Saels	Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability Senior Manager
EXKi	2000	43.369.196	N/A	402	N/A	N/A	Camille Navarro	Corporate Social Responsibility Coordinator
Responsible 100	2012	No info.	No info.	4	N/A	N/A	Michael Solomon	Founder

Table 3: Summary: Company presentation.

Chapter 2: Findings and Discussion

Following the introduction of the companies approached and the people interviewed, it is interesting to disclose their opinion on B Corp and their experience with the certification. Hence, the purpose of this chapter is to report, in a synthetical way, the findings of the interviews. First, the results of the conversation with people working in B Corp companies will be shared. Second, the focus will be placed on the findings of the interviews with the non-B Corp companies.

Section 1: B Corp Companies

1.1 Drivers of becoming a Certified B Corporation

First, it is important to mention that all companies approached really have sustainability and responsibility in their DNA. Kazidomi, StreetwiZe, Revive, Parafina Co., Too Good To Go and The Skateroom are all companies that, in their essence, are doing business differently and that truly want to create a positive impact on society and the environment. Hence, for all of them, becoming a B Corp did not come from external pressure from stakeholders – e.g. consumers asking more sustainable and responsible products.

Indeed, Mr. Etienne says he was convinced by B Corp (A. Etienne – Kazidomi, email, March 17th, 2020, cfr. Appendix 10). Mr. Depickere states that the company was already a B Corp before officially becoming one, due to the fact that all their profits are given to their nonprofit organization, MobileSchool (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020). Mrs. Koolhof mentions that it was truly an internal desire to become a B Corp. As a matter of fact, since the label is not that well-known in Belgium, there is little incentive for becoming B Corp only for external recognition (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020). Furthermore, Mrs. Novillo Rentero states that, apart from using marine plastic waste to produce their eyeglasses, 5% of their profits are directly donated to their social project, Parafina Social Proyect. Hence, they do really care about sustainability internally and are conscious of the social issues in the world (E. Novillo Rentero – Parafina, personal communication, March 24th, 2020). Lastly, both Mrs. Bardiau and Mrs. Moy declare that getting the B Corporation Certification was a logical next step as their company leads a movement that is either socially responsible, either ecologically-oriented (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020, cfr. Appendix 15; S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication, March 27th, 2020).

Second, an important argument that led companies to get certified is the recognition that they would gain by being a B Corp. According to Mr. Depickere, one of the main reasons to become a B Corp was *"as a kind of certification, as a label"*. Besides, he also reveals that, even though it is not that well-known in Belgium, it can give you the possibility to talk about it and raise awareness (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020). Concerning Parafina Co. and the Skateroom, as they do a lot in terms of environmental and social actions, they wanted to be recognized for it (E. Novillo Rentero – Parafina Co., personal communication, March 24th, 2020, C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020). Lastly, Mr. Moy acknowledges: *"it's a real source of pride for us. It shows that we are going beyond economic interest and we really want to try to change the world and try to make it a better place.* [...] *It proves that we go beyond the notion of pure business and that we also have very strong societal and environmental requirements"* (S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication, March 27th, 2020).

Third, and in alignment with the first driver, companies aspired to become certified because B Corp truly shares the same vision and the same goals as theirs. Through the interviews, it is clear that all these companies approached agree with this opinion. However, three of them state it explicitly. As a matter of fact, according to Mr. Depickere, *"the goals that B Corp has – being sustainable, doing business in another way, focus on employees, on short supply chains, it is really close to our DNA* [...] *our mission is to preach this social way of doing business, this other way of doing business. And so, that's why we are a B Corp in first instance."* (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020). Besides, Mrs. Novillo Rentero declares that Parafina Co. wanted a certification that was close to their values, to what they were doing, and that B Corp is the one that reflects it the best (E. Novillo Rentero – Parafina, personal communication, March 24th, 2020). Also, according to Mrs. Moy, it is one of their core values to be transparent, and B Corp, is just an extension of Too Good To Go's values (S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication, March 27th, 2020).

Fourth, as mentioned above, B Corp is not a well-known certification in all parts of the world. Hence, another aspect that led three of the six companies to begin the B Corp process is namely because they came to know people from the organization directly. Convinced by it, they decided to complete the questionnaire and join the B Corp family (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020; S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020; E. Novillo

Rentero – Parafina Co., personal communication, March 24th, 2020). However, it is obvious that this reason is closely linked to other factors as well and should not be taken independently.

Fifth, three of the six companies approached were attracted by the community that B Corp offers. Mrs. Koolhof claims that *"the network of changemakers is very inspiring"*; (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020). On the other hand, Mr. Depickere (personal communication, March 25th, 2020) declares that StreetwiZe wanted to be part of the community and help it grow because, as for now, the network in Belgium is rather small. Indeed, Mr. Etienne (email, March 17th, 2020) acknowledges that Kazidomi was hoping for a great network-effect, but that it is actually rather limited in Belgium.

These five drivers were the most common and the mostly shared. However, three other arguments were mentioned by some of the companies. A fifth driver of becoming certified is, for Kazidomi and Revive, that B Corp can be used as a standard. Indeed, according to Mrs. Koolhof, B Corp is a good *"framework to evaluate yourself and keep the bar high for improvement"* (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020). Also, the same companies believe that it is interesting to be certified B Corp as it has a holistic approach. Indeed, it takes into account both social and environmental concerns and it is available for companies in all kinds of industries. Hence, it is not another additional, specific certification in which the consumer would get lost (A. Etienne – Kazidomi, email, March 17th, 2020; S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020). Lastly, for Kazidomi, attracting talent is another minor but interesting driver (A. Etienne – Kazidomi, email, March 17th, 2020).

All in all, it can be noticed that the reasons for becoming a certified B Corporation are numerous and mostly shared by the majority of the companies interviewed. We see as main drivers to become a B Corp: internal desire, recognition of the certification, the fact that B Corp shares the same goals than the certified corporations, and the attraction for the community. In conclusion, it is interesting to mention that some companies were attracted by the certification but did not know exactly how it would benefit them, as Mrs. Bardiau states: *"I think that when we began the process, we were not aware of all what B Corp would include. For us, it was a recognition"* (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020).

Driver to Become B Corp	Companies agreeing with the reason	Total
Internal Desire	• Kazidomi • StreetwiZe • Revive • Parafina Co. • Too Good To Go • The Skateroom	6
Recognition	• StreetwiZe • Parafina Co. • Too Good To Go • The Skateroom	4
Same Goal/Vision	• StreetwiZe • Parafina Co. • Too Good To Go	3
Met People from B Corp	• StreetwiZe • Revive • Parafina Co.	3
Network/Community	• Kazidomi • StreetwiZe • Revive	3
Standard	• Kazidomi • Revive	2
Cross-Industries certification // Holistic Approach	• Kazidomi • Revive	2
Attract talent	• Kazidomi	1

Table 4: Summary of the main drivers leading companies to become a B Corp.

1.2 B Corporation Certification: a good or bad thing?

1.2.1 Benefits of Being B Corp

First, all companies agree on the fact that being a B Corp company has a positive impact on all stakeholders, even if the impact is usually hard to measure or prove. According to Mr. Etienne, the B Corp certification is a *"quality standard that is clear for the team, customers, potential applicants and investors"* (A. Etienne – Kazidomi, email, March 17th, 2020). For StreetwiZe, the certification may have helped them in some respects (e.g. partnerships, clients), but the business did not really take off since they became certified (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020). Besides, Mrs. Koolhof is convinced that it is an added-value as she believes it "*has attracted talent, decreased the employee turnover, and investors are keener to invest"*, but she acknowledges that demonstrating it is quite complicated (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020). Just like Revive, Parafina Co. truly sees the positive impact of B Corp. Indeed, Mrs. Novillo Rentero states: *"our community really sees that we are who we say we are. It brought us much credibility. There is an enhancement of the*

performance of the company in every respects of the company. It also has a positive impact on investors, they are more attracted to Parafina Co." (E. Novillo Rentero – Parafina, personal communication, March 24th, 2020). In addition, as maintained by Mrs. Moy, B Corp is also a way to value their partners and community: "*it is also a real added-value for them to know that they are committing themselves, thanks to their baskets, to a cause that has been recognized*" (S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication, March 27th, 2020). Lastly, concerning The Skateroom, Mrs. Bardiau states: "*potential partners ask us "are you B Corp yes or not? Because we only want to work with B Corp companies", but in Europe, it is still quite narrow"* (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020). Hence, it is thus clear that being B Corp certified has a positive impact on all stakeholders.

A second widely acknowledged benefit of being a B Corp is that is brings you a great network. Although it appears that the importance of the community effect differs from country to country, the fact of being a B Corp member is always positive. Indeed, of the six companies interviewed, five are really happy and proud of being a member of this family. Only Too Good To Go, that obtained the certification in January, has not yet had the chance to benefit a lot from this network, and, therefore, cannot have a clear positioning on it. In particular, Mrs. Koolhof has heard it called "*the movement of the sparkling eyes*" (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020). According to her*, "everyone in the B Corp movement is passionate in making a change, they do not work to work but to do something different. We inspire each other and after every community event I know I am not alone in making the change. It is a bunch of positive entrepreneurs sharing good practices, commit to the same goals"* (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020). Also, Mrs. Novillo Rentero value this network as it is, as reported by her, an opportunity to know other brands with the same values and to work with them (E. Novillo Rentero – Parafina, personal communication, March 24th, 2020). Lastly, for Mrs. Bardiau, the network has a real added value. Thanks to it, she came to know Dopper and Seepje, two Dutch B Corps, and together, they created a chat group where best practices are shared, advise is given and discussions on how to improve the ways of doing business are ran (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020).

Third, it is interesting to mention that the certification has a great reputation that positively affects companies. Indeed, the BCC is viewed as a "*recognized label*" (S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication March 27th, 2020), "*a standard of quality*" (A. Etienne – Kazidomi,, email, March 17th, 2020), "*robust and trustworthy*" (S. Koolhof – Revive, email,

March 19th, 2020), having "*a lot of good positive reputation*" (E. Novillo Rentero – Parafina, personal communication, March 24th, 2020), and bringing *"credibility and visibility"* (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020). In a nutshell, all companies but StreetwiZe clearly mention it as an important benefit.

A fourth advantage is that B Corp can be used as a tool to provide guidance. Thanks to the B Impact Assessment, many companies realized that some aspects of their business may needed some improvements. Four of the six companies approached stated that, B Corp helps companies spot the areas that need improvement and provide guidance on how to work on them. Indeed, as claimed by Mr. Depickere, B Corp "*gives you a structured way, a backbone to think about your own organization"* (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020). Besides, according to Mrs. Koolhof, "*it provides guidance in a company's strategies. It is nice to be challenged in certain themes that we did not consider in the first place"* (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020). Also, Mrs. Moy states*: "what I find interesting is that we may have things on which we do not meet the criteria well, and we will be asked to adapt certain things, so in the end it can be a good way to regulate its practices. I think that there is always room for improvement and to see things from a different angle and therefore, sometimes, with a critical look from the outside, it can also make us think differently"* (S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication, March 31st, 2020). Lastly, another very interesting vision is the one of The Skateroom that uses the BIA as a real tool for improvement. For them, this is an on-going process: to get the annual collective bonus, the company needs to improve its BIA score by 5% (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020).

A fifth benefit of being a B Corp is that it enables companies to lead by example. As a matter of fact, all the organizations interviewed are truly committed into making the world a better place, and most of them want to use their voice to influence and inspire other enterprises to do the same, or at least make them think about doing business in a more responsible way. These companies truly believe that becoming a B Corp will help them in that direction. According to Mr. Depickere, *"being a B Corp gives us an entry point, a reason to start talking about doing business in a sustainable way. It gives us a reason to start talking about it, and to start trying to explain to people why this is important and why maybe they should be thinking about this, even though they do not know it. Otherwise it's more difficult to start having this discussion"* (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020). Also, Mrs. Bardiau, from the Skateroom (personal communication, March 31st, 2020) says *"we really try to act as*

ambassadors […] *we went to panels to present B Corp, what it brought us, the process, some best practices"*. Lastly, Too Good To Go would like to "*impact as many people as possible into making a change"* (S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication, March 27th, 2020) and Kazidomi is very "*happy to inspire and convince some other companies to get into the process"*(A. Etienne – Kazidomi, email, March 17th, 2020).

Furthermore, according to four of the six companies approached, the BCC also benefits companies as it can be used as a differentiating tool. Indeed, not all companies can meet all the B Corp requirements. Hence, being a B Corp "*gives a little extra, it gives the validation*" (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020) that the company is truly sustainable and responsible because *"some brands say they are sustainable, ecological, but it is a lie"* (E. Novillo Rentero – Parafina, personal communication, March 24th, 2020). However, since B Corp is not well-known in every country, you need to have the opportunity to explain it first (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020). Another interesting vision is the one of Mrs. Bardiau. For her, being B Corp certified can definitely play a role, not only because a company has the B Corp label, but also because it shows that the company reflected on its way of doing business and try to improve its practices (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, 2020). In conclusion, this certification also gives credibility, *"people know that what you are doing is real"* (E. Novillo Rentero – Parafina, personal communication, March 24th, 2020).

A last benefit is, for Kazidomi and Revive, B Corp's holistic approach. Not only was this particularity a driver for them to become certified, but they clearly see it as a positive point for the same reasons mentioned in the previous section (A. Etienne – Kazidomi, email, March 17th, 2020; S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020).

To sum up, all the benefits mentioned above are recognized by the majority of the companies approached. It can thus be clearly said that B Corp has a positive impact on all stakeholders, that it as a great reputation and brings an important network with it. Also, it provides guidance and encourages improvement, enables companies to lead by example, and can be used as a differentiating tool.

Benefits	Companies agreeing with the benefit	Total
Positive impact on Stakeholders	• Kazidomi • StreetwiZe • Revive • Parafina Co. • Too Good To Go • The Skateroom	6
Network	• Kazidomi • StreetwiZe • Revive • Parafina Co. • The Skateroom	5
Good Reputation of the label (pride, credibility, visibility, etc.)	• Kazidomi • Revive • Parafina Co. • Too Good To Go • The Skateroom	5
B Corp provides guidance // encourage improvement	• StreetwiZe • Revive • Too Good To Go • The Skateroom	4
Lead by Example	• Kazidomi • StreetwiZe • Too Good To Go • The Skateroom	4
Differentiating Tool	• StreetwiZe • Revive • Parafina Co. • The Skateroom	4
Holistic Approach	• Kazidomi • Revive	2

Table 5: Summary of the benefits of being a B Corp.

1.2.2 Drawbacks of the certification

It has been analyzed, through the interviews, that all the companies are truly satisfied with the certification. Usually, they researched it before getting into the process and have thus little or no "negative surprises" afterwards. This is why, disadvantages of being a B Corp are usually small or sometimes even "*not really worth mentioning*" (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020). Besides, the "negative points" of B Corp did not have a direct adverse impact on the certified organizations, which makes them even less significant. In addition, in most cases, the disadvantages mentioned were reported by one or two companies, which does not represent the majority of the interviews conducted.

However, the first significantly negative point to mention was acknowledged by most of the enterprises: the ignorance regarding the certification. Indeed, most companies agree on the fact that the vast majority of customers do not know about the certification and hence, using it only as a sales or marketing strategy has little sense (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020). This can be quite a negative aspect for some companies. Indeed, the process of becoming a B Corp is long and demands energy and a financial investment. Having little return afterwards can be rather disappointing for some companies, especially for small ones, that were hoping B Corp to have a great impact on their organizations. Nonetheless, the certification is more widely known in the United States, where the movement began. Besides, in Europe, B Corp seems to have a greater importance in Spain and France than in Belgium. This can be linked to the fact that there are much more certified companies in Spain and France and that the local B Lab organization is more active there than in Belgium.

Linked to this, it is also believed that the impacts of being a B Corp are quite limited. For some, it might help in small areas of their business, but it is nothing huge (A. Etienne – Kazidomi, email, March 17th, 2020; W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020). In addition to this, Mr. Etienne also admits that the networking effect is quite small in Belgium, smaller than what he would have expected (A. Etienne – Kazidomi, email, March 17th, 2020). In line with this, Mrs. Bardiau acknowledges that the B Corp movement is more advanced in the United States than in Europe, and hence, that there is still a lot to do in Europe (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020). On the contrary, Mrs. Novillo Rentero states that in Spain, the movement is rather active and that many events take place around it (E. Novillo Rentero – Parafina, personal communication, March 24th, 2020).

All in all, all companies were generally very positive about the B Corporation Certification. The amount of benefits really exceeds the drawbacks, but most importantly, it seems that the benefits totally outweigh the negative sides of being a B Corp. Indeed, as mentioned above, most of the certified companies said that the negative impacts were of minor importance. Besides, they mostly do not directly impact the company. Hence, it can be concluded that for all the B Corp companies, being certified is truly an added value.

Drawbacks	Companies agreeing with the argument	Total
People do not know the certification	• Kazidomi • StreetwiZe • Revive • Parafina Co.	4
Limited impacts of B Corp	• Kazidomi • StreetwiZe	2
Small Network	• Kazidomi	1

Table 6: Summary of the drawbacks of the B Corp certification.

1.3 The process of becoming a B Corp: a positive or negative experience?

Information about the certification process has been harder to gather. Either companies were relatively shy on disclosing their experience with the process, or the person interviewed was not the one who had completed the process and thus, could not tell, in details, the easiest and hardest steps in the procedure.

Generally, the process is viewed as "*long*", "*meticulous*", "*tedious*". For the vast majority of interviewees, even though the procedure has not always been an easy path, they believe it is necessary in order to ensure that all companies becoming B Corp deserve the certification.

Afterwards, it is also interesting to mention that some companies seem to have had a tougher process than others. Indeed, Mr. Etienne, Mr. Moy and Mrs. Novillo Rentero, respectively working at Kazidomi, Too Good To Go and Parafina Co., remember the process being relatively hard. In the opinion of Mr. Etienne, "*the hardest part is to stay motivated despite the length of the process and the important work that it represents"* (A. Etienne – Kazidomi, email, March 17th, 2020). In addition, Mrs. Moy states: *"there are a lot of requirements and criteria that you need to comply with. Especially when you want to get certified in 14 countries, it is hard to get all the documentation. There are a lot of physical meetings as well"* (S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication, March 27th, 2020). Last, Mrs. Novillo Rentero also acknowledges: *"the hardest part is the one where they do an audit of the product to see if you are really sustainable and if you create a positive impact. They are very meticulous"* (E. Novillo Rentero – Parafina, personal communication, March 24th, 2020).

On the contrary, for StreetwiZe, the for-profit company donating all of its revenues to its non-profit organization MobileSchool, the process seemed to be quite easy: "*we just had to explain how we are working, give them the documents, and that was enough. I do not know how they*

verify all these things. But I just sent them information and they accepted it; they accepted my explanations" (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020). However, he does admit that perhaps, the fact of being a company that donates 100% of their profits to a nonprofit organization might simplify the process. Indeed, he acknowledges: *"I do not know, it may be for us because they see who we are and what we are doing, and they will not be so strict on verifying everything because they know that we give our money to a nonprofit. Or they believe us, they trust us. Maybe if Nike would come, I would hope that they would be stricter and perform more audits to really verify all of these things"* (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020).

Concerning the easiest parts of the process, most say that the beginning the process is quite easy (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020; A. Etienne – Kazidomi, email, March 17th, 2020; E. Novillo Rentero – Parafina Co., personal communication, March 24th, 2020). All companies can do the BIA and have an idea of where they position themselves; it is "just" a form, which is easy to do for all companies.

Regarding the hardest part of the process, it was widely acknowledged that gathering all the information is quite hard. As mentioned above, the process goes into details and requires a lot of documentation. Especially for small firms, where some responsible and/or sustainable practices are already in place, but where there is no formal evidence that would prove it. Revive, Too Good To Go and The Skateroom were both confronted to the same issue during their process. However, Revive has had the certification for quite a long time, and, over the years, the company has grown and the recertification process has become easier because more formal procedures were put in place and the documentation has been easier to get: "*in the beginning when I started with Revive and I had to re-certify, we only had 15 employees. So, most decisions or evaluations were made around the coffee table. 5 years later, we have 38 employees, and now we do have KPI's and management and official evaluation procedures. So, this makes the documentation somewhat easier"* (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020). Conversely, Mr. Depickere has a complete opposite vision on this. For him, being a small company has helped him in the process and being a bigger company could harden the gathering of documentation: "*Of course, it could also be because we're a small organization. I have all the information available.* [...] *Maybe if you're a really big company it could be different"* (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020).

All in all, it can be analyzed that mostly, doing the BIA is relatively easy, but getting all the documentation and the validation part are harder as these parts are long, specific, and detailed. However, all companies agreed on saying that it is logical and coherent that getting such a certification is not straightforward, otherwise it would lose is specificity and credibility.

Easy Parts of the B Corp process	Companies agreeing with it	Total
Beginning of the process	• Kazidomi • Parafina Co. • The Skateroom	3
Companies that did not mention anything	• Revive • Too Good To Go	2
Easy process if information available	• StreetwiZe	1

Table 7: Summary of the easy parts of the B Corp Process.

Hard Parts of the B Corp process	Companies agreeing with it	Total
Long process	• Kazidomi • Too Good To Go • The Skateroom	3
Get all the documentation and prove it	• Revive • Too Good To Go • The Skateroom	3
Stay Motivated	• Kazidomi	1
Audit of the product	• Parafina Co.	1

Table 8: Summary of the hard parts of the B Corp Process.

1.3.1 Length of the process

For a majority of the companies, it took a few months to get the certification, ranging from 2 to 3 months. Mrs. Koolhof and Mrs. Bardiau also state that it is an on-going process and that the BIA should be continuously used in order to improve a company's practices (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020; C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020). Besides, Mrs. Bardiau mentions that it is quicker for already responsible companies. However, for big corporations that need to adapt many practices, it can take up to a year to finally get the certification (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020).

1.4 Greenwashing in the B Corp community: reality or fiction?

Sustainability and responsibility are raising topics and to prove a company's commitment in these fields, many certifications, labels or some sorts of recognition have emerged. Nonetheless,

some companies still practice “greenwashing”. It was thus interesting to understand whether B Corp companies fear the existence of this practice.

According to the interviews, four of the six companies interviewed strongly believe that greenwashing does not exist in B Corp. On the one hand, they are convinced that all B Corp companies truly have fair and responsible business in their DNA and would not use B Corp as a way to have a better image. On the other hand, even if they would use B Corp as way to show a better picture of themselves, they would never pass the BIA and hence, would not be able to get certified. Indeed, Kazidomi, To Good To Go, Parafina Co. and Revive share the opinion that becoming a certified B Corporation is a long, meticulous and “*in-depth process done by an independent, external audit”* (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020) and that after analysis, it is obvious that the certified companies all deserve to be B Corp certified. In addition, when asking if B Lab would lower its standards to let bigger, but less responsible companies enter the community, which would enable greater visibility for the certification, all six companies are convinced that B Corp would not do that and certainly would not have any interest in doing it, otherwise the certification would become *“empty*”.

Conversely, Mrs. Bardiau admits that companies could use B Corp as a way to greenwash, but she believes that B Corp is aware of this and hence, keeps strengthening its questionnaire, to fight it (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020). Besides, Mr. Depickere also believes that greenwashing is possible inside the B Corp community, even if he would not be sure about it. StreetwiZe has had, according to him, a really easy process which was not thoroughly verified. Hence, he admits that if B Corp behaves with big corporations the way they did with StreetwiZe, greenwashing could certainly happen (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020).

A last but very interesting aspect is that currently, the vast majority of B Corps are small or middle-sized companies and B Corp is a great differentiating tool enabling SMEs to prove themselves more genuine and more authentic than MNCs. However, there are also some key actors becoming B Corp. On that aspect, interviewees were asked if the fact that multinationals becoming B Corp would tarnish the image of B Corp, because stakeholders (namely customers) could think about greenwashing. Mrs. Bardiau has an interesting view on that, acknowledging that even if she might have thought that way in the beginning, she has changed her mind and she encourages everybody to do the same. According to her, it is great that big corporations are

becoming B Corp because it truly means that they thought about their way of doing business, and that they want to move towards a more responsible and fairer approach, which should be encouraged (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020). Aligned with this, Mr. Depickere states *"then we would lose our distinction, and the thing that makes us special would then become less special, of course, but on the other hand, that would mean that as a society, that we are really taking steps forward!* [...] *It would be nice that some more known brands or names become a B Corp and really help us push in this direction as long as they are really doing it and not just having the label"* (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020).

To sum up, most of the companies believe that there are no greenwashing practices in the B Corp community. Besides, even though it is believed that B Lab keeps its certification procedure strict, seeing big corporations and key actors becoming certified should be perceived as a great evidence that minds are changing and evolving, and that the society at large is moving forward.

Existence of Greenwashing	**Companies' opinion**	**Total**
No	• Kazidomi • Revive • Parafina Co. • Too Good To Go	4
It could be	• StreetwiZe • The Skateroom	2

Table 9: Summary of the opinions about the existence of greenwashing in the B Corp Community.

1.5 Overall barriers and risks of the certifications

Generally, all companies were very satisfied by the certification and the B Corp community, even if some negative points were mentioned here and there. Seeing such a great enthusiasm around this certification, it has been questioned why every responsible company is not a B Corp. Indeed, some limitations or risks may explain this.

Concerning the barriers to the certification, the main argument was that it is not a well-known certification. Indeed, Mr. Depickere says that the certification is not common, and companies would not enter the process because they do not understand all the benefits they earn. Besides, B Corp is a cross-industry certification, which is a good point for Kazidomi and Revive, but according to Mr. Depickere, specific industries have their own, more important, certifications,

and B Corp might not be the must-have recognition for some businesses (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020).

Besides, all companies agreed that it was a long process, taking time, and companies need to have time to dedicate to it. Hence, for startups and small companies, it is not always easy to put the certification process as a priority. Usually, they have many projects at the same time, with not many people working for them, and adding a certification process is not always a top priority. Indeed, interviewees from Revive, Too Good To Go and The Skateroom insist on saying that it is important to have one person working almost full-time on the process and that is responsible for it (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020; S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020; S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication, March 27th, 2020). However, this is not always feasible, and choices need to be made. Besides, B Corp involves a financial consideration that must be taken into account.

Concerning the risks, the major one is that B Corp would lower its standards to get more visibility. Although the vast majority of the companies believe it will not happen, they all mention that B Corp should really keep its requirements strict; otherwise, it would lose its credibility and essence. Linked to this, some also mention that the fact that an increasing number of companies becoming B Corp is great, but there is a risk that it will lose its value if it becomes mainstream. Hence, according to the majority of the companies, it is paramount that the certification keeps its strictness (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020; A. Etienne – Kazidomi, email, March 17th, 2020; S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication, March 27th, 2020).

Lastly, another risk that is mentioned by both StreetwiZe and The Skateroom, is that the label greatly relies on trust. Indeed, "*it is part of the game to be fair-play"*, but it remains a risk (C. Bardiau, The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020).

Barriers	**Companies agreeing with the argument**	**Total**
Not well-known certification	• Kazidomi • StreetwiZe • Revive • The Skateroom	4
Tedious/meticulous	• Kazidomi • Parafina Co. • Too Good To Go	3

Need of one person dedicated to it (due to time needed to complete the process)	• Revive • Too Good To Go • The Skateroom	3
Ignorance of how the business is going to be impacted	• Too Good To Go	1
Holistic approach vs. Industry specific labels	• StreetwiZe	1
Cost	• Too Good To Go	1

Table 10: Summary of the main barriers preventing companies starting the B Corp process.

Risk	Companies agreeing with the argument	Total
Preservation of the exclusivity // preservation of the strictness of the rules	• Kazidomi • StreetwiZe • Too Good To Go	3
Relies on trust	• StreetwiZe • The Skateroom	

Table 11: Summary of the main risks concerning the evolution of the B Corp certification.

Section 2: Non-B Corp companies

2.1 The B Corporation Certification: a seducing tool?

The first interesting analysis is that the majority of the companies approached were already very familiar with the certification. As a matter of fact, Telos Impact has started the certification process in March and hopes to have the certification in June (E. Faris – Telos Impact, email, April 2nd, 2020). Also, Mr. van den Abeele had completed the first BIA but due to time and priority constraints, did not pushed the process any further. However, with the current COVID-19 crisis and his business consequently slowed down, getting the B Corp certification is one of his top-priorities (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020). In addition, Mrs. Saels admitted that Coca-Cola was interested into becoming B Corp and was conducting research about it, but could not tell more, as it is confidential information (K. Saels – Coca-Cola, personal communication, March 23rd, 2020). This means that three-fifths of the companies interviewed do have a great interest in the certification. Concerning the other companies, Mrs. Navarro said she knew of the B Corp certification, but that EXKi is not thinking about getting it yet, as the company is currently focusing on another recognition: "Great Place to Work" (C. Navarro – EXKi, email, March 21st, 2020, Appendix 19). The fifth and last organization interviewed is rather special, as it delivers its own kind of recognition, and, even if they know and respect B Corp, they will, with reason, not become B Corp. This first finding already gives a direction to the study: the certification is known among responsible companies and it also convinces them. That being said, it is interesting to understand the reasons why they would be interested in getting the BCC.

Unanimously, the four companies (Telos Impact, Sea2See, EXKi and Coca-Cola) believe that since they are taking steps to be more responsible, it would be a logical next step to get certified. Especially, according to Mrs. Faris: "*B Corp has become a benchmark certification; not having it when we can afford it would be a shame*" (E. Faris – Telos Impact, email, April 2nd, 2020). Also, Mr. van den Abeele, states "*Well, I have to (have the BCC) in the sense that what we make is quite unique"* (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

Second, it is also widely acknowledged that B Corp provides a worldwide recognition that can benefit the company. Three of the five organizations approached do mention that as an advantage. Mrs. Navarro states that having the BCC is better than getting another label because it has this worldwide recognition and that, consequently, a company's reputation is enhanced (C. Navarro – EXKi, email, March 21st, 2020). Besides, according to Mrs. Faris, the recognition of the certification lies in the fact that, in order to become a B Corp, a company is guaranteed to be subjected to objective analysis, which makes the certification even more reliable (E. Faris – Telos Impact, email, April 2nd, 2020). Furthermore, it is also seen as a "*standard of quality"* that proves the responsibility of a company (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

A third argument that would explain the appeal for B Corp is the network it offers. Indeed, Sea2See, Telos Impact and Responsible 100 see that as a great advantage and more specifically, Mr. van den Abeele sees this community as a great way to collaborate with other brands (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

Fourth, according to Telos Impact, Seea2See, and Coca-Cola, B Corp is very appealing as it is viewed as the certification that "*stands out*, that is "*on the picture*" (K. Saels – Coca-Cola, personal communication, March 23rd, 2020; F. van den Abeele, Sea2See, personal communication, March 17th, 2020). Besides, Mrs. Faris even states that B Corp has become a benchmark certification (E. Faris – Telos Impact, email, April 2nd, 2020).

Those were the most widely acknowledged benefits. However, Telos Impact also recognizes to be seduced by the B Corp certification due to its holistic approach (E. Faris – Telos Impact, email, April 2nd, 2020). Also, the same company and Responsible 100 see B Corp's requirement as a way for companies to move forward, to go further in the initiatives already taken. B Corp

can thus, according to these companies, be a real tool for improvement (E. Faris – Telos Impact, email, April 2nd, 2020; M. Solomon – Responsible 100, email, March 8th, 2020). Furthermore, Mr. Solomon and Mr. van den Abeele believe that having the B Corp Certification can make a difference for customers, that it can be used as a differentiating tool (M. Solomon – Responsible 100, email, March 8th, 2020; F. van den Abeele – Sea2See, personal communication, March 17th, 2020). Lastly, Mr. Saels also says that Coca-Cola wants to use this certification as a mean to lead by example. Indeed, through it, they want to show the world that they are taking concrete actions and want to position themselves as leaders in sustainability (K. Saels – Coca-Cola, personal communication, March 23rd, 2020).

In a nutshell, the main benefits of B Corp perceived are the worldwide recognition and its leading to enhancement of a company's credibility and the accessibility to an inspirational network. Besides, B Corp is also very appealing as it is the certification that stands out. Lastly, some smaller benefits of B Corp are the holistic approach it has, its encouragement for moving forward, and the fact that it can be used as a differentiating tool, or to lead by example.

Positive aspect of B Corp	Companies agreeing with the argument	Total
Becoming a B Corp is a logical step	• Telos Impact • Sea2See • Coca-Cola • EXKi	4
Worldwide Recognition (credibility, visibility, objectivity)	• Telos Impact • Sea2See • EXKi	3
Attracting Network	• Telos Impact • Sea2See • Responsible 100	3
Certification that stands out // B Corp is a benchmark	• Telos Impact • Sea2See • Coca-Cola	3
Tool for improvement	• Telos Impact • Responsible 100	2
Differentiating Tool	• Sea2See • Responsible 100	2
Holistic approach	• Telos Impact	1
Lead by example	• Coca-Cola	1

Table 12: Summary of the main positive aspects of the B Corp Certification.

2.2 What prevents a company from becoming B Corp?

Although non-B Corp companies recognize the positive aspects of the certifications, none of them is a B Corp (yet) and there could be some reasons for that. According to the analysis, some reasons would make the certification process more complicated or could hinder companies from starting the procedure.

According to Mr. van den Abeele (Sea2See), Mr. Saels (Coca-Cola) and Mr. Solomon (Responsible 100), time is a real constraint. It takes a lot time to begin the process and it needs implication, commitment, and a lot of energy. Mr. Saels even specifies that "*you don't become B Corp overnight*" (K. Saels – Coca-Cola, personal communication, March 23rd, 2020). Indeed, the first questionnaire, the BIA, contains 200 questions: some are easy, some are completely the opposite. Besides, for each answer, proof needs to be provided, and getting all the documentation is also time-consuming. In addition, as mentioned by some B Corp companies, Mrs. Faris admits that having documentary evidence for all the questions can be hard when you are a small company (E. Faris – Telos Impact, email, April 2nd, 2020). Indeed, usually, the responsible practices are put in place, but due to the small size of the organization, there is not always a formal procedure to prove it easily. Furthermore, after the questionnaire, the procedure is not completed yet, as a company needs to have the assessment review, and that can take months, especially currently, with the high demand of companies wanting to become B Corp, and more evidence can be required. For these reasons, becoming a B Corp takes time, and you need to be able to put it as a top priority, at least during the whole certification procedure. However, again, for small companies it is not always possible. They usually have many projects simultaneously and being only focused on the B Corp project is not possible (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

Linked to this, according to Mr. van den Abeele, it would be easier for him if he had one employee focusing on the project. However, a start-up or a small organization does not have many employees, and hence, it is hard to assign someone only with the task of B Corp. Indeed, he states "*I just do not have one person to deal with it.* [...] *We dream of having ten people, but when we start, we do the work ourselves"* (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

According to the representatives of Sea2See, EXKi and Responsible 100, a third reason that would prevent a company from starting the process is the lack of awareness of this certification

(F. van den Abeele, Sea2See, personal communication, March 17th, 2020; C. Navarro – EXKi, email, March 21st, 2020; M. Solomon, Responsible 100, March 8th, 2020). People do not know B Corp and hence, do not value it as they should. According to Mr. van den Abeele, it would be great if people would know B Corp, but on the other hand, if it gets widely known, and everyone gets the certification, not only would it lose its credibility, but small companies would not find any incentive to get the certification anymore. The certification is thus trapped between the ignorance of people and the risk of loss of credibility (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

Next, both Responsible 100 and Sea2See mention the cost as being a factor to take into account. Obviously, the certification's fee is calculated according to the company's revenue. However, it is still a burden. Again, for small companies and, especially for companies with a purpose, there are choices to be made: *"with 5000 euros, I do not have B Corp but with that, I pay 3 guys in Ghana for 1 year, you see"* (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

Lastly, according to Mrs. Navarro, a company would not think of getting a certification that certifies the whole company. According to her, Fairtrade or an organic certification that emphasizes the quality of the products are more common and thinking about a comprehensive certification might not cross all company's minds (C. Navarro – EXKi, email, March 21st, 2020).

Aspects preventing companies from starting the process	**Companies agreeing with the argument**	**Total**
Time (hard to put it as a priority)	• Sea2See • Coca-Cola • EXKi • Responsible 100	4
Lack of awareness	• Sea2See • EXKi • Responsible 100	3
Cost	• Sea2See • Responsible 100	2
Provide documentary evidence	• Telos Impact	1
Have one person responsible for it	• Sea2See	1
Holistic approach (a company do not think about certifying the company)	• EXKi	1
If many companies are getting certified → little incentive to get certifies	• Sea2see	1

Table 13: Summary of the main negative aspects related to the B Corp Certification.

2.3 B Corp: a way to greenwash?

For most of the companies, there is little or no greenwashing in the B Corp community. Generally, all companies part of the survey agree that the requirements for becoming a B Corp are strict and that the external and independent audit is rigorous and meticulous. In addition, it is an objective evaluation of your company's practices and, if greenwashing is detected, it will not be accepted. Also, B Corps are generally well-perceived and truly want to improve their practices.

However, even though she would not say that there are greenwashing practices inside B Corp, Mrs. Navarro believes that some companies having the B Corporation certification do not always only apply responsible practices (C. Navarro – EXKi, email, March 21st, 2020). Likewise, Mr. van den Abeele is convinced that some B Corp companies should not be B Corps. According to him, there is, a lot of greenwashing, especially in the apparel industry, and some companies easily state that their products and/or garments are from recycled materials, even if in reality, only 10% comes from recycled materials (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

Existence of Greenwashing	**Companies' opinion**	**Total**
NO	• Telos Impact • Coca-Cola • EXKi	3
YES	• Sea2See	1
No opinion	• Responsible 100	1

Table 14: Summary of the opinions about the existence of greenwashing among non-B Corp companies.

In a nutshell, this chapter aimed at disclosing all the findings of the interviews ran in the frame of this thesis. For all companies, drivers, benefits, and drawbacks are to be found, as well as barriers and risks. The opinions of both B Corp and non-B Corp companies gave a broad understanding of the general views on the B Corporation Certification and will, in turn, enable a thorough analysis to finally provide an answer to the main research question of this thesis.

Chapter 3: General analysis

After having exposed all the findings of the interviews, it is interesting to look at it with a critical eye, take some distance from it in order to enable making conclusions about it.

Section 1: Comparison of B Corp and non-B Corp opinions

For both B Corp and non-B Corps, the same topics have been approached: the benefits of the B Corp certification, the possible drawbacks of it, the barriers and risks of the certification and the issue of greenwashing. Besides, for the B Corp companies, questions about their experience with the process of becoming a B Corporation have also been asked, as it was interesting to understand which were the easy steps of the procedure, and which were more complicated.

Firs of all, it can be noticed that B Corp companies have more arguments than non-B Corp companies, which can be explained by 2 reasons. First, interviews with B Corp companies have been more in-depth. As these companies were already certified and had an experience with B Corp, they had more examples in mind, and more opinions to share. Second, some non-B Corp companies did not want to disclose information due to confidential reasons, or were just not able to provide the answers, due to the lack of knowledge in the certification. Indeed, Mr. Saels was sometimes vague in his answers. He admits that they were looking at it, but that a lot was confidential (K. Saels – Coca-Cola, personal communication, March 23rd, 2020). Hence, he was not comfortable with disclosing information. Besides, Mrs. Navarro, from EXKi knew of the certification, she had heard about it, but did not really know it in detail, which made her answers also quite short. That being said, it is still possible to draw interesting conclusions from this qualitative research.

Second, it is interesting to see that most of the answers given by companies, either B Corps or not, go in the same direction. Indeed, most of the aspects given by B Corp organizations were also found in the answers provided by non-B Corp organizations. This means that the certification is generally perceived the same way by all organizations.

Concerning the reasons that can drive a company to begin the process of becoming a B Corp, even though the companies already certified have many reasons to share as they became a B Corp, all companies, whether they are B Corp or not, state that the eagerness of getting certified has or would come from an internal desire. Indeed, for all companies, it has been or would be a logical step to get certified as they are taking many initiatives to be a responsible company.

This means that there is no external pressure from stakeholders: it truly comes from an internal inclination to use business as a force of good and to be recognized for it.

In the matter of benefits, most of them were shared by both B Corps and non-B Corps. Indeed, the aspiration for the network, the good reputation of the label, its holistic approach and the fact that it can be used as a differentiating tool have attracted companies. Besides, it is also seen as very appealing that the BIA provides guidance and encourages organizations to move forward. In addition, both types of firms also believe that being certified can help them lead by example and inspire other companies to enter the movement, and this is also viewed as attractive. Besides these shared opinions, B Corp companies also add, as the most important benefit, that the certification has an overall positive impact on shareholders. On the other hand, non-B Corp companies also see the certification as the one standing out, as the one that companies need to have if they fit in the movement.

About drawbacks, limits and risks, the answers where easily put in categories by B Corps, but less by the non-B Corps. Indeed, for an organization that already has gone through the process, and who knows the certification, it is easy to distinguish the limits, the negative sides of the certification and the risks associated to it. However, for a non-B Corp company, those reasons are rather gathered in one single category that regroups all arguments potentially dissuading companies from starting the process. Nonetheless, when merging the arguments together, we see that many of the negative points are found on both sides, B Corps and non-B Corps.

As a matter of fact, for most of the companies, B Corp is a certification that is not sufficiently known yet. This dissuades companies to enter the process because they wonder why they would get a certification that no one knows about. In addition, companies do not understand all what the B Corp certification includes, and thus, under-value the certification. Also, a common negative point is the time required to get the certification. This is a real constraint, especially if it is impossible to assign a specific person with this task. Besides, it is also commonly said that finding all the documentation in order to prove the existence of some initiatives and B Corp requirements is rather complicated. Afterwards, the cost consideration must also be taken into account, even if it is, for some companies, a minor negative point. Last, besides these common negative points, B Corp companies mention as another minor drawback the limited impacts of being a B Corporation and the small network effect compared to what was expected. Also, some non-B Corps also mentioned that the fact that the certification has a holistic approach can

prevent companies from getting certified, as they would not think about getting such a comprehensive certification. However, even if these negative aspects were mentioned, it is important to remember that they were stated by a minority of the companies interviewed.

Concerning greenwashing, most of the companies, either B Corps or non-B Corp, believe that there is no greenwashing in the B Corp community. However, according to some certified companies, there could be an opportunity of greenwashing if the requirements to obtain the certification were lowered. According to most of the B Corp companies, this would be the main risk.

Third, it is also interesting to see that the B Corporation certification is unanimously seen and perceived as very positive. Most of the companies could not tell real disadvantages of being B Corporations but could point out some minor negative points that are not directly related to the certification itself: the long procedure, the fact that it is a rigorous and hard process and so forth. However, even if these were put in the negative section and could represent barriers that could potentially dissuade companies from starting the process, all B Corp companies also admitted that it was necessary to ensure the avoidance of abuses and that all Certified B Corporations would truly align with the certification's value and the movement. Besides, it can also be said that B Corp is seen as mostly positive when looking at all the drivers that led organizations to become certified and when looking at the various benefits that have been mentioned during the different interviews, both with B Corps and non-B Corps.

To conclude this section on the comparison of opinions stated during the interviews, it can be said that the vast majority of the opinions goes in the same direction, with a majority of positive opinions about the certification, even though some negative sides are also pointed out. However, usually, these were of minor importance. In addition, the B Corp companies add more details and more arguments, as they know the certification better.

Shared positive points
• Network • Good reputation of the label // worldwide recognition • B Corp provides guidance // encourage improvement • Lead by example • Differentiating tool • Holistic approach

Additional opinions	
B Corp	**Non-B Corp**
• Positive impacts on stakeholders	• Certification that stands out// B Corp is a benchmark

Table 15: Comparison of the opinion of B Corp and non-B Corps on the benefits of the B Corporation Certification.

Shared negative points	
• People don't know of the certification // Lack of awareness • Long process // Time need → need of one person dedicated to it • Provide evidence // find documentation • Cost	
Additional opinions	
B Corp	**Non-B Corp**
• Limited impacts of B Corps & small Network	• Holistic approach

Table 16: Comparison of the opinion of B Corp and non-B Corps on the drawbacks of the B Corporation Certification.

Existence of greenwashing in the B Corp community		
NO	**It could be**	**No opinion**
7 Companies • 4 B Corp • 3 non-B Corp	3 companies • 2 B Corp • 1 non-B Corp	1 company • 1 Non-B-Corp

Table 17: Summary of the opinions of B Corps and non-B Corps on the existence of greenwashing in the B Corp Community.

Section 2: Comparison between the literature review and the empirical research

After having analyzed the opinions of the certified and non-certified companies about the B Corporation certification, it is also interesting to confront it to the ideas that have emerged with the theoretical review.

Concerning the benefits of the certification, we find that most of the arguments stated in the theoretical review are materialized in the practical research. Moreover, the list of benefits that are stated by companies is longer. This means that the theoretical assumptions match the practical revelations. Hence, it can thus reasonably be concluded that what B Corps want to express aligns with what it is in reality.

Regarding the critics about the certification, the literature review mentioned five preliminary critics about the certification, and it is interesting to confront them with the revelations of the people interviewed.

First, it is said that the B Corp model does not go far enough, and that B Corp is merely another form of businesses pretending changing the world. However, when hearing representatives talk

about the BCC, all companies awarded by the certification are truly responsible and most of them really wants to lead a movement towards more responsible and fairer companies. Hence, it is true that there is a lot of work ahead, however, change needs to start somewhere, and becoming B Corp certified is certainly already going a good step forward.

Second, there are also some concerns about the reach of the BCC. Scholars believe that even though the movement is growing, there are still many companies that are not getting certified. This reflection is somehow shared by companies. Indeed, many companies agree that the certification is not well known yet and that the impacts of B Corp are rather limited. Besides, they also acknowledge that there is a still a lot to work on, especially in Europe, to make the movement grow even more. However, B Corp is part of a rising trend and an increasing amount of companies want to be certified. All in all, this certification is rather new, and time is needed to see clear impacts.

Third, scholars believe that a company can be responsible without being certified and that non-B Corp companies should not be categorized as “bad companies”. On this aspect again, the companies interviewed agree on it. Indeed, it is true that many companies can be socially responsible without having the certification, but most of the B Corps encourage organizations to undergo the BIA to understand where they stand on the scale, and which areas they can improve. Indeed, as the BIA is free for everyone, it can be used as a great tool for improvement.

Fourth, B Corp is criticized due to the fact that the standard setting lacks transparency and that it is unclear how the B Corp movement can lead to improvement. However, in the frame of this study, only B Corp and non-B Corp have been interviewed, since they do not set the standard, having a clear answer to this critic is rather hard.

Last, the fact that companies do not have to publish specific data is also criticized as it lacks transparency. On this last aspect, some companies agree that B Corp is also about trust and fair play. B Lab verifies what they can verify, and companies “need” to play the game. Besides, there are also some specific transparency clauses that companies must agree to with if they want to get certified.

In a nutshell, the benefits of the B Corp Certification disclosed in the literature review are found in the field research, which is very positive. Concerning the critics, practical research show that

some of the critics are indeed true. Mainly, the reach of B Corp is rather small, non-B Corp companies can be socially responsible without being certified, and publishing data is not compulsory in order to get the certification. However, findings show that most of the interviewed companies do not agree on the fact that B Corp is another form of businesses pretending changing the world. Besides, they do not have a clear opinion about the standard setting defined by B Lab.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Shared benefits of Being a B Corp</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">• Join a Community and Network
• Differentiating tool → competitive advantage
• International reputation
• Positive impact on stakeholders (due to greater awareness)
• Attract talent and investors
• B Corp aligns with values → internal desire to become B Corp</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Additional Opinions</th></tr>
<tr><td>Theory</td><td>Practice</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Communicate the identity, values and ethics to stakeholders</td><td>• B Corp provides guidance // encourage improvement
• Lead by example
• Holistic approach
• Certification that stands out// B Corp is a benchmark</td></tr>
</table>

Table 18: Comparison between theoretical benefits and practical benefits.

Section 3: Analysis of the barriers and risks of the certification

As mentioned in the first section of this chapter, most of the opinions given were very positive and all interviewees were very enthusiastic about the certification. However, the goal of this thesis is also to understand the various barriers to it and to analyze whether they would outweigh the benefits of being certified. It is thus important to underline the main barriers found through these interviews, even though some of them have been briefly mentioned in the above section.

The main and most important barrier seems to be the consequences of the time and commitment that the process requires. Indeed, a person is needed to take care of the certification procedure, and this is the main obstacle. Not only does the process take time and is very rigorous, but it needs to be understood and for some companies, adaptations of some internal practices are needed. This is why B Corp companies usually advise to have a person who can work on it full-time, at least during the certification process. However, for start-ups or small companies, this is not always possible: having usually many different projects on hold at the same time and not many employees, it is rather hard consider the certification process a top priority. Sea2See is the perfect example that illustrates this problem: as a small company, they initiated the process

more than one year ago and completed the B Impact Assessment. However, due to time and priority constraints, they did not continue the process, and quit it. Since then, they have not found the time to put the B Corp process as a top priority. However, with the current situation and COVID-19 crisis and as their business consequently slowed down, they hope to finally have time to work on it (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

Second, the B Corp movement is not sufficiently known in Europe, and especially in Belgium. The movement started in the United States and is, according to Mrs. Bardiau widely known there as it even almost became political (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020). However, people and companies in Europe do not really understand it and do not know what impacts the certification would have on their business. Even Mrs. Moy, from Too Good To Go acknowledges that, when starting the process, they did not really know all the potential benefits it could have on the company (S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication, March 27th, 2020).

Third, B Corp has a holistic approach. For some companies, it is a real advantage, but for others it is a clear barrier. B Corp certifies the whole company on its level of responsibility towards the environment and society at large. However, it is not common to have such a comprehensive certification. Due to ignorance, companies do not really think about having their whole company certified. On the contrary, it is more common to have certifications on some practices, on some products, like, for example, the Fairtrade certification. Besides, some industries have their own certifications that are important, which makes B Corp a secondary or tertiary certification that can be interesting, but not "vital" to the business. Hence, the third main barrier is that it might not be an obviousness for all companies to become B Corp certified.

Concerning the risk of B Corp, it is clearly stated that everything relies on the strictness of the procedure to become a B Corp. For now, the certification is not well known, and it can be assumed that all the B Corp companies are truly committed and try to be as responsible as possible, while being aware that there is always room for improvement. However, the main risk is be the potential lowering of standards to let more actors becoming B Corp and to have the certifications' visibility enhanced. Besides, according to StreetwiZe and The Skateroom, the certification also relies greatly on trust, which is great, and people who want to become B Corp play the game, but it also could potentially lead to abuses. (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom,

personal communication, March 31st, 2020; W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020).

While none of the companies believe that it is in the interest of B Lab to lower the standards, most of them mention it as a main and most important risk. This possibility could have great negative impacts. However, the likeliness of occurring is very low, according to the vast majority of companies. Besides, B Lab seems to be aware of this risk and, instead of lowering the standard, they even push it further through modifications in the BIA. Indeed, since the creation of the certification, 6 different versions of the BIA have been released, with the latest in January 2019. This also clearly shows the will of continuous improvement that B Lab wants to promote.

To sum up, according to the findings and analysis, 3 main barriers could prevent a company from starting the process of becoming a B Corp: time, ignorance of the existence of the certification, and the fact that a company might not think about having their whole company certified or prefer a more industry-specific certification. Concerning the risks, although it is unlikely to happen, many B Corp companies mention standard lowering as a main factor to take into account.

Section 4: Analysis of paradoxes

While discussing with the interviewees and when thinking about the certification, its benefits and limits, two paradoxes appear, that are interesting to point out and analyze.

First, as mentioned in the barriers against the certification, currently, most of the consumers do not know of B Corp, and hence, for companies, having the B Corp label on its products is a differentiating tool, but with little impact. If the movement grows, and an increasing number of companies is certified, on the one hand it will be great, significantly more consumers would be aware of the certification, would know what it means and would henceforth be attracted to B Corporations. On the other hand, it would also mean that an increasing number of organizations would be recognized as B Corps, and the thing that made firms special would not be so special anymore. Consequently, there would be less incentive to make the effort to become a B Corp, however, some companies would still feel like they have to get the certification. This phenomenon has been studied by Powell and DiMaggio, naming it the institutional isomorphism which is "*a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble*

other units that face the same set of environmental conditions" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p.149). On the contrary, related to this, it could also be possible that, if huge companies become B Corps, there would be even less incentives for small companies to get certified. Indeed, it could be thought that if big corporations become certified, it could tarnish the image of the certification and it could lose its credibility. Besides, if many large companies are getting certified, it will not be a differentiating tool anymore for small organizations. The paradox is thus clear: the movement needs to grow to be more widely known and have more impacts. However, the more it grows, the less special it is and the less impact it has.

To tackle this paradox, there are two possibilities. On the one hand, B Lab could provide different levels of B Corp certification. The idea is given by Mr. van den Abeele, who knows other certifications working like this. The levels could, for example, range from bronze to platinum and would refer to the extent to which companies are responsible (F. van den Abeele – Sea2see, personal communication, March 17th, 2020). This way, the consumer would understand how responsible and sustainable a company is, and make his decision based on it. Besides, this would let the most responsible companies distinguish themselves from others that are B Corps but on a lower level.

On the other hand, according to Mrs. Bardiau, people should be encouraged to change their mindset. B Corp is a trustworthy and strict certification: this means that if a company successfully passes the certification process, it respects the requirements and deserves to be a B Corp. In that sense, it is important to consider big corporations becoming B Corps as a good thing, as a proof that society is evolving and moves forward. It means that minds are evolving, and real changes are happening inside companies. Hence, there would be no need to be afraid of the growing amount of companies becoming B Corps (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020).

A second paradox is related to the time it takes to become a B Corp and the rigor of the process. As mentioned in the second section of this chapter, one of the main barriers to getting the certification is the length of the process. Indeed, for some companies, the time constraint, and the impossibility to assign this task to a specific person, can dissuade them from starting the procedure. On the one hand, most companies sincerely believe that it is a good thing that the certification procedure is long, rigorous, meticulous, and that requirements are strict and not easily achievable. Indeed, if it would not be the case, every organization could easily become a

B Corp, and hence, the certification would lose its values and credibility. On the other hand, due to this time constraint, some companies, mostly small organizations, that truly fit the movement and deserve to be recognized as a B Corp, do not find time and resources needed to begin the process. However, to tackle this paradox, there is unfortunately not a straightforward and easy answer. All companies, even non-B Corps, recognize that it is important that the process remains strict and rigorous. Hence, the only possibility is to decide, at some point, to put the B Corp process as a priority.

At first sight, these two paradoxes could have consequences on the decision whether or not to begin the process of becoming B Corp. It is thus important to highlight them, so that companies can be aware of these. However, positive points that can come out of these two paradoxes. The first paradox can evolve, and solutions can be found to tackle it. The second paradox is mainly due to the time constraint and is thus not a negative consequence of the certification nor has it unfavorable impacts on the certification itself. In addition, the time needed to get the certification even proves the quality of it. All in all, it can be reasonably said that these paradoxes should thus not be taken as dissuading arguments for companies to enter the process, rather, they only are additional information that both B Lab and potential future B Corp should know and keep in mind.

Section 5: General recommendations

All B Corp companies are really convinced by the concept, the certification, and the movement. None of the companies approached regret being certified B Corps and most of them also recommend other companies to try to become B Corps. Indeed, after analyzing all aspects of the certification, even if some unavoidable adverse points do exist, when talking about B Lab and the B Corporation Certification, the main trend is very positive. In that regard, and based on what B Corp companies have shared, it is interesting to make some recommendations to organizations that hesitate to start the B Corp process.

First, it is important that the B Corp movement matches a company's values. Becoming B Corp and joining the community needs to come from an internal desire. Indeed, if it is merely a communication strategy, it is not worth it (S. Moy – Too Good To Go, personal communication, March 27th, 2020). An organization needs to be sure of what it wants to do, and be ready to fight for it. Besides, the process takes time, so the firms needs to be ready to put all its efforts into it.

Second, it is also widely recommended for all companies just to start with the BIA (A. Etienne – Kazidomi, email, March 17th, 2020; S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020). It is a free tool, accessible for everyone. Thanks to it, a company can understand where they are, what is well-done and what areas need improvement. If a company reaches the 80 points, it is widely advised to pursue the process and get the certification. However, if the score obtained is below 80, it is strongly recommended to look at B Lab's guidance, set targets and try to improve the practices. According to Mrs. Bardiau, B Lab does not want to exclude anyone. If the 80 points are not reached, they will help a company achieve it and will provide suggestions for improvement (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020). Besides, there are also B Leaders (more than 25 in the Benelux). They are consultants trained by B Lab who can guide companies towards the achievement of the certification and help organizations improve their practices (S. Koolhof – Revive, email, March 19th, 2020).

A last recommendation is to not try to show a better picture of the company than what it really is. The BCC is also based on trust and fair play: a company needs to be committed into being transparent, fair and true. If a company tries to give a better picture of itself, it can be detrimental, and this is a real risk. Indeed, it is always worse to be de-certified than not having the certification at all. Hence, companies need to think about their answers and be sure of what they do (C. Bardiau – The Skateroom, personal communication, March 31st, 2020).

All in all, according to the already certified B Corps, the most important is to think about the practices put in place in an organization, and to try to improve it. B Corp is a great tool in the sense that it will provide an external view and companies can learn what they can improve based on the BIA. If B Corp aligns with the company's values and vision, then it is highly recommended to go through it, as having a recognition for the actions taken is always positive. To finish, the statement of Mr. Depickere is interesting and gives a very positive picture of what actually needs to be done: *"If you're really serious about it, yes, please do. But if you can already start thinking about the way you do business and start making small adjustments. I think that it would be really nice too. And for that you do not need to become a B Corp"* (W. Depickere – StreetwiZe, personal communication, March 25th, 2020).

General Conclusions

Section 1: Limitations of the research

Working on the B Corp topic has been very interesting, and I honestly enjoyed working on it. However, I faced, during the whole project some difficulties that have limited the research.

First, as mentioned in the report, the B Corporation movement is more well-known in the United States, as the B Lab organization emerged there. However, in this thesis, the emphasis has been put on European and especially Belgian companies. The analysis and conclusions have thus been drawn based on interviews with European organizations and the results are henceforth only valid for this geographical zone and could differ in another one.

Second, as many interviews as possible were conducted to make the research as qualitative and as complete as it could be. However, most of the companies approached are rather small or medium-sized actors. Indeed, when not having a direct contact in a company, it is harder to get in contact with them, especially with the COVID-19 crisis, that did not make it easier. Hence, it should be kept in mind that the outcome of this research is based on insights from a majority of small and medium sized business and that interviewing big actors could have affected the conclusions drawn in this research.

Lastly, I also wanted to mention the current crisis of the COVID-19 as an important limitation to this work. It affects every single person and we had to adapt to it. However, I must admit that it added an additional unexpected challenge to the realization of the work. Indeed, when it began mid-March, I was beginning the practical part of this thesis and was thus contacting companies to get interviews. However, with this situation bringing a lot of uncertainties, many companies did not have time, with reasons, to provide me an interview and cancelled it. Some also preferred to do it per e-mail, as physical meetings were no longer possible. E-mail interviews are always useful, but I must admit that collecting in-depth information is harder without a real conversation. That being said, I am truly grateful to all participants who took time in helping me in my research and who made it possible. Furthermore, the COVID-19 has had as consequence that all libraries were closed, with makes accessibility to information also harder. Of course, with the Internet, we can access to a lot of information. However, the university connection provides you with many scholars' articles and books, that would have been paying otherwise.

Section 2: Paths for further research

This research has been focused on the extent to which the barriers to becoming a B Corporation could outweigh the benefits of it. To attempt to answer this question, only European companies have been approached. It has been seen that many benefits existed in the community, but some barriers, unfavorable aspects and paradoxes do exist as well.

As the movement has grown in the United States and as it is way bigger and more well-known there, it would be interesting to complete a study on being a B Corp in the United States and analyze the movement.
By doing this, since the movement has attracted a great number of companies and stakeholders, and is way more advanced there than in Europe, it would hence be interesting to discover and understand the best practices that could be implemented in Europe as well. Indeed, it could be interesting to take inspiration from the good sides and initiatives of the movement in the United States and apply them here. It might help the movement evolve in a good direction.

Besides, it would be possible to predict how the movement will evolve here in Europe and we could, if needed, make some adaptations to ensure that the possible errors made in the United States would not be done here in Europe.

Section 3: Final conclusion

This thesis has had as main aim to make a deep literature review of the B Corporation certification and to make a field research in order to attempt to answer the research question of this paper: "Do the barriers to getting certified outweigh the benefits of being a Certified B Corporation ?"

Since 2007, the B Corporation is a certification granted by the American nonprofit organization B Lab to companies that *"meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose"* (B Lab, 2019b). Currently, there are about 3.200 certified B Corps around the world and the movement keeps growing with an increasing number of companies wanting to begin the process.

The literature review has been very useful to provide a broad understanding of the concept but has also brought with it many questions. Namely, these are: "Are the barriers to getting certified

high enough that they would retain companies of going through the process?", "Does the model go far enough?, "Does it convince companies to get through the process and pay for it?", "Are the theoretical benefits of being a CBC materialized in practice? Are there hidden benefits or drawbacks?", "Does the B Corporation community really supports a better system?",

To answer these, an empirical research has been conducted for which eleven companies, both B Corps and non-B Corps, have participated in an interview to give more insights about their personal experience with the certification. During these meetings, the benefits, the drawbacks, the process, the barriers, and the risks of the certification have been mainly discussed.

Concerning the positive aspects of the certification, namely, it has been studied that B Corp is a worldwide recognition having a holistic approach that also provides guidance on how to improve a company's practices. Being certified has a positive impact on stakeholders; it also allows accompanies to join an inspirational network, and certified organizations have the opportunity to lead by example. Also, all the benefits mentioned in the theoretical review of the certification were to be found in the acknowledgments of the companies approached. In addition, the few negative points mentioned (namely, the ignorance of the certification, the time it takes, and the hard process) are generally taken up by one or the other company and generally considered of minor importance. Conversely, the benefits of being a certified B Corporation are generally recognized by most companies. Therefore, it can be concluded that the theoretical benefits are materialized on the field. Besides, not only does the amount of benefits surpass the number of drawbacks, but it can reasonably be said that it also outweighs it.

Regarding the barriers to the certification, generally, the fact that the certification procedure takes time, that B Corp is not well known and has a holistic approach have been mentioned. However, these should not dissuade companies to enter the process. Certainly, time has to be found, and this might be the most complex barrier to overcome. However, concerning the two other mentioned barriers, companies should not be worried about it. As the movement is growing, more and more people will get to know the certification. Besides, the holistic approach might be a reason that prevents companies from thinking about getting the certification; however, it is also a good point for a company to be awarded by such a comprehensive certification.

Lastly, regarding the community that the certification offers, it can be said that it is truly a family of companies that want to make a change, that wants to move forward, to think differently and encourage people to follow the movement. However, in Europe, its impacts are rather limited. Hence, the movement may need to grow more to have more power, a bigger voice and more impact.

To sum up, the B Corp certification is a growing movement born in the United States that is mostly perceived as very positive, both when looking at empirical studies and at companies, whether they are B Corps or not. It can thus be said that it has a lot of potential. However, it needs to evolve more in Europe in order to create a more positive impact. Hence, companies should be encouraged to start the process if it comes from an internal desire and if it aligns with their values.

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Appendix 1: Business Roundtable: Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation

BR Business Roundtable

Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation

Americans deserve an economy that allows each person to succeed through hard work and creativity and to lead a life of meaning and dignity. We believe the free-market system is the best means of generating good jobs, a strong and sustainable economy, innovation, a healthy environment and economic opportunity for all.

Businesses play a vital role in the economy by creating jobs, fostering innovation and providing essential goods and services. Businesses make and sell consumer products; manufacture equipment and vehicles; support the national defense; grow and produce food; provide health care; generate and deliver energy; and offer financial, communications and other services that underpin economic growth.

While each of our individual companies serves its own corporate purpose, we share a fundamental commitment to all of our stakeholders. We commit to:

- Delivering value to our customers. We will further the tradition of American companies leading the way in meeting or exceeding customer expectations.
- Investing in our employees. This starts with compensating them fairly and providing important benefits. It also includes supporting them through training and education that help develop new skills for a rapidly changing world. We foster diversity and inclusion, dignity and respect.
- Dealing fairly and ethically with our suppliers. We are dedicated to serving as good partners to the other companies, large and small, that help us meet our missions.
- Supporting the communities in which we work. We respect the people in our communities and protect the environment by embracing sustainable practices across our businesses.
- Generating long-term value for shareholders, who provide the capital that allows companies to invest, grow and innovate. We are committed to transparency and effective engagement with shareholders.

Each of our stakeholders is essential. We commit to deliver value to all of them, for the future success of our companies, our communities and our country.

Released: August 19, 2019
Signatures Updated: September 2019, December 2019 and February 2020

Source: Business Roundtables. (2019b, August 19). *Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation.*

Appendix 2: Traditional CSR vs. Fair and Responsible Business Approach

Traditional CSR Approach	Fair and Responsible Business Approach
Limited connection to the business model: Aimed at reducing negative social or environmental effects of the business model and/or adding positive effects through voluntary programs **Motivation:** Reducing any negative activities, protecting the traditional business model and the company's reputation **Forms:** Citizenship, philanthropy, sustainability in terms of compliance (e.g. reduction of carbon emissions)	**Integral to the business model:** A social or environ- mental value is at the core of the business model; profits are generated through fair and responsible solutions and practices **Motivation:** Increasing positive activities, contributing to a greater goal, creating new value and profit pools, creating entirely new markets or changing the rules of competition in established markets **Forms:** Business-oriented thinking, sustainability in terms of creating social and business value

Source: Kückelhaus, M., & Tomoff, K. (2015). *Fair and Responsible Logistics: a DHL perspective on how to create lasting competitive advantage.*

Appendix 3: ISO 14001: Requirements list

Before ISO 14001 certification:

An ISO 14001 environmental management system will need to be fully developed and implemented prior to an ISO 14001 certification audit. For an EMS to be implemented the organisation will need to demonstrate a variety of completed actions including:

- *The development and communication of an environmental policy;*
- *Environmental aspects need to be reviewed;*
- *Legal requirements need to be assessed and compliance monitored;*
- *Objectives and targets need to be set and the programs in which to achieve them developed;*
- *Training needs should be identified and a strategy for achieving them implemented;*
- *An internal audit completed; and*
- *A management review of the EMS and their organisation's environmental performance.*

Source: ISO 14001. (2018). *ISO 14001 Requirements*.

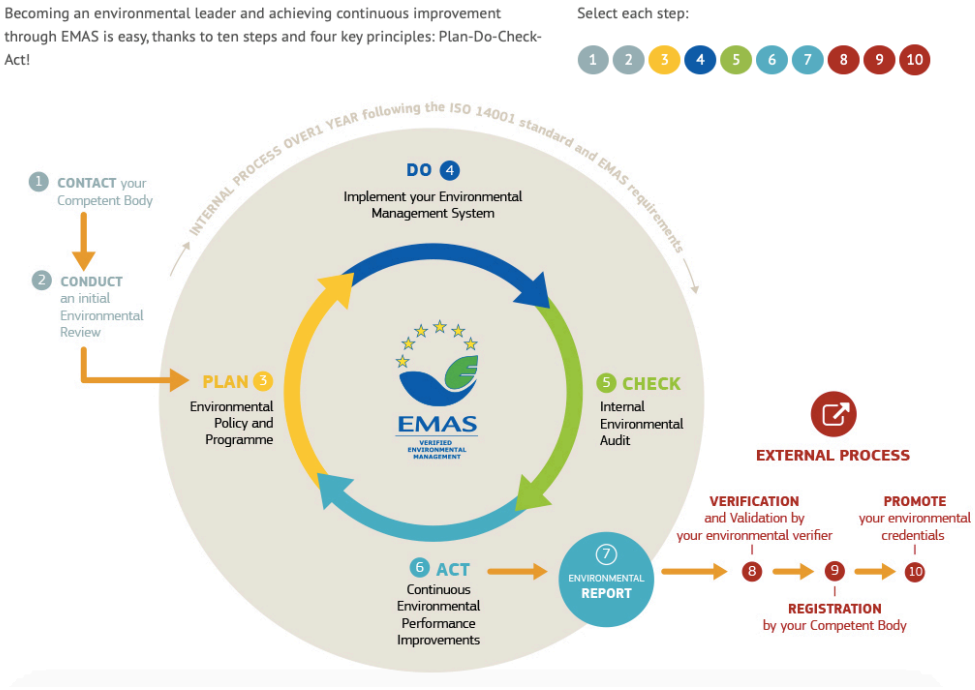
The Elements of ISO 14001:

Within the standard there are numerous elements of ISO 14001 that are required to be met by organisations seeking formal recognition for their EMS. General requirements include:

- *Development of an environmental policy that reflects an organisation's commitments;*
- *The appointment of a person(s) responsible for the EMS's coordination;*
- *Identification of how the organisation **interacts** with the environment;*
- *Identification of actual and potential **environmental impacts**;*
- *Identification of **environmental compliance** requirements;*
- *Establishment of environmental **objectives, targets and programs**;*
- ***Monitoring and measurement** of the progress to achieve its objectives;*
- ***Reviewing** the system and environmental performance; and*
- **Continuous improvement** of the organisation's environmental performance

Source: ISO 14001. (2018). *ISO 14001 Requirements*.

Appendix 4: EMAS: How does it work?



Source: European Commission. (2017, December). *EMAS: How does it work?*

Appendix 5: SA 8000: Social Accountability Management Standards

TABLE I
The SA8000 series of social accountability management standards[1]

SA8000 Sstandard[1]	Description[1]
8.1	*Child Labor:* Prohibits the use of child labor (less than 15 years of age, unless local regulations are higher); requires corporate support for the education of school-age workers; time spent daily on work and school cannot be more than 10 hours; that the corporation does not expose children either inside or outside the workplace to hazardous or unhealthy situations.
8.2	*Forced Labor:* Prohibits the use of "forced labor."
8.3	*Health & Safety:* Requires safe & healthy working conditions, health & safety training for all workers, clean and sanitary working and living conditions (if company provided).
8.4	*Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining:* Requires that the corporation allow, without discrimination, workers to form trade unions and engage in collective bargaining.
8.5	*Discrimination:* Prohibits discrimination based on gender, race, caste, etc., in hiring, compensation, training, promotion, or retirement.
8.6	*Disciplinary Practices:* Prohibits use of coercion or corporal punishment.
8.7	*Working Hours:* Prohibits required work in excess of 48 hours/week, and requires at least one day in seven off. Allows up to 12 hours/week overtime at a wage premium.
8.8	*Compensation:* Requires that the corporation pay workers a legal minimum and locally derived "living wage."
8.9	*Management Systems:* Requires a company policy for social accountability that includes social accountability audits for the corporation itself and its suppliers and sub-contractors.

Source: Miles, M. P., & Munilla, L. S. (2004). *The Potential Impact of Social Accountability Certification on Marketing: A Short Note.*

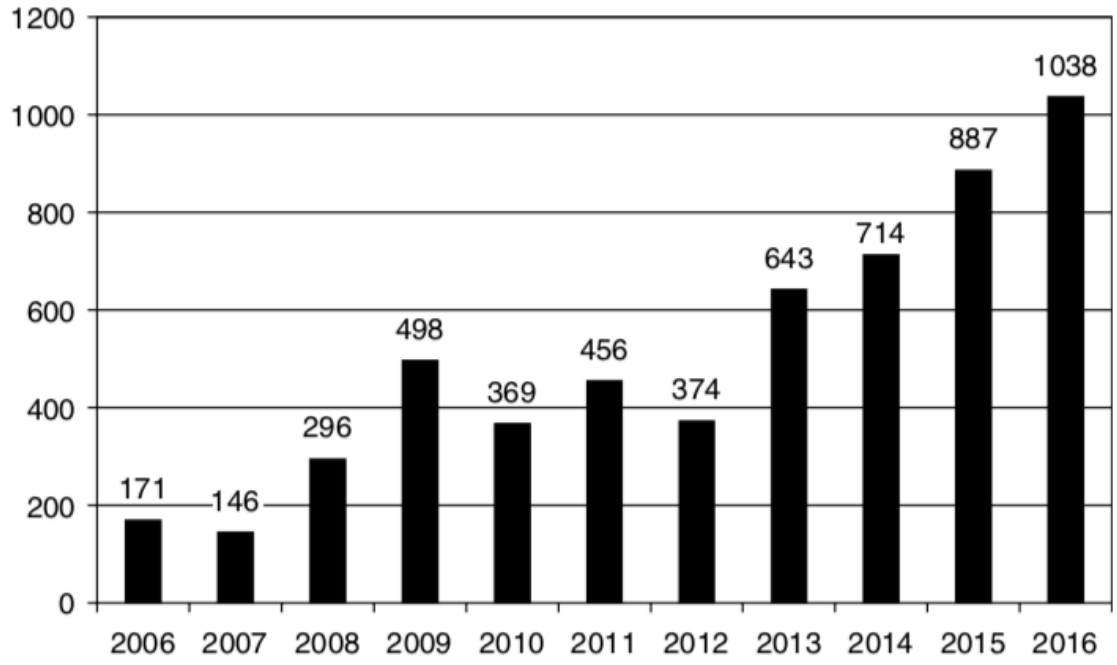
Appendix 6: B Lab Milestones

Table 1. Selected B Lab Milestones.

Date	Event
July 5, 2006	The first official day of work at B Lab, known as "Interdependence Day."
September 2006	The first version of the B Impact Assessment was created.
June 2007	The initial 19 Certified B Corporations were announced.
July 2007	*Inc.* published the first feature story on B Corporations.
September 2007	B Lab formed the Standards Advisory Council, an independent committee responsible for overseeing the B Impact Ratings System.
October 2007	The phrase "impact investing" was born at a Rockefeller Foundation sponsored event in Italy.
December 2007	King Arthur Flour was credited as the first to use the Certified B Corporation logo on a product (10 million bags of flour).
February 2008	B Lab raised its first outside funding: $500,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation.
September 2008	A group of 50+ "B Corp champions" convened at a retreat in California.
February 2009	The Rockefeller Foundation, Acumen, and B Lab jointly launched the Impact Reporting & Investment Standards (IRIS).
	Better the World became the first Certified B Corporation in Canada.
April 2010	Maryland became the first jurisdiction to pass benefit corporation legislation.
September 2011	The Global Impact Investing Rating System (GIIRS) was officially launched at the Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting in New York.
January 2012	TriCiclos became the first Certified B Corp in South America.
May 2012	Juhudi Kilimo obtained B Corp certification, the first in Africa.
April 2013	Rally Software became the first Certified B Corp that went public.
July 2013	Public Benefit Corporation legislation was signed into law in Delaware.
October 2013	B Lab introduced B Analytics, an aggregated data platform.
	Sistema B was launched in Brazil.
November 2013	More than 15,000 companies initiated the B Impact Assessment. Among those, 5,000 completed the assessment.
March 2014	B Lab published its first Best for the World list, honoring the top 10% of Certified B Corporations.
	B Lab received the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship.
May 2014	The number of Certified B Corporations passed 1,000.
December 2014	The Brazilian cosmetics company Natura became the first public company to achieve B Corp certification.
	Vermont-based Green Mountain Power obtained B Corp certification, the first public utility company to do so.
April 2015	Etsy became the second B Corp to go through the IPO process.
January 2016	Version 5.0 of B Impact Assessment was launched.
January 2017	Laureate Education became the first registered benefit corporation to go through the IPO process.

Source: Cao, K., Gehman, J., & Grimes, M. G. (2017). *Hybrid Ventures* (Vol. 19). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Appendix 7: Media coverage of B Corporations



Source: Cao, K., Gehman, J., & Grimes, M. G. (2017). *Hybrid Ventures* (Vol. 19). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Appendix 8: Annual Certification Fee in Canada and USA for the B Corporation Certification

Annual Sales	Annual Certiciation Fee
€0 - €149,999	€500
€150,000 - €1,999,999	€1,000
€2 MM - €4,999,999	€1,500
€5 MM - €9,999,999	€2,500
€10 MM - €19,999,999	€5,000
€20 MM- €29,999,999	€10,000
€50 MM - €74,999,999	€15,000
€ 75 MM - €99,999,999	€20,000
€100 MM - €249,999,999	€25,000
€250 MM - €499,999,999	€30,000
€500 MM - €749,999,999	€37,500
€750 MM - €999,999,999	€45,000
€1 B+	€50,000+, scaling based on company size

Source: B Lab. (2020). *B Certification*.

Appendix 9: Interview Guide for B Corporation Companies:

General Introduction:

Dear,

First and foremost, a big thank you for the time you take to help me in my thesis.
I would like to do this interview with you in order to gather information on my research subject: the sustainable development, CSR and the B Corporation Certification.

Concretely, I'm here today to discuss two different things. Firstly, I would like to discuss the CSR initiatives that you are taking in your company, the motivation behind these actions, the consequences of them and so forth. In the second part of this interview, I would like to dig deeper into the B Corp topic: understand what drove you to get the certification, how the process happened, the advantages/disadvantages of the certification and so forth.

To clarify all of this, I propose to begin this interview and I will turn now to the questions.

1. **General Questions about the Company:**

- Can you tell me about your company? How has it started?
- What do your company do? What is your work?
- What are your company's values?
- How did it grow?
- What is the mission and vision of your company?

2. **Questions regarding CSR initiatives:**

- What are the initiatives you take regarding CSR?
- Why do you take CSR initiatives at first?
- Since you are taking CSR initiatives, do you see any improvement regarding your company's reputation?
    - If yes, how do you see it? What has changed?
    - If not, does it impede your motivation of being socially responsible?
- Since you are taking CSR initiatives, do you see any differences in terms of financial performance?
    - If yes, how do you see it? What has changed?

- If not, does it impede your motivation of being socially responsible?
- According to you, what are the main advantages of getting committed into CSR?
- On the contrary, what are the main disadvantage/difficulties of getting increasingly committed into CSR?
- How do you track and measure progress of the initiatives you are taking?
- Do you think taking CSR initiatives can help you anticipate trends and customer's and market's expectations?
  - Can you explain me how and why?
- Do you see changes in the motivation and involvement of the personnel thanks to CSR activities? Can you explain how and what has changed?
  - Does taking CSR initiatives have help you to retain staff?
- Does CSR initiatives help you to have a long-term relationship with your suppliers, consumers and employees?
  - If yes, does it help you to create a prosperous and an innovative environment?
- What investment are you willing to do to take CSR initiatives in terms of time and money?
- Do you find it hard to convince management/shareholders/stakeholders to pursue CSR activities?
  - If yes, how did you manage to make it happened anyways?
  - If yes, who was hard to convince and why?
  - If not, why not?
- Are you hoping CSR initiatives will have a financial return eventually?
  - If yes, how do you prove that?
  - If not, are you afraid that CSR initiatives might don't bring any financial value?
- How do you choose what initiative to take, at what time?
  - Do you have a concrete CSR Strategy?
  - To what extent is it integrated in the core strategy?
- Do you have a CSR manager? An expert in that field?
- Does the Belgian legislation support CSR implementation?

3. <u>Questions regarding the B Corp Certification:</u>

- How did you get to know the B Corporation Certification?
- Why did you want to get B Corp certified in the first place? What seduced you in the movement?

- Did you begin the process due to external pressure (consumers demanding for more responsible products) or internal desire to invest in it?
- Why would you feel you needed to become a B Corp?
- There are many certifications promoting the sustainable development, why did you choose B Corp specifically?
- Did you hesitate with other certifications? Which one?
  - What made you choose B Corp?
- How did you experience the process of the certification?
  - How long did it take from the beginning till the obtention of the certification?
  - How expensive was it to get the certification (all cost included)?
  - What was the easiest part in the process of the certification? Why?
  - What was the hardest part in the process of the certification? Why?
- Since you got the B Corp certification, did you see enhancement of your company's reputation?
- According to you, what are the main advantages of the certification of B Corp?
- On the contrary, what are the main disadvantages of B Corp?
- Since you got the B Corp certification, did you see any differences in terms of performance (positive or negative)?
- Do you notice that consumers are willing to pay more to get sustainable goods?
  - Do you see that they are more attracted to your products since you got certified?
- Do you feel that investors are keener to invest since you are certified?
- Do you feel that since you got the certification, you have a competitive advantage compared to non-certified companies?
  - Do you believe that having a certification is a way of differentiating yourself?
- Since you have been granted the B Corp certification, do you see a difference in employee turnover? Has is increased? Decreased? Stayed even?
- It is said that when you join the B Corp movement, you are part of a real community. Do you share this point of view?
  - How did you benefit of this network?
  - Did you experience any bad consequences of being part of this community? If yes, which one?
- To what extent are you afraid of the "greenwashing" effect?

- As a “small” company, does having the B Corporation certification help you to prove that you a more genuine and authentic than big corporations? - According to you, what are the main barriers of the B Corp certification?
4. **<u>Questions regarding possible evolution of the system</u>**: - How do you believe the B Corp movement will evolve? - If you had to redo the process, would you do it again? Why yes? Why not? - What would you say to a company that is considering getting into the process of being a B Corp? - If you self-monitor your sustainable actions, why would you need a certification in the first place? - Do you think there are alternative to B Corp’s? If yes, which ones?
<u>Closing</u> - Do you have anything else to add? Is there anything you would like to share? Again, I would like to thank you very much for all your very useful answers. This will help me a lot in my research! Best regards, Rosalie Alsberge

Appendix 10: Interview with Alain Etienne (Kazidomi)

Alain Etienne lun. 2 mars 16:44 (il y a 17 heures)

À moi

Bien reçu. J'avais répondu à des questions similaires pour une autre étudiante la semaine dernière, je peux vous inviter à y jeter un œil ?

- **Quelles sont les initiatives que vous mettez en œuvre pour améliorer l'impact ESG (Environnement, Social, Gouvernance) de votre société ? (en interne, en externe, en DIY ou en faisant appel à des prestataires)**
    - Mission de base orientée ESG (démocratiser les produits sains et naturels)
    - Politique d'achat locale, tri des déchets, énergie verte, logistique sur base de recyclage, dons à des œuvres humanitaires,

- **Quelles sont vos motivations pour mettre en œuvre ces initiatives ? Viennent elles des salariés ou de la direction ?**
    - Pour nous il s'agit d'une évidence
    - + nombreuses sources d'inspirations (Veja, Patagonia, etc.),
    - Toujours d'abord des fondateurs, qui vont attirer les bonnes personnes, mais on ne change pas les gens

- **Quelles sont les raisons qui vous ont poussées à entreprendre les démarches de certification B Corp ?**
  J'étais un convaincu, j'avais moi-même travaillé dans l'investissement social auparavant. Je crois en un label uniquement dans toutes les industries vs. des nombreux labels dans lesquels les gens se perdent. C'est aussi une façon pour nous de nous mettre un standard et d'attirer des talents pour qui c'est important. On comptait un peu sur l'effet de réseau B Corp mais c'est assez faible en pratique.

- **Quels sont vos critères de sélection pour déployer une initiatives ou une solution visant à améliorer l'impact ESG de votre entreprise ?**
  Viabilité financière + alignement sur nos valeurs.

- **Quels sont vos critères de "qualité"/de satisfaction concernant les engagements ESG que vous développez ?**
  On mesure encore assez peu, on pense pouvoir encore faire du progrès à ce sujet, mais généralement, c'est un sentiment commun si l'on se sent satisfait et que l'ambition est atteinte.

- **Quels sont les retours de vos employés sur ces engagements ?**
  Cela est très important pour eux.

- **Comment étudiez-vous l'impact de vos initiatives/actions ?**
  Encore trop peu et de façon peu systématique

- **Quels sont vos process de décision avant de développer une solution ? Avez-vous besoin d'une phase test ?**
  C'est encore très startup :)

- **Quels sont vos points d'insatisfaction aujourd'hui dans ce domaine ?**
  Pas toujours possible de ne pas faire de compromis. e.g., la santé vs. le prix vs. l'environnement. Si l'on veut tout faire, on se retrouve non viable économiquement, on est souvent contraints de faire un choix.

- **Y a t-il une solution miracle qui vous manque ? Quelque chose que vous aimeriez faire et que vous ne savez pas comment aborder ?**
  La mesure de CO2, on voudrait passer en carboneneutral mais c'est peu clair, ça coute cher et on se retrouve à payer une bande de consultants qui font des calculs savants mais je suis assez peu convaincu.

- **Avez-vous rencontré des frustrations dans votre process de certification B Corp ?**
  Non, on est super fans. On recommande à tout le monde, et on est ravis d'avoir inspiré pas mal d'autres sociétés à se lancer dans le process également.

Je t'invite aussi à lire notre page "Kazidomi Shares" pour plus de détails sur ce que l'on fait.
Pour les impacts d'être B Corp c'est assez limité en toute franchise.
Je t'invite à aussi te renseigner sur des sociétés comme Veja ou Patagonia qui sont vraiment top dans ce domaine.
Cordialement,
Alain

Alain Etienne 13:26 (il y a 54 minutes)

À moi

Bonjour Rosalie,
Mes réponses sont ci-dessous :)
Bonne journée,
Alain

Le mar. 3 mars 2020 à 11:50, Rosalie Alsberge <alsberge.rosalie@gmail.com> a écrit :
Bonjour Monsieur Etienne,

Merci déjà pour toutes ces réponses, elles sont déjà bien utiles.

Cependant, j'aimerais vraiment plus me focaliser sur le processus pour devenir une B Corp, sur les difficultés et les limites du certificat. Ensuite, j'aurais bien aimé également savoir si la certification B Corp était une évidence pour vous ou si vous avez hésité avec d'autres certifications. C'est pourquoi je me permets de vous envoyer quelques questions additionnelles.

- **Avez-vous hésité avec d'autres certifications ? Si oui, lesquelles ? Qu'est ce qui a fait que B Corp pèse plus dans la balance ?**
  Non
- **Quel a été la chose la plus facile dans le processus pour devenir une B Corp? A contrario, qu'est ce qui a été le plus difficile?**
  Le plus simple était de débuter le test et de se lancer, c'est très simple, il n'y a pas de prérequis tout le monde peut le faire, le plus dur est de rester motivé malgré la longueur du processus et le travail important que cela représente.
- **Combien de temps et d'argent cela vous a pris pour finir le processus et recevoir le certificat ?**
  Deux mois, un demi jour/semaine. Pas de ressources financières en dehors du paiement de la cotisation.
- **En quelle mesure avez-vous eu « peur » que le certificat B Corp soit seulement une manière de faire du greenwashing ?**
  Non du tout
- **Selon vous, quelles sont les plus grands avantages de B Corp ?**
  (i) c'est un standard de qualité clair, pour l'équipe, les clients et les candidats potentiels ou même des investisseurs
  (ii) c'est un réseaux
- **Au contraire, quelles sont les plus grandes barrières, les limites du certificat ?**
  Fastidieux, et encore trop peu connu
- **Après coup, réitériez-vous l'expérience de devenir une B Corp ? Pourquoi?**
  Oui
- **Que pourriez-vous conseiller à une entreprise qui envisage de devenir une B Corp ?**
  Tenter au moins de faire le diagnostic pour se situer, et ne pas s'attendre à de grosses retombées médiatiques
- **Pensez-vous qu'il y a d'autres alternatives aux B Corp ? Si oui, lesquelles ?**

Je ne les connais pas

- **Comment pensez-vous que B Corp va évoluer au fil des années ?**

  Je crois que le réseau va s'agrandir de plus en plus rapidement et devenir un réseau très puissant, s'imposant comme LA référence en terme d'entreprises éthiques, le seul risque est son exclusivité qui doit être conservée, si des entreprises "un peu limite" rentrent dans le réseau, cela va vraiment être dommageable pour la réputation sur la qualité du réseau, il faut absolument qu'ils restent sélectifs

Appendix 11: Interview with Susanne Koolhof (Revive)

1. **General Questions about the Company:**

- **Can you tell me about your company? How has it started?**

  Revive started 11 years ago from an understanding that we should not build on greenfields anymore, to stop this urban sprawl. We wanted to create sustainable and livable communities in the city, on former brownfields (mostly polluted, former industrial, abandoned sites)

- **How did it grow?**

  Step by step our expertise to develop this specific type of brownfields grew. As we mostly develop in the city, these are always complex projects with lots of neighbors and other stakeholders involved. By concentrating on sustainable developments + creating strong and connected communities, we were frontrunner in our market.

- **What do your company do?**

  We build inner-city developments (= houses, apartments, shared spaces, commercial spaces, parks, etc. all mixed in one development). https://www.revive.be/en/

- **What are your company's values?**

  Our aim is to create high-quality, sustainable and affordable residential areas. A home in the city with the smallest possible ecological footprint.

- **What is the mission and vision of your company?**

  Our mission in a nutshell? To continually make a fundamental difference within those three Ps. This is reflected in different ways. In the land that serves as the foundation for our projects, for instance. By redeveloping old industrial sites to contemporary urban neighborhoods where private homes and open space go hand in hand, Revive does more than 'construct buildings'. So, it's with good reason that our motto is: 'We build society, not real estate.'

2. <u>Questions regarding CSR initiatives:</u>

- **Why do you take CSR initiatives at first?**

  Because it is in our DNA. We started Revive to be a changemaker in this market. We believe in doing business in a different way. Every Reviver has a passion for a specific theme within people, planet, profit & within the company we get the freedom to experiment and innovate.

- **What are the initiatives you take regarding CSR?**

  Everything we do with Revive, is part of CSR I believe. A few examples are: we experience with circular materials, we create projects that are off the grid and have their own green energy system, we innovate with circular water systems, we build community sheds on our projects where people can meet and organize events which strengthen the social capital in a city, we have space for co-creation for example co-housing and co-working. We support a local organization TAJO who invests in schooling for youth from disadvantaged families (support via money + give lessons on this school ourselves) and many more initiatives!

- **Since you are taking CSR initiatives, do you see any improvement regarding your company's reputation?**
  - **If yes, how do you see it? What has changed?** nothing has changed as we do this since the beginning. But off course, the more you really accomplish and can prove with existing projects and people who live on our projects, the better. So, people see it is not only marketing or ideas, but that we really walk the talk.
  - **If not, does it impede your motivation of being socially responsible?**

- **Since you are taking CSR initiatives, do you see any differences in terms of financial performance?**

  We do target impact investors. People who don't necessarily want the highest return on investment - although you should still offer a fair return on investment, otherwise they are not interested either - and this works for Revive since the beginning.
  - **If yes, how do you see it? What has changed?**
  - **If not, does it impede your motivation of being socially responsible?**

- **According to you, what are the main advantages of getting committed into CSR?**

  It is fun! all these social and environmental projects, to do something that really matters and makes a change. It gives your job and company a purpose.

- **On the contrary, what are the main disadvantage/difficulties of getting increasingly committed into CSR?**

  Time. Not everyone in the team sets CSR as their highest priority as there are many other things to be done as well. But for that reason, it is good to have a few people who are dedicated to CSR (or social impact and innovation within Revive) with no other responsibilities. They make sure that the company puts it high on the agenda.
- **How do you track and measure progress of the initiatives you are taking?**

  We don't. It is a recurring question from the management, as for some investors it is important to measure this. But we don't. Only in stories and practice what you preach (so good examples and testimonials from our customers and users). We do set certain KPI's to measure progress of the initiatives, but we don't measure the results and we believe it is a good thing to do. No need to prove this with numbers.
- **Do you think taking CSR initiatives can help you anticipate trends and customer's/market's expectations?**
  - **Can you explain me how and why?**

    Yes, I believe that's true. We did a market study with trend researchers last year, to know what the expectations in the market will be for the next year. So, we can set certain (CSR) goals and key performance targets. But I also believe that because we are a frontrunner in some topics, we can influence customer's expectations. With this I mean that still most of our customers choose to buy or rent from Revive, because we have housing on great locations. The vibe and architecture are nice, there is great connectivity etc. There is only a small percentage (but growing) of the customers that choose Revive because we are environmental and socially committed, BUT if they learn about this, they think it's fantastic & they will act upon it. So I believe that with our CSR and social impact initiatives on our sites, we encourage people in another lifestyle (e.g. give up their car because there is a sharing system, buy local because there is a contract with a local farmers collective, spend more time outside with neighbors because there is green space in front of their house, take care of your neighbors because there is a platform and events that bring them together, etc.)
- **Do you see changes in the motivation and involvement of the personnel thanks to CSR activities? Can you explain how and what has changed?**
  - **Does taking CSR initiatives have help you to retain staff?**

Yes, it does. Employees are proud to be part of the Revive team, because we have such a holistic, impact approach. And we are changing all the time so there are new things to learn, new goals to achieve and new actions to support. So, this keeps the team motivated in doing better, not only at the company but also in their personal live.

- **Does CSR initiatives help you to have a long-term relationship with your suppliers, consumers and employees?**

  It does with our consumers and employees, but I think we have to focus more on the relationship with suppliers. If I look at architects for example, then Yes: they do like to work with Revive because they know they get the freedom to innovate and experiment, and that we set a high standard. But some suppliers still use business as usual and I would like to go to an agreement that we only work with suppliers who use the same standards and do have a focus on social and environmental aspects. But there is still a way to go.

  - **If yes, does it help you to create a prosperous and an innovative environment?**
- **What investment are you willing to do to take CSR initiatives in terms of time and money?**

  I can't tell what all the initiatives cost for Revive, as it is so caught up in every project and everything we do. So, there's no fixed "CSR budget", gladly!
- **Do you find it hard to convince management/shareholders/stakeholders to pursue CSR activities?**
  - **If yes, how did you manage to convince them?**
  - **If yes, who was hard to convince and why?**
  - **If not, why not?**

    Not at all, as our management and shareholders are all convinced already. They also push us, so it isn't only bottom up. Off course, sometimes we do have to skip certain social and environmental initiatives, as in the end we are still a for profit company and not an NGO. So, our projects should be profitable, and we can't innovate on every aspect in every project.
- **There are studies saying that CSR initiatives can have financial performance, are you hoping CSR initiatives will have a financial return eventually?**
  - **If yes, how are you going to measure these financial returns?**

- Not sure how to measure this financial return, as there is not one projects who doesn't have CSR / social and environmental initiatives. So, we can't compare one project to another. We are not really a company where these things are measured. In the end it's about reaching our sales targets and I do believe that the more projects we will have, and the more people know Revive, they will choose Revive because of all the initiatives. So that's a financial return? If we launch a project, we often sell already a lot before we even start building so for us this means that our projects are a great success and something that people are looking for.
- **If yes, when do you expect financial return?**

  When we start selling our projects. Often 2, 3 years before people can move in.

- **How do you choose what initiative to take, at what time?**
  - **Do you have a concrete CSR Strategy?**

    No, there is no strategy. We do have innovation teams which all have their own KPI's, but no overall specific strategy. Although we do have an Impact Dashboard with 15 playfields which evaluates every project. So, the project developers have to make sure they give enough attention to those topics - but they can still do more.
  - **To what extent is it integrated in the core strategy?**
- **Does the Belgian legislation support CSR implementation?**

  Not that I know off.

3. <u>Questions regarding the B Corp Certification:</u>

- **How did you get to know the B Corporation Certification?**

  Our CEO met one of the founders of B Corp in 2011. He loved the idea of this global network of changemakers and wanted to be part of it. In 2012 we were certified!
- **Why did you want to get B Corp certified in the first place? What seduced you in the movement?**

  It is a great framework to evaluate yourself and keep the bar high for improvement. This network of changemakers is also very inspiring.
  - **Did you begin the process due to external pressure (consumers demanding for more responsible products) or internal desire to invest in it?**

Internal desire, as we are one of the first B Corps in Europe. So, there was no external pressure at all, there still isn't as the label is not so well known in Belgium.

- **Why would you feel you needed to become a B Corp?**

  We didn't need it, but it is a great framework for evaluation and improvement.

- **There are many certifications promoting the sustainable development, why did you choose B Corp specifically?**

  Because it is a holistic approach, you don't only test the environmental or only the social part of your company but it's an evaluation of your target group, your environmental impact, your internal governance, the impact you have on the community, etc etc.

- **Did you hesitate with other certifications? Which one?** Nope
  - **What made you choose B Corp?**
- **How did you experience the process of the certification?**
  - **How long did it take from the beginning till the obtention of the certification?** for me it's hard to give a timing as I use the assessment almost daily. It is something that I always go back to if I need inspiration to improve. Then I choose a topic to work on for a few weeks or months, and then we implement this. So, it is not an assessment that I start with a few weeks for the re-certification and give an exact timing. It is an ongoing project.
  - **How expensive was it to get the certification (all cost included)?** This depends on the revenue of your company. For Revive it is 2500 euro/year.
  - **What was the easiest part in the process of the certification? Why?**
  - **What was the hardest part in the process of the certification? Why?**

    To get all documentation in order. Sometimes we knew we did something in a specific way, but if you have no documents to prove this, then you get zero points. This is frustrating by sometimes. I also notice that when the company grows, it is easier to implement certain policies. In the beginning when I started with Revive and I had to re-certify, we only where with 15 employees. So, most decisions or evaluations were made around the coffee table. 5 years later we are with 38 employees, and now we do have KPI's, a management and official evaluation procedures. So, this makes the documentation part easier.

- **Since you got the B Corp certification, did you see enhancement of your company's reputation?**
  Don't know, I don't think so as the B Corp certification is not so well known in Belgium. But when you have time to explain people what it means they will definitely see it as an added value.
- **According to you, what are the main advantages of the certification of B Corp?**
  Guidance in a company's strategies and the inspiring international network.
- **On the contrary, what are the main disadvantages of B Corp?**
  You need someone who has this as his/her main focus, because it takes time if you want to do it right.
- **Since you got the B Corp certification, did you see any differences in terms of performance (positive or negative)?** no
- **Do you notice that consumers are willing to pay more to get sustainable goods?**
  No, as most consumers don't know the label and we do not charge more because we are sustainable.
  - **Do you see that they are more attracted to your products since you got certified?** No
- **Do you feel that investors are keener to invest since you are certified?**
  Yes, I think that for investors it is an extra added value. With investors you often have more time to explain the company to them and the B Corp certification is something very robust and trustworthy, so yes, I believe that for investors it is an added value.
- **Do you feel that since you got the certification, you have a competitive advantage compared to non-certified companies?**
  - **Do you believe that having a certification is a way of differentiating yourself?** Yes, I do, but again: only when you have the chance to explain what B Corp is. But for example, if we apply in a tender to buy a new site, the B Corp story is valid and a way to differentiate ourselves from companies which say they do good from companies who can prove this.
- **Since you have been granted the B Corp certification, do you see a difference in employee turnover? Has is increased? Decreased? Stayed even?**
  Not sure, I would say the turnover has decreased and we attracted talented people because we are a B Corp. But I have nothing to prove this.

- **It is said that when you join the B Corp movement, you are part of a real community. Do you share this point of view?**

  Yes, for sure. Somebody once called it "the movement of the sparkling eyes" and I still believe that's a great way of explaining it. Everyone in the B Corp movement is passionate in making a change, they don't work to work but to do something different. We inspire each other and after every community event I know I am not alone in making the change. It is a bunch of positive entrepreneurs!

  - **How did you benefit of this network?**

    Via sharing good practices, commit to the same goals (for example "carbon neutral 2030"), keep the motivation to change something up,

  - **Did you experience any bad consequences of being part of this community? If yes, which one?** No

- **To what extent are you afraid of the "greenwashing" effect?**

  Not at all. The certification process is an in-depth process done by an external, independent party. And it isn't easy to reach the 80 points benchmarks, so companies who only want to greenwash, can never certify. We do have to be careful how companies use the B Corp certification in marketing because sometimes it is only a part of the company that is certified (a specific brand for example) and not the whole company. For example: Coca Cola bought Innocent Drinks, the latter is a B Corp company, but Coca Cola isn't, so it is important they tell correctly in their communication. But B Lab has a lot of attention for this, so I didn't notice it is used for greenwashing yet.

- **As a "small" company, does having the B Corporation certification help you to prove that you a more genuine and authentic than big corporations?**

  Not sure

- **According to you, what are the main barriers of the B Corp certification?**

  Time and knowledge of the assessment. Every company has to answer +/- 200 questions (different for every company as the questions are based on the answers that one gives) and in the beginning this is very overwhelming!

4. **<u>Questions regarding possible evolution of the system</u>**:

- **How do you believe the B Corp movement will evolve?**

Let's hope more and more companies will be B Corp certified and step by step every company transforms to a company who want to be best FOR the world and not best IN the world.

- **If you had to redo the process, would you do it again? Why yes? Why not?**
  Yes - I think the above answers show how enthusiastic I am about B Corp :-)
- **What would you say to a company that is considering getting into the process of being a B Corp?**
  Go for it! Start with the assessment and see where you end up. If you are above or close to the 80 points benchmarks, then don't hesitate to go for the certification. If you are far off, set goals to improve based on the assessment. See if someone internal can take the lead or if you need an external consultant. I am a trained B Leader for example so I can guide a company to certification. In the Benelux we are already with 25+ B Leaders so there is always a consultant who can help you to get a step further.
- **If you self-monitor your sustainable actions, why would you need a certification in the first place?**
  Good question! One could say we don't need it as we are doing good to start with. But it is nice to be part of this network and to be challenged in certain themes that we didn't consider in the first place.
- **Do you think there are alternative to B Corp's? If yes, which ones?** No

Appendix 12: Interview with Wim Depickere (StreetwiZe)

Rosalie: Hello!

Wim: Hi!

Rosalie: Thank you very much for taking the time to talk to me. So actually, first, thank you already, and then I don't know actually if you understand the purpose of my thesis. Actually, I'd to compare a company that is a B Corp with a company that takes a lot of initiatives towards sustainability, social and environmental initiatives but that is not a B Corp. I'd like to understand the advantages, the disadvantages, what drives a company to become a B Corp, why a company don't want to become one etc. And this is why I'd like to hear a bit the story of StreetwiZe and why it has become a B Corp.

Wim: But are you studying? Are you in Belgium studying?

Rosalie: Yes, yes, I am in Louvain-la-Neuve doing a master's in international management.

Wim: So StreetwiZe. You know a little bit about StreetwiZe?

Rosalie: Yes. What I understood that it first began with a social project for the education of children in streets, and then now you also provide trainings in companies here in Belgium to raise awareness.

Wim: So actually, StreetwiZe is combined with MobileSchool. So, the organization started as MobileSchool, a nonprofit organization where we work with street children around the world. So, we help local organizations in their work with street children, so, we give to them, material, educational materials, we deliver trainings, we make a network among them, so that they can improve the quality, so that is something we are still doing with MobileSchool, that is not finished.

And so, based on that actually, I think in 2008, if I'm not mistaken, that's before when I was in the organization. Well, we decided to no longer be only a nonprofit and depend on external fundraising in order to survive. But, because to the children that we were working with or the organizations that we were working with, we always claimed like, "Hey, we are not here to give you money. We're not here to give you anything but we will train you, we will work on your self-esteem and we will work with you to make you stronger and so that you are able yourself to take life in your own hands". But at the same time, we were asking money to everybody, so...

Rosalie: You decided to get your own money from your trainings that you do in Belgium?

Wim: Yeah. So, then we decided, okay, we want to make our own money that we can use for our nonprofit. And so that's how StreetwiZe came to be. And so, that was founded in 2008 in order to raise the necessary money for MobileSchool, but also with the same … (Internet disconnection)

Rosalie: I didn't hear, sorry, I think there was a bug, it disconnected.

Wim: So, on one hand to raise money for the nonprofit but on the other hand, with the same DNA with the same mission, as within MobileSchool, to improve the self-esteem, to make people, organization, society stronger. And so, while with MobileSchool, we are doing this for street children, with StreetwiZe we are doing this for companies for professionals within companies. But we deliver trainings, learning and development

programs based really on the things we've learned on the street. So, the competencies that you need to survive on the street, being proactive, positive focus, agility, resilience, creativity, these kinds of competencies that you really need to survive on the streets are really the same competencies we believe that are really useful in a company context, in a context here in Belgium.

Rosalie: So actually, from what you learned in the streets, then you make it a training that you provide in the companies here in Belgium.

Wim: Yes, yes, that's correct. And so, we're not doing something completely different. It's the same competencies that we already have within the organizations to deliver trainings based on the same methodologies, the same view on how to work together, that we translate it into a business context. And so that's how StreetwiZe was started. And so that's how it's still today. Of course, in meantime, we have grown a lot. So, now, most of the organization can be really funded by StreetwiZe. We still have some fundraising and it is still needed. But most of the budget comes from StreetwiZe on yearly basis. This year will be a little bit different because of the corona crisis. Learning and development market is going down.

Rosalie: That's nice, and so more about B Corp, why you decided to become B Corp?

Wim: So, with MobileScool, Arnoud Raskin, who founded MobileSchool, he's an Ashoka member. I don't know if you know Ashoka.

Rosalie: I've read on one of the websites, but I didn't know exactly what it is.

Wim: So, Ashoka is like a global network for social entrepreneurs. So, Ashoka selects social entrepreneurs to become part of the of the network on one hand, and on the other hand, they have "Ashoka support network members". So, these are people from businesses. These are people most of the time with a lot of money who are willing to spend time to help social entrepreneurs. Because of Ashoka, we came into contact with some people of B Corp, we came to know, B Corp. And so, well, the goals that B Corp has, being sustainable, doing business in another way, with the focus on employees, on the short supply chains with environmental issues, so it's a lot of aspects. It's really close to our heart and our DNA anyway. So that's why we decided to investigate it on the first hand, to see how to do the whole procedure. And the reason why, for us, it's not difficult to become a B Corp is because of our DNA.

Rosalie: Yeah, I've seen that you have a high score compared to other B Corps. You are really super high. You have like 120 or something when other B Corps have 80 or something, so it's really high.

Wim: Yes. The most important reason that you score so high well is of course, first that all our profits go to a nonprofit, because that's why StreetwiZe was created in the first place anyway. So yeah, that's already quite exceptional for a normal company to give all your profits. Yeah, normal companies even B Corps will not go so far. That's first thing. Second thing is that within our team within the organization, we have a really flat heu…

Rosalie: Really flat hierarchy? Like everyone is on the same level?

Wim: But also like a flat salary policy. So that also really helps to get a high score. That is of course, because we come from a nonprofit organization where this is more used to see this type of organization, this type of salary distribution within the organization. It's more normal within a nonprofit organization. And so, you can still see this within the organization today, in StreetwiZe too. And other than that, for all the environmental aspects, that's not really our main focus. But we don't produce anything, we don't have any waste. So, we work locally in Belgium, we work with local trainers. So, because of that, you also score quite okay on that aspect, even though that's not our main focus. But we don't have any negative points, other than traveling worldwide with the MobileSchool part. We don't have any issues there too. So, for us, getting the certification was not a big difficulty. We just have to go through all the process and filling in all the documents and providing all the necessary information.

Rosalie: But so basically you decided to become a B Corp because suddenly B Corp was on your road. And so, it was not hard for you. So, it was just a good move to have this additional certification. Not that you really needed it to exist.

Wim: No, no. So, we were already, if you want, we were already B Corp before we go further, if you want. And so, we did not have to change anything in the way we work or the way we operate to become a B Corp. So, for us, the main reasons to become a B Corp were first and for all, as a kind of certification as a label. Even though you have to understand that in Belgium, if you say, "hey, we are B Corp" that 99% of the people don't have a clue what you're talking about. So, as a marketing or sales strategy, it's not the best because nobody knows about it so, it doesn't say a lot. But if you, for example,

in a sales pitch, you can say, “Hey, we are a B Corp”, most of the time, they don't know what you're talking about. But at least you can then explain what it means and why you are there. And so at least it gives you the opportunity to talk about it. That’s on point. But the second point, and actually, what we're trying to do in Belgium with B Corp is to be really part of the bigger community and help the community grow, help to convince organizations to become a B Corps themselves or to take on some aspects that even if they don't go for the certification, that's fine too. But at least to think about business in another way. And so that's really our, our main focus. And that's the focus that we already had before B Corp too, when we go to clients, we try to train the trainees, but we also talk about how we do business, how we have a hybrid structure with a nonprofit and a profit working together to create benefits for street children but also benefits for society here in Belgium for organizations. And so that's already in our DNA as an organization, we already put this to our clients, to our volunteers. And so, by working with B Corp, that's an extra angle, an extra way to try and change society. That is one part of our mission too: to help advance society in more sustainable direction.

Rosalie: Yeah, so actually through your trainings, you try to kind of promote also B Corp and help them raise awareness of being responsible and do business in a good way actually?

Wim: Through the trainings we already do the sustainability part. We don't always, in the trainings, go back to B Corps, of course. But for example, with the clients in sales, or with partnerships, there we try to, we really push it and also there is a community of B Corps within Belgium and the Netherlands together. And there every year we try to do some activities, some conferences with B Corps to try and attract new companies to become B Corps and to try and spread the word if you want. So…

Rosalie: And has B Corp helped you in the partnership you got? Or does the fact that you are part of this community, does it help you in your daily work as well? To get partners or to get new clients? Or don't you really see a difference?

Wim: I think as far as clients is concerned; I don't think we have really, maybe a few little things, but no big lines or nothing big. So, if you look at it purely like from a sales perspective, I don't think it has really benefited on to this point. As far as partnership is concerned, we do have two partners because of the B Corp community that we got to know through B Corp and then have worked with us. One partner that has worked with

us on marketing and on a client. We had a proposal for a client, but we needed a partner because we couldn't do everything ourselves. So, we've partnered up with them. So that has helped us to get that business at that point, of course. But yeah, it's not like we have exploded our business, because we are B Corp. But for us it is just like another aspect of our DNA, of our mission to try and preach this social way of doing business, this other way of doing business. And so, that's why we are a B Corp in first instance.

Rosalie: And concerning the process of being a B Corp, so how long did it take for you? Was it really long or was it okay? Or do you remember maybe?

Wim: Oh, yeah, it was me who had to do all the stuff. So, it's quite okay actually. So, for the first certification that went well, I think it took a few months to get through the process, but of course, it does not mean that you're working on it every day. So, the work I think it was a few days of work, I think, maybe maximum one-week work to get through the whole certification part. Of course, it could be also because we're a small organization. I have all the information available. I did not have to make up a lot of documents or things. Maybe if you're a really big company could be different. It could be that you have a lot of more administration and work to do to be able to get to the certification, but I had no idea about that. The recertification, we had to do it this year. Because every few years, you have to be recertified. And that went very difficult. But I don't know why, but internal processes at B Corp, they actually always forgot to go forward. So, we had to send mails ourselves all the time. "Hey, you still have to do this", "hey, you still have to do this". And they just didn't do anything. And then it's dragged on and on. So, that was not really the nicest process this year. I don't know, is it a personnel problem within B Corp? Did they not have enough people to handle everything? Or was it just not a priority? Because we already had such good points? And they said "well, whatever"? I don't know why. But it really took more than half a year to go through the process. And it did not give me a lot of work, it was just a few days of work, but we just had to keep sending them reminders and mails to go forward.

Rosalie: From the beginning to the to the end, it was like a half a year, but not like heavy working on it?

Wim: No, it's really light. As a process, it's quite light, actually.

Rosalie: Okay. And according to you, what is the easy part of the process and what is the hardest part of the process? For a company that wants to become a B Corp, what can be like the easy part and the hardest part of the process?

Wim: Difficult to say, I think because for us as you see, based on our points, we did not really need to do anything, or to change anything within our own organization to become a B Corp, because we already were actually just ahead. So, on that part, we did not have to do any work, we just had to explain how we are working, give them the documents, and that's was enough. But I do think that for a more normal company, let's say, that wants to become a B Corp, that in order to get enough points to actually get the certification, it can be quite, that it has to change quite a lot of processes and internal way of working to be able to get through the certification. But yeah, it's quite hard for me to say that. I can, I can imagine that this can be difficult, but in our case, it was not. So yeah, it's hard to do it. But I know that for some companies, some very big companies, it's not so easy to get to the 80 points you need to get to become certified.

Rosalie: And what do you think about big companies that are becoming B Corps? Because I have talked also with other B Corps companies, also small companies that say that if there are so many big companies that become B Corp, the certification will lose its value. Because now B Corp gives you a lot of credibility also, but now, for example, if, I don't know like, Nike or Adidas become a B Corp. That's gonna be like a bit contradicting…

Wim: Well, it depends. If they can keep the certification process strict and if they can really, as the point of view of B Corp, they can really say, "Nike has become a B Corp now", but they have really proved the fact that they have all these points and that they are working a lot on the work-life balance, and the salaries and environmental issues and all these kind of things. Yes, I would be happy that they would become a B Corp because that means that they are taking steps in the right direction. So, I would be happy that all organizations, every company in the world becomes a B Corp of course, then we would lose our distinction, and the thing that makes us special would then become less special, of course, but on the other hand, that would mean that as a society, that we are really taking steps forward. So, I think that's for me the main focus, so I would be very happy that all these big organizations become B corp as long as the process has remained the same strict levels to become a B corp and that's for me really the most important part.

Rosalie: And you don't think that maybe because B Corp is, as you said, 99% of the people don't really know what is B Corp, you're not afraid that maybe B Corp wants to loosen its process to make it more easily achievable for big corporations, and that it's more known by customers? Because, of course, if Adidas has the B Corp label, it has maybe more visibility than if a small company has the same label.

Wim: Yeah, well, like I said, well, it would be good that some big companies become a B Corp, and become really a B Corp and not just have the label but don't really act on it, but if they really act on it, it would be good, so that people get to know it. Because now, as much as we would like, it will not be StreetwiZe who will make B Corp a known factor in Belgium. For that we are too small. Unfortunately. Yeah, it would be, it would be nice that some more known brands or names become a B Corp and really help us push this direction as long as they are really doing it and not just having the label. So no, for me it is a good thing, honestly, as long as they have the same strict...

Rosalie: And you don’t think that it’s a risk?

Wim: Well, there is a risk, that if B Corp has like, if the B Corp, as an organization, decides “hey we want really big companies to become B Corp and we will lower our standards in order for them to be able to have the certification”. Yeah, that would be very negative, of course, and it would be a risk. But if they would do that, I think in the end, they would just, a B Corp itself would become empty that would no longer have a meaning. And as an organization, as a movement, I think at the end, they would cease to exist, actually, because everybody can become a B Corp just like that, it would become invalid.

So, I think they have all reasons themselves, to restrict otherwise they don't have meaning anymore themselves. But yeah, that could be a risk. I have no idea. I don't have any view on how these things on a global scale on how B Corp is working.

Rosalie: So, if you need to just name some advantages and disadvantages of the of the B Corp certification, what would you say?

Wim: The advantages? Well, it does give you a network. There is a new network that we did not have before, of companies, of people that we got to know and that are certainly beneficial for us because of that, so that's the first thing.

Second thing is that it does give us an entry point, a reason to start talking about doing business in a sustainable way. Because having this label on our website, on our

brochure, on everything actually. It gives us a reason to start talking about it , and to start trying to explain to people why this is important and why maybe they should be thinking about this, even though they don't know it. Otherwise it's more difficult to start having this discussion. So that's the second advantage for us.

And the third one is that for our clients, it does give a little bit of extra, they already know that we are a sustainable business. And they know that we work with street children and that all our profits go to the nonprofit part of the organization. So, we don't have to really convince them of that. But it does also give like the validation that it's not only on that aspect that we also working on other aspects in like, the environmental issues, like inside the organizations, how do you work with your colleagues? How do you work with your suppliers? These kinds of things, that we also are paying attention for these things. So, it's a small benefit. It's not the main point.

And I think a fourth one is that it does give you a structured way, a backbone to think about your own organization. Because in the past, we did not really, it's not that we were not conscious about environment, for example, we will not do stupid things about the environment. But we did not really think about it in a very structured way. Because of the certification process, you do have a lot of points that you get to score and then you see," hey, we are not really scoring very well on electricity", let's say something, "maybe it's a good idea to take ,when we have a new contract, to take 100%, green electricity" for example, or think about the policies around travel or around transportation. It's small things because we're a small organization but it does give us a more structured way.

Rosalie: It also helps you improve on some on some areas that you wouldn't have seen before, for example.

Wim: Yeah, and it's not like a major, major things, but it does help us in some small ways to at least be conscious about it, to help us and make some small adjustments and improvements.

Rosalie: And would you have some disadvantages then or some negative points of the B Corp?

Wim: Honestly, the small amount of time that we have to invest or the thousand euros every year that we have to pay for the certification. That would be some small disadvantages, but then it's really small things and not really worth mentioning. Other than that, I don't think I don't see any disadvantage for us for the moment, not really no.

Rosalie: And so, you would just recommend to everyone to take the steps to become B Corp and to make the effort to become a B Corp?

Wim: I think I would recommend everybody to think about the way they do business, the way how they set their business models, and to learn from the B Corp on what they can improve. And if then, they have to become a B corp and get a certification, yes or no, that's up to them. Honestly, if they think they have enough benefits to do this.

Well, I think for me, what is most important is raising the awareness that you can do business in another way, and hopefully triggering some people, some businesses to think about this. And I think that's for me the most important so, if you have a company, you would ask me, "hey, should we become a B Corp"? If you're really serious about it, yes, please do. But if you can already start thinking about the way you do business and start making small adjustments. I think that it would be really nice too. And for that you don't need to become a B Corp.

Rosalie: And why would you think, because there are so many other companies that are taking a lot of initiative towards sustainability and environment and stuff, but they're not B Corp. Why do you think they would not make the effort to do it? Because it's not that known? But it's not like it just a random label, it has credibility. So why would a company not take the process to become a B Corp?

Wim: I think the first reason would probably be that it's not well known. And so that, to get a label that nobody knows, and that maybe nobody values or not a lot of people value. Yeah. Is that really worth the administrative hassle to do that, and the costs related to that? So that's the first one why probably they would not do that.

Second, for a lot of company sectors within businesses, they have their own type of label. For example, if you are in the clothing business, there are a lot of regulations and labels available to show that you are fair trade or that you protect the rights of the workers. So, we have a lot of different labels and it's always nice to have one more, but you just can’t keep on adding labels. And for example, in a clothing business, B Corp is not the one that people will ask about, they will be asking about some of the others more known, globally accepted labels in that business and so, they will not have a lot of benefits for becoming a B Corp and they will probably prefer other things to put their efforts in. That's a second one.

And a third one: even though for B Corp, for the certification, they asked a lot of information and a lot of documents. If I have to be honest, and we did everything very

correct and honest, but I could have, if I wanted, I could have lied about everything got 140 points, and they would not know about it. They don't. I don't know how they verify all these things. But I just send them information they accepted it; they accepted my explanation. And that's it.

Rosalie: And they didn't ask for more? They didn't ask to prove or something?

Wim: Of course, I have to share the balance sheets. But for example, they asked me "Hey, what is the ratio", for example, "between the highest salary and the lowest salary within the organization". I just gave two numbers. I said, "hey I calculated it and it's 1.2". Let's take that number now. It doesn't matter. They accepted it. They could have asked me to give the paycheck, you know?

So, I don't know if that makes a difference. But I have gone through the process, and they just picked out some little things that they asked for more information about. But even then, it's more like me making a statement or giving, in an Excel, some numbers, but I could make up those numbers. I did not do that, of course, because there's no reason for me, and if you want to become a B Corp, I don't think you will bother yourself by inventing numbers just to be become a B Corp, that's not really worth it, I think.

But it's not really a very strict and verified process. And for some other labels, I know that there are really audits happening to verify all the data. And as far as I have seen, with B Corp that's not the case, maybe next year we get an auditor. That's possible. Maybe, next year they go to verify everything. I don't know. So that might be a reason. So that might be a reason that for some companies, the value of the bigger label is less important, because there's no real audit behind it. And so, it's really you stating a lot of things.

Rosalie: Then it's more like based on trust?

Wim: The process as I have witnessed and seen myself. It's really based on trust, yes. Or a lot of it is based on trust. I don't know. Maybe with other companies they did it in a different way. I don't know, I can only speak about the process that we have gone through, of course.

Rosalie: And you didn't think that it can lead to abuses?

Wim: Of course, yes. If you don't audit everything,

Rosalie: Then you think that there is like, the risk of greenwashing? A company that takes all the process to become a B Corp, but actually that lies or that is like borderline and then he gets the label, but actually, it's just to say to customers "Hey, I'm good", but actually not?

Wim: I think that's very much possible, yes. I don't know if people will be doing that. Because maybe therefore, the label is not strong enough to actually care about it. I don't know, but I think that's certainly possible. But I don't know, it may be for us because they see who we are and what we are doing, they will not be so very strict on verifying everything because they know that we give our money to a nonprofit. Or they believe us, they trust us.

Maybe that if Nike would come, I would hope that they would be stricter and has more audits to really verify all of these things. Because if they would just say "hey, Nike, you can give us the numbers and you can tell it yourself". And if they would just take that. Yeah, that would be a little bit too easy, I think. The big risk on greenwashing.

Or even if Nike was, in this hypothetical case, was really giving the right replies and is doing the right things. For the outside world, it would probably be less valuable, because there was no audit behind it.

Rosalie: Yeah. Okay. Well, thank you very much for all your answers and all your time. I don't know if you want to add something else, and that we haven't discussed yet?

Wim: All these things about the audit and the verification that's really how we perceive it for StreetwiZe. Maybe you have to ask to the people from B corp, I don't know if do you have a call with people from B Corp yourself?

Rosalie: No, I don't I don't have, but I have calls with different companies. So, I can compare like your process with the process of another company. Because for example, I had a call last week with a Spanish B Corp company and they say that the process was very, very long and very meticulous. So maybe also it depends from country to another.

Wim: So maybe just like the Belgian-Dutch branch who does the verification is like less strict than the other branches, I don't know.

Rosalie: Yes, maybe. Well, thank you very much and have a nice day. And I hope all your projects will still go on in spite of this crisis. Is it still going on?

Wim: Yeah, well, for the MobileSchool part, all the travel of course abroad is canceled. The local organizations that we support, some of them are still working, most of them have to stop to because they're working on the streets with children. That's not really something you can still do today. And for the StreetwiZe part, all deliveries have been canceled or most of them will be postponed actually. So, we'll try to put them on a later date. But, in fact, it's actually the fact that we are not able to do any sales at this moment.

Rosalie: Good luck with that!

Wim: Thank you. Good luck with your study.

Appendix 13: Interview with Eli Novillo Rentero (Parafina Co.)

Rosalie: Hello, good afternoon. Am I disturbing you?

Eli: No it's okey. Wait, can you please wait a minute?

Rosalie: Yes, sure!

Eli: Ok, I am here. Sorry, I don't speak that good English, so I hope it's going to be ok and that you will understand me.

Rosalie: O si no, podemos hablar español también.

Eli: ¡Oh! Vale, lo que quieras.

Rosalie: Vale. Lo intentamos en español, o si no, hacemos mitad-mitad. Hablo en ingles y usted me conteste en español. Entonces querría hablar con usted sobre la certificación B Corp. Quería saber los aventajes y desventajas de B Corp. Mi *goal* es entender porque querían ser B Corp, las partes difíciles en el proceso y las partes mas fáciles. Pero tal ves puedes hablar primero sobre Parafina y las iniciativas que tomen por el

Eli: Bueno, puedes ver mucho sobre el sitio, pero tomamos iniciativas sociales y por la durabilidad. Parafina tiene su proprio proyecto social.

Rosalie: Si, Parafina Social Proyect.

Eli: Exacto. Sobre las ventas, tomamos 5% y lo damos al proyecto social que ayude a financiar la educación en un colegio en Paraguay. Por lo que es de la durabilidad, utilizamos muchos materiales reciclados. Por ejemplo, tenemos una colección hecha

con plástico PET, una con neumáticos reciclados, tapones de corcho, otras formas de plástico reciclado. También tenemos colecciones de gafas que están hechas con bambú orgánico o lata de refrescos. Entonces, hacemos muchos por ambos la durabilidad y por la sociedad.

Rosalie: ¿Vale entiendo, porque querrían ser B Corp?

Eli: Hacemos mucho y somos muy responsable y queríamos ser reconocidos por nuestras acciones. Queríamos una certificación que realmente estuviera alineada con nuestros valores, con lo que hacemos. Aquí en España, B Corp es muy reconocido, y creemos que es la certificación que mas nos parece. Por eso, elegir B Corp era una evidencia.

Rosalie: ¿Entonces, no había dudas sobre cual certificación elegir?

Eli: No, también conocemos a gente adentro de B Corp y nos gusta mucho la certificación. Elegir B Corp era una opción natural para nosotros.

Rosalie: ¿Cuanto tiempo ha durado todo el proceso para convertirse en B Corp, mas o menos?

Eli: Pues, duró me parece, creo que lo puedo buscar. Me parece que fueron como unos 3 meses. Sí, duró unos 3 meses desde que solicitamos la primera auditoria, que es gratuita. Si la pasas, tienes que hacer una aportación para que sigan adelante con la certificación.

Rosalie: Ok. Y para usted, no se si usted puede contestar porque no lo hizo, ¿pero cual era la parte la mas fácil del proceso y la parte la mas complicada del proceso?

Eli: La parte mas difícil es la parte en la que te hacen como un auditoria del producto para ver si realmente es sostenible y que crea un impacto positivo. Eso es la parte mas complicada porque son muy meticulosos. La parte mas fácil es la primera auditoria porque al final es como un formulario, algo así.

Rosalie: ¿Desde que Parafina se convierto en una B Corp, did you see any enhancement of your company's reputation?

Eli: ¿Como que si nos ha reportado algún beneficio tener esta certificación? ¡Si! La comunidad que nosotros queremos conseguir, o sea que queremos tener y queremos

afianzar, sobre todo en las redes sociales que ha visto que realmente somos lo que decimos. Entonces eso nos ha aportado mucha credibilidad, o sea, la gente esta empezando a seguir mas, a ayudarnos que nuestro propósito que es "crear un impacto positivo" se vea.

Rosalie: ¿Entonces los clientes ven que Parafina es B Corp y que es mejor que otra empresa?

Eli: ¡Si, si!

Rosalie: ¿Y también se ve en el desempeño financiero?

Eli: Si, si, en todos los ámbitos.

Rosalie: ¿Y también se ve con los "*investors*"? They are keener to invest?

Eli: Si, hay mucho mas partners, por decirlo así, que son atraídos por Parafina y que ahora están respaldada por esta certificación. Al final, es lo que te digo, estar certificado por algo, siempre te va a dar mas credibilidad, mas atracción por la marca. Porque demuestras que lo que haces es verdad, porque mas ahora, muchas marcas se dicen sostenibles, ecológicas y es mentira. ¡Pero si detrás tienes una certificación B Corp, es mejor!

Rosalie: ¿Pero eso también pasa con cualquiera certificación no? ¿O con B Corp mas? Porque el cliente puede creer en cualquiera certificación.

Eli: Claro, puedes confiar en cualquiera certificación. Pero la cosa es que B Corp tiene mucha más reputación. Entonces, puedes tener otra certificación que nos esta tan conocida, y igual pueden pensar "bueno si tienen esta certificación, ¿pero hasta que punto también es real esta certificación?", pero si tienes a B Corp, tiene mucha mas reputación.

Rosalie: Y entonces con este network de B Corp, con esta comunidad, ¿en que le ha ayudado, esta comunidad?

Eli: Pues, por ejemplo, nos ha ayudado en lo que te he dicho de que nuestra comunidad sobre todo va creciendo, es mas fuerte porque ve que Parafina es real. Luego también, nos ha dado la oportunidad de conocer otras marcas con las podemos hacer, crear sinergias, hacer cosas con otras marcas.

Rosalie: ¿Como partnerships?

Eli: Si, eso es. Hacemos mas acciones con marcas que tienen las mismas valores que nosotros. Nos ha dado la oportunidad de conocer Ecoalf y una otra marca. Y estas son las dos marcas que gracias a B Corp hemos podido colaborar.

Rosalie: ¿Entonces, este aventaje de comunidad es real? Porque he hablado con otras empresas aquí en Bélgica que me han dicho que esta comunidad no hacia mucho. Entonces, en España tal vez funciona mas.

Eli: Aquí en España, nosotros estamos en Madrid, y la verdad que si que se ve bastante movimiento. Y muchas empresas aspiran a ser B Corp.

Rosalie: ¿Ven alguna desventaja a ser un B Corp? ¿Hay algo que no les gustan a B Corp o algo o no?

Eli: De momento, porque, además, la propia B Corp, como corporación, hace mucho. Hace mucho por estar cara a la gente, a las marcas y hace eventos, hace webinars, hace muchas cosas para que esta comunidad se mantenga fuerte y crezca.

Rosalie: Ok, gracias. ¿Y no tienen miedo del "*greenwashing effect*"? Que la gente piensa que es solo un *label* sobre los productos, pero es en serio adentro de la cultura de la empresa.

Eli: Claro. A esto me refería cuando estaba hablando de las otras certificaciones que no tienen tanta reputación. Puede ser, que otras certificaciones no sean tan, no vayan tan al fondo de la marca como lo hace B Corp. Porque B Corp, una de las cosas que B Corp utiliza par eliminar empresas que hacen el *greenwashing*, es la auditoria del producto. Porque en apariencia, todo puede ser muy sostenible, muy ecológico, pero luego, el producto no.

Rosalie: ¿Y no crees que en la comunidad de B Corp hay alguna empresa que hace el *greenwashing*?

Eli: No, no. Porque, además, son empresas que realmente sienten su propósito y quieren conseguirlo. O sea, yo de momento, no he conocido ninguna empresa, además que son casi todas empresas pequeñas, medianas, no hay empresas grandes, que quieren tener un beneficio que se convierte en dinero, por decirlo así. Si no que su objetivo de ser B

Corp, es eso: encontrar gente que les ayuda con su propósito y que de verdad quieren crear un impacto positivo en la sociedad, con su servicio, con su producto.

Rosalie: Ahora hay mas y mas grandes empresas que quieren ser B Corp. ¿Que piensas si hay mas y mas grandes actores que tienen esta certificación?

Eli: Pues, yo estoy convencida que aun sea una empresa muy grande, porque se puede pensar que B Corp también le viene bien tener en su cartera de empresas, empresas grandes. Pero estoy segura de que B Corp no aceptará a una empresa para tener mas reputación. Porque decir: tenemos a Coca-Cola, que es B Corp, ¿es algo muy grande no? Pero no creo que hicieran eso.

Rosalie: Ok. Porque ahora, Danone, si es una B Corp. No todo el grupo, pero algunas partes del grupo que es B Corp, y también es un actor muy grande.

Eli: Si les han conseguido el B Corp, es porque realmente son lo que dicen ser. Yo he conocido a la gente de B Corp de dentro, puedo afirmar que es de verdad.

Rosalie: Pero no crees que, para las pequeñas empresas, el hecho que las grandes empresas también se convierten en B Corp, hace daño a las pequeñas empresas que quieren diferenciarse con esta certificación.

Eli: Si puede ser. Porque también, habrá gente que no sepa que es B Corp. Pero creo, que como esta avanzando la sociedad y con todo lo que esta ocurriendo, al final el efecto no será negativo, pero positivo.

Rosalie: ¿Cuales son las desventajas de ser B Corp?

Eli: Llevamos poco tiempo siendo B Corp, y de momento no nos ha ocurrido nada que sea una desventaja.

Rosalie: ¿Y cuales son las aventajas de ser B Corp? La comunidad, las colaboraciones, la reputación de Parafina esta mejor.

Eli: ¡Si, totalmente!

Rosalie: ¿Hay algo mas que quiere compartir?

Eli: No. Creo que te he contado todo. Somos muy feliz con B Corp. Para nosotros lo que podemos ver es que hay una muy buena influenza de B Corp sobre nuestra empresa.

Tenemos mas credibilidad, tenemos todas la aventajes de ser parte de la comunidad de B Corp. Gracias a esta comunidad, podemos hacer “partnerships” con otras firmas que son muy reconocidas, por ejemplo, hicimos un partnership con Ecoalf.

Rosalie: Ok. Muchas gracias por su tiempo.

Eli: ¡De nada, hasta luego!

Appendix 14: Interview with Stéphanie Moy (Too Good To Go)

Rosalie: Bonjour, je suis en Master à Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgique) en Management International et en fait je fais mon mémoire sur les entreprises écoresponsables et tournées vers le social et surtout sur les B Corps. Le but de mon mémoire est de comparer des entreprises qui sont devenues B Corp et des entreprise qui sont quand même tournées vers le social et qui sont écoresponsables mais qui ne sont B Corp. Le but est de comprendre le pourquoi du comment, qu'est ce qui va pousser une entreprise à devenir une B Corp et qu'est ce qui justement va empêcher une entreprise à commencer le processus et cetera. Du coup, vu que Too Good To Go est une B Corp, c'était intéressant d'avoir votre point de vue sur la certification et tout ça.

Stéphanie: Ce que je propose de faire, c'est que je fais une présentation un peu classique de Too Good To Go, et après tu poseras tes questions, sachant qu'il y a évidemment des choses que je ne pourrai pas aborder, pour des questions de confidentialité et de stratégie, donc je compte sur ta compréhension à ce niveau-là.

Rosalie: Ok!

Stéphanie : Alors, pour te donner un peu de contexte, Too Good To Go ça a maintenant 4 ans, ça a été lancé en 2016 et l'idée est partie d'un constat: un tiers de la production mondiale de nourriture est gaspillée, et en France cela représente 10 million de tonnes de nourriture qui sont jetées chaque année à la poubelle. 10 million de tonnes de nourriture cela représente à peu près 16 milliards d'euros et donc l'idée est de créer un outil qui permet à chaque personne de s'engager contre le gaspillage alimentaire à son échelle. (…) L'idée toute simple de Too Good To Go est de mettre en relation des commerçants qui ont des invendus en fin de journée et des utilisateurs qui vont pouvoir récupérer ses invendus et donc éviter qu'ils partent à la poubelle. Ces invendus sont présentés sous forme de panier surprise, donc l'utilisateur ne sait pas exactement ce qu'il

va avoir, parce que tout dépend des invendus que le commerçant aura ce jour-là en magasin à la fin de la journée. Le panier est de 4 euros environs et représente un tiers de la valeur initiale. On va payer 4€ et on va avoir 10 euros minimum de produits dans son panier donc ça reste quelque chose de pratique et d'intéressant aussi pour le consommateur. Et ce qui est vraiment très cool avec le concept de Too Good To Go, c'est que c'est vraiment un concept gagnant-gagnant: gagnant pour le commerçant parce qu'il peut revaloriser son invendus, surtout pour les artisans qui ont préparés des bons produits, c'est toujours rageant de devoir les jeter, ça leur permet de dégager un petit revenu, c'est pas avec les paniers Too Good To Go qu'ils vont gagner de l'argent, mais ça leur permet d'avoir un petit complément qui est toujours intéressant. Ca va aussi leur permettre de toucher une nouvelle clientèle et le commerçant peut évidemment montrer son engagement pour la planète et contre le gaspillage alimentaire. Pareil du coté utilisateur, ce sont des super produits à petit prix et on fait un bon geste pour la planète. (…). Alors aujourd'hui en France on a 6 millions d'utilisateurs, on a 13 000 commerces partenaires. Ces commerces partenaires, ça va être aussi bien des petites boutiques de quartier comme la boulangerie, la boucherie, le primeur, le resto du coin. Mais ça va être aussi des chaines, on bosse avec des chaines de boulangerie comme Paul, on travaille avec Planet Sushi, on a des partenariat avec de la grande distribution, on a maintenant tous les grands noms de la grande distribution, Carrefour, Monop', Cora, tous en fait maintenant. (…).

Aujourd'hui Too Good To Go est présent dans 14 pays. Too Good To Go en Europe cela représente 22 millions d'utilisateurs, 45 000 commerces partenaires dans toute l'Europe, et au total 35 millions de repas sauvés.

Depuis Janvier 2020, on est certifié B Corp, parce qu'on se défini vraiment comme une entreprise qui un impact, on travaille sur le gaspillage alimentaire pour des raisons écologiques, et l'idée c'est qu'on puisse aussi impacter un maximum de personnes tout en préservant l'environnement et en respectant les gens. C'est un processus qui a été assez long. J'ai pas toutes les réponses sur le B Corp parce que comme j'ai dit c'est un truc relativement récent et surtout il y a beaucoup de critères qui faut pouvoir justifier etc. Mais c'est une vraie source de fierté pour nous. Ca montre qu'on dépasse un peu juste l'intérêt économique et nous on veut vraiment essayer de changer le monde et essayer d'en faire un meilleur endroit.

Rosalie : Justement à propos de B Corp, comment est-ce que tout d'un coup vous vous êtes dit « tiens, on aimerait bien se faire certifier B Corp » ? Comment est-ce que vous avez connu B Corp et comment est-ce que cette idée vous est venue ?

Stéphanie : C'était quelque chose qui était assez logique depuis le début, parce que B Corp maintenant c'est quand même connu. Il y a plus de 3000 sociétés qui sont certifiées mais ça prouve quand même qu'on dépasse la notion de business pur mais qu'on a aussi une mission pas d'intérêt général mais des exigences sociétales et environnementales très fortes. Ca a aussi toujours été notre posture d'être transparent au maximum et donc ça ne fait que prolonger les valeurs et ce qu'on prône.

Rosalie : Mais du coup c'est ou que vous avez connu B Corp ? Parce que moi je viens de Belgique, et c'est relativement peu connu ?

Stéphanie : Je pourrais pas te dire spécifiquement, mais pour moi, même avant Too Good To Go je connaissais déjà B Corp. Il y a Danone aussi, donc il y a quand même des grosses boites aussi. Pour moi en France c'est quand même connu et il faut savoir que notre siège est basé à Copenhague, au Danemark. Donc chaque pays va avoir un management indépendant mais qui reporte au siège et donc c'est vraiment une idée globale, Too Good To Go a été labélisé au niveau global dans tous les pays.

Rosalie : Et du coup, au niveau du processus, que vous dites assez long, est ce que vous savez ce qui vous a posé plus problème, ce qui a été plus facile ?

Stéphanie : Non, ça je pourrais pas te dire, c'est vraiment plus le top management qui a géré le process. Mais je sais qu'il y a énormément d'exigences et de critères à respecter et il faut pouvoir tout justifier. Justement quand on est une entreprise qui veut être certifiée dans 14 pays, le fait de pouvoir rapporter toutes les pièces et toute la paperasse, ça peut aussi être compliqué. De ce que j'ai compris, c'est que les B Corp sont quand même assez exigeants, il y a énormément d'entretiens physiques à faire aussi. Quelle est la durée du processus en Belgique ?

Rosalie : C'est très variable. J'ai eu des contacts avec des entreprises espagnoles qui disaient que le processus est très méticuleux, que ça prenait plus ou moins 3 mois. Par contre en Belgique, on me disait que le processus était relativement facile, que ça prenait du temps, parce qu'il faut tout remplir et ça prend du temps, mais que ce n'était pas si compliqué. Il y a même une entreprise qui m'a dit qu'ils avaient donné tous les documents

qu'on leur avait demandé mais il n'y avait pas spécialement un audit externe qui se faisait pour prouver l'exactitude des documents. C'est pour ça que je me pose aussi la question par rapport au greenwashing, au final c'est très fort sur la culture d'entreprise, sur comment vous vous positionnez par rapport à vos valeurs, missions, etc. mais ça ne va pas tellement dans des détails techniques et du coup vous n'avez pas peur que ce soit juste une certification, un label parmi tant d'autres ?

Stéphanie : Non, parce que pour nous, B Corp c'est un label reconnu, c'est le seul pour lequel on a postulé et quand on voit les boites qui sont certifiées, ce sont des boites qui éthiquement me parlent. C'est vrai que nous, à l'intérieur en terme de gouvernance, de management, de gestion de l'information, de gestion des équipes en interne, ça colle totalement avec ce qu'on défend, nos valeurs et notre manière de travailler. Et globalement le greenwashing, enfin nous, on se définit comme un mouvement, parce qu'on a quelque chose qui nous permet d'agir très concrètement contre le gaspillage alimentaire et on a vraiment cette volonté d'éducation, de sensibilisation, pour donner un maximum d'envie, de solutions concrètes pour lutter contre le gaspillage alimentaire, et a plus grande échelle, lutter contre le changement climatique, donc pour nous, à la rigueur, on pourrait accuser nos partenaires de greenwhasing…

Rosalie : Excusez-moi, en fait, je ne parle pas de vous, parce que le mouvement de Too Good To Go, la raison d'être de Too Good To Go c'est de lutter contre le gaspillage, je ne conteste donc pas du tout ça. Mais est-ce que vous n'avez pas peur par hasard, que d'autres entreprises soient certifiées B Corp et que elles, par exemple, fassent du greenwashing et qu'au final ce label soit un peu biaisé entre guillemets.

Stéphanie : Comme je le disais, vu que c'était un processus long et méticuleux et quand on voit les entreprises certifiées en France, il y a une certaine logique et je pense pas qu'il y ait des boites qui vont greenwasher. Si B Corp continue leur processus de screening assez intransigeant, je ne pense pas qu'il y ait de risque. Je pense justement, que pour eux, c'est important qu'il garde un label strict parce que si tu le donnes trop facilement à plein de boite, ça perd un peu de sa valeur.

Rosalie : Ok, merci. Un autre point, c'est que B Corp, on entend aussi souvent parler de mouvement, mais surtout de communauté B Corp. Est-ce que vous sentez cette communauté B Corp ? Par exemple Danone qui est B Corp, est ce que grâce à B Corp,

vous avez pu les rencontrer et est-ce que ça vous a aidé du coup dans vos partenariats ? Est-ce que vous ressentez des avantages du fait de faire partie de cette communauté ?

Stéphanie : Alors bon, comme je t'ai dit, c'est encore tout récent, parce qu'on a eu la certification fin janvier. Il se trouve que nous on travaillait déjà séparément avec Danone sur la question du pacte, donc pour le moment il n'y a pas eu de gros changement, mais on a déjà eu l'occasion de participer à des calls avec la communauté, donc pour le moment c'est plus pour apprendre à se connaître, de connaître les différentes boites, de voir les différentes initiatives qui sont intéressantes, qui pourraient nous parler, mais encore une fois, depuis mars, avec tout ce qu'il se passe je ne pourrais pas te donner de réponse claire parce qu'on vit un moment exceptionnel… Tu dois le rendre quand ton mémoire ?

Rosalie : Je dois le rendre début juin. Donc apriori d'ici-là, la situation n'aura pas énormément changé. J'espère me tromper mais bon..

Stéphanie : Je pense que globalement, toutes les entreprises, quel que soit leur taille, elles mettront du temps à retourner aux pratiques normales du quotidien. Ca va être un peu spécial.

Rosalie : Oui en effet. Et si vous deviez dire des avantages et inconvénients de B Corp ? Je ne sais pas si vous avez déjà une idée ?

Stéphanie : Pour nous B Corp c'est quelque chose de très cool, donc c'est beaucoup de fierté. Encore une fois, c'est quand même tout récent, donc on a pas encore de recul. Globalement pour nous ce qui nous intéresse, c'est la reconnaissance B Corp et puis c'est aussi un moyen de valoriser nos partenaires et notre communauté. C'est aussi une vraie plus-value pour eux de savoir qu'ils s'engagent, grâce à leurs paniers, pour une cause qui a été reconnue. Niveau aspect négatif, on ne sait pas encore vraiment. Il y a des choses que les autres entreprises que tu as interrogé ont mentionné ?

Rosalie : En fait c'est très varié en fait ce qui est marrant c'est que ça dépend énormément des pays comme je l'ai dit. En Espagne il y en a beaucoup qui m'ont dit « le processus est très long, on est motivé de le faire mais c'est dur de garder la motivation ». En Belgique on m'a dit qu'ils espéraient beaucoup sur l'effet de réseau mais au final, il ne s'est pas beaucoup montré. Tout le monde est vraiment satisfait en général par la certification mais en gros ce qui ressort le plus c'est que c'est quand même pas super connu dans le sens où

ça ne va pas non plus changer énormément par rapport aux consommateurs, ce n'est pas pour ça qu'on va vendre plus. Après c'est sûr ça c'est toujours un gage de qualité donc quand on a le temps de pouvoir en parler et cetera, les gens disent que oui ils y croient, ils savent que ce que l'entreprise dit qu'elle est c'est vrai quoi. Il y a un peu un problème de méconnaissance et alors cet effet de réseaux qui ne fonctionne pas autant dans un pays ou un autre mais ça je pense que ça dépend aussi de la communauté B Corp locale, si elle organise beaucoup d'événements, tout ça dépend un petit peu, mais en effet c'est vrai qu'il n'y a pas énormément de points négatifs. C'est pour ça que du coup je me pose de plus en plus la question, « si c'est si bien B Corp, si tout le monde en est ravi et satisfait, pourquoi est-ce que toutes les entreprises qui sont écoresponsables ou qui en tout cas essayent de l'être, ne font pas plus les démarches ? » Je ne sais pas si vous vous avez des idées à ce niveau-là.

Stéphanie : Je pense que justement c'est un processus qui prend beaucoup de temps et d'énergie. Nous on a pu se le permettre parce qu'on a une équipe qui peut s'occuper de ça. Sinon nous quand on voit l'activité qu'on a au quotidien, c'est compliqué, parce que c'est vrai que c'est une petite boite, une startup. Tu gères 50 projets en même temps, il y a plein de trucs que tu as envie de faire, mais tout ça prend du temps, et globalement, il faut savoir placer ses priorités. Sachant que la certification B Corp a un cout aussi, et donc c'est un budget et encore une fois, tout dépend de ta priorité. En surtout au début, tu ne sais pas, enfin tu sais que c'est une reconnaissance intéressante, mais tu ne sais pas dans quelle mesure ça va impacter ton business. Oui moi je comprends qu'il y ait quand même pas mal de choix à faire, et de se dire, on y va ou on y va pas.

Rosalie : C'est sûr. Est-ce que vous avez peut-être des conseils pour des gens qui pensent peut être devenir B Corp. Est-ce que vous leurs conseillez de « go for it » ?

Stéphanie : Être sûr de savoir ce qu'on veut faire, d'être sûr qu'on respecte tous les critères. Ce que je trouve intéressant, c'est qu'on va peut-être avoir des choses sur lesquelles on ne remplit pas bien les critères, et on va nous demander d'adapter certaines choses, donc au final ça peut être un bon moyen de réguler ses pratiques. Je pense qu'il y a toujours matière à s'améliorer et à voir les choses sous un autre angle et donc, des fois, avec un regard critique, d'extérieur, ça peut aussi nous pousser à réfléchir de manière différente. Je pense que si c'est un projet et s'il correspond fondamentalement aux valeurs de la boite et quelque chose pour lequel on se bat, ça vaut le coup. Après, si c'est juste réfléchir à une opportunité communication parce qu'il y a quelques critères

qui collent, non. C'est pas ça l'essence, et je pense que c'est important aussi qu'on reste sur une communauté justement pas trop grande, pour s'assurer que justement tout le monde avance dans la même direction.

Rosalie : Mais justement, il y de plus en plus de gros acteurs qui deviennent B Corp. Par exemple Danone, j'ai discuté aussi avec quelqu'un de chez Coca-Cola, qui me disait qu'ils essayaient aussi et qu'ils regardaient maintenant le processus de B Corp. Et Coca-Cola, Patagonia disons ce n'est pas non plus exactement les mêmes valeurs, le même business model etc. Est-ce que vous pensez que ça pourrait un peu ternir l'image de B Corp s'il y a des énormes acteurs comme ça. Ou est-ce que ça pourrait nuire aux petites entreprises ? Parce que pour ces petites entreprises, c'est plutôt quelque chose pour se différencier le fait d'avoir B Corp mais maintenant si Danone, Coca, etc. commence à avoir cette certification-là, est ce que cela ne l'abime pas un peu ?

Stéphanie : Je suis un peu partagée dans le sens où, au final, nous on travaille aussi avec des grosses entreprises, et on s'aperçoit que fondamentalement, il y a plein de choses qui évoluent dans la manière de penser de ces grosses boites, et dans les pratiques aussi. Il faut se rendre compte aussi qu'il y a de plus en plus de gens qui ont été formés au développement durable, ils ont 35/40 ans et ils arrivent à des postes à responsabilités. Donc il y a aussi ce principe de venir changer les choses de l'intérieur, ce n'est pas qu'une opportunité de communication. Parce que globalement, il y a énormément de gens qui sont conscients de l'état d'urgence dans lequel on est et qui maintenant ont le pouvoir de changer les choses de l'intérieur, donc c'est aussi quelque chose d'hyper positif. Et pour moi, il ne faut pas les brider dans l'évolution. Encore une fois, si cela repose sur des critères très spécifiques, qui sont prouvables, pourquoi ne pas y aller ? Et au final ça serait quand même génial si toutes les grosses boites, qui sont hyper polluantes, changeaient leur manière de bosser pour avoir un impact environnemental minime, je pense que tout le monde serait content.

Rosalie : Et vous ne pensez pas que B Corp aurait peut-être tendance à diminuer la rigueur de leurs critères pour permettre à des gros acteurs de rentrer dans cette communauté, pour pouvoir justement agrandir la visibilité de la B Corp ?

Stéphanie : Bha je pense qu'ils n'ont vraiment pas intérêt à le faire, bon je parle vraiment de mon avis perso. C'est quelque chose de très exigeant, et très fort, je ne vois pas quel serait leur intérêt. Parce que pour eux, la plus-value de B Corp, c'est que justement c'est

un label très difficile à avoir, qui est très exigeant, s'il y a un nivellement par le bas, ça perd tout son intérêt. Parce qu'il y a déjà énormément de label, de normes, ISO par exemple, qui sont beaucoup moins contraignantes, tout le monde les a, c'est plus incroyable quoi.

Rosalie : Et vous, à part B Corp, vous n'avez pas envie d'avoir une autre certification ? Justement ISO et cetera, tout ça, ça ne vous intéresse pas ?

Stéphanie : Non, et puis et nous comme on est pas sur des trucs production. En fait nous à la base l'application, c'est vraiment un système de réservation, il n'y a pas de question de ventes, de question de production, donc pour le coup, ça ne nous concerne pas. Et comme on est un mouvement contre le gaspillage alimentaire, on veut plus mettre en avant l'impact sur le monde et les valeurs qu'on veut transmettre à nos partenaires à nos partenaires et à nos utilisateurs

Rosalie : Ok. Merci beaucoup.

Appendix 15: Interview with Clara Bardiau (The Skateroom)

Rosalie : Bonjour, c'est Rosalie Alsberge!

Clara : Bonjour Rosalie !

Rosalie : Est-ce que je vous dérange ?

Clara : Pas du tout ! Attends, je vais mettre mes écouteurs ! (…) Voilà !

Rosalie : Je ne sais pas si vous avez bien compris, mais en fait, je suis en dernière année de master et je fais mon mémoire sur les B Corp, les entreprises responsables, éco responsables, etc. En fait, j'aimerais bien comparer une entreprise qui a réussi à devenir une B Corp, avec des entreprises qui sont très fort orientées, éco- et socio-responsable, etc. mais qui n'ont pas fait les démarches pour devenir B Corp. En fait, j'aimerais bien comprendre ce qui pousse une entreprise à faire le process et qu'est ce qui, justement, les retient un peu de commencer cette procédure. Du coup, vu que the Skateroom est une B Corp, ça serait très intéressant d'avoir un peu votre avis sur la certification, sur B Corp, sur comment s'est passé votre procédure, etc. Et du coup, c'est pour ça que je viens un petit peu vers vous.

Clara : Super, Génial! On peut se tutoyer! C'est une super recherche en tout cas, je pense que c'est très fort dans l'air du temps. Comme tu le sais j'imagine, il n'y a pas encore beaucoup de B Corp en Belgique, mais ça commence à grandir, en Europe, le monde commence à grandir. C'est une organisation qui a été leadée plus aux States, et du coup aux Etats-Unis, être une B Corp c'est vraiment quelque chose. Comment le comparer? C'est presque être bio ici. Si on n'a pas bio, Fairtrade… C'est très connu ! Et les gens cherchent maintenant vraiment des partenariats avec uniquement des B Corp aux States, donc c'est vraiment devenu quelque chose de primordial là-bas. Et nous, évidemment, en tant que B Corp, on essaye évidemment de leader le mouvement, pour que le mouvement grandissant en Europe et en Belgique évidemment. Il me semble que tu avais un questionnaire, est-ce que tu veux qu'on repasse sur les questions ?

Rosalie : On peut suivre les questions, mais au fil de la discussion, il y a certaines questions qui vont *pop-up*, d'autres qui sont peut-être un peu moins, un peu moins primordiales. Je voulais d'abord surtout savoir un petit peu comment est-ce que vous avez connu la certification B Corp? Parce que, comme tu l'as dit, en Belgique, c'est vraiment pas très connu. Et du coup, comment est-ce que ça vous est venue à l'idée que B Corp serait intéressant ? D'où est-ce est-ce que vous avez connu tout ça?

Clara : Alors, en fait, moi je suis arrivé chez The Skateroom il y a maintenant un plus d'un an. Et en arrivant, un de mes mission était d'obtenir la certification. Il n'y avait pas encore de rôle de Social Impact Manager chez The Skateroom, donc ça se divisait un petit peu à travers les départements et les personnes qui savaient prendre un peu le lead là-dessus. Et en fait, ils avaient essayé de faire la certification l'année d'avant, mais n'y étaient pas arrivé parce que voilà, ça prend quand même du temps, il faut quelqu'un derrière, pendant en tout cas le process de certification, il faut quand même être derrière. Et du coup, la première fois, ça a été mis un peu de côté, ils ont rempli le questionnaire, mais ils n'ont pas du tout fait le follow-up comme ils auraient dû le faire pour pouvoir avoir la certification. Et donc The Skateroom a décidé d'engager quelqu'un qui ferait ça full-time, c'est-à-dire moi, et donc, quand je suis arrivée, une des missions principales de mon rôle c'était de faire la certification. Donc, j'avoue ne pas trop savoir répondre à la question de comment on a entendu parler de B Corp. Je pense que ça a dû être, parce que nous, chez The Skateroom, notre marché est majoritairement américain, Notre gros marché, enfin on a un gros marché en Amérique et là-bas c'est assez connu. Je pense que c'est mon équipe management qui a dû entendre parler de B Corp à travers l'un ou

l’autre partenaire Américain. Donc pour nous, et c’est l'histoire qu'on raconte souvent quand on parle de B Corp, c'était vraiment logical next step. Notre business model est social, je sais pas si tu as déjà lu par rapport à The Skateroom, et ce qu’on fait ?

Rosalie : Oui, oui !

Clara : Donc vraiment la base et le cœur de ce qu’on fait c’est de soutenir des projets sociaux. Et du coup, ça c’est depuis Jour 1, on a toujours fait ça, et ça reste encore notre business model. Encore maintenant, on essaie de vraiment s’accrocher à nos valeurs et à ce business model, parce que, dans cette crise actuelle, pour nous c'est très difficile, évidemment de soutenir des projets sociaux, parce que je pense que n'importe quelle entreprise souffre de cette crise économiquement. Et nous, on a vraiment décidé dans le plan de continuation qu'on a mis en place à travers cette crise c’est que, une de nos priorités, c'est de continuer à soutenir des projets sociaux. Donc c’est vraiment pour dire que c’est dans le cœur de ce qu’on fait, c’est dans notre ADN. Déjà, ça, c'est quelque chose qu'on avait mis en place sans vraiment s'en rendre compte qu'après, il y avait tout un monde autour de l'entrepreneuriat social, de B Corp etc. Parce que d’ailleurs, nous c’est en 2014, que ça a vraiment commencé, que c’est vraiment devenu une entreprise, de base c’était plus un projet. Et puis on a commencé aussi à être CO2-neutral, on a compensé les émissions de carbone avec CO2 Logic qui est un service basé en Belgique. Et au fur et à mesure, on a essayé d’améliorer nos pratiques par rapport à nos producteurs, et cetera. Le fait qu’ils prennent quelqu'un en full-time alors qu’on est une petite équipe, au moment où je suis arrivée, on était que 10, sur une entreprise qui emploie dix personnes et qui une personne en full-time sur le social, c’est qu’il y a quand même des ressources, ils mettent des ressources et de l'argent là-dedans, c’est important quoi. Parce que même dans des grosses entreprises, je sais pas moi, disons même Levi’s, ils ont peut-être trois ou quatre personnes en sustainability, bon maintenant ça a grandi évidemment, et c’est devenu une trend, c’est quelque chose de presque obligatoire. Donc, je pense que ça change, et tant mieux. Mais j’ai envie de dire Skateroom était quand même assez avant-gardiste. Et donc B Corp c'était vraiment la suite logique de ce qu'on voulait faire, et donc je suis arrivée et j’ai pris le truc en lead, et on a eu la certification 3 mois après, en juillet.

Rosalie : Et du coup, pour vous, le fait que vous ayez envie d'être B Corp c'était juste parce que c'était un logical step, ou c'était aussi parce que vous espérez quelque chose de B Corp par après ? Par exemple, la communauté, la reconnaissance de B Corp, etc.

Clara : Alors je pense qu'au moment où on a commencé le processus, on ne se rendait pas trop compte de tout ce que ça incluait par après. Pour nous, c'était évidemment une reconnaissance, de se dire « voilà, on fait toutes ces choses et enfin, on a une reconnaissance de ce qu'on fait », c'est vrai qu'on fait quand même un effort considérable tous les jours, on se bat tous les jours. Notre équipe, on fait tous des concession pour pouvoir soutenir ces projets sociaux et en avait envie d'avoir cette confirmation, ce label qui te dit « Vous êtes vraiment une boite responsable ». On est loin d'être durable, je pense que c'est un discours que B Lab, l'organisme qui s'occupe de la certification, tient, c'est vraiment de dire, dans les entreprises, je pense que pour pouvoir dire qu'on est sustainable, il faut vraiment être loin. Nous, aujourd'hui, on est pas sustainable, on est responsable et c'est un premier pas vers la sustainability, mais on peut pas dire qu'on est sustainable, on n'est pas parfait. Et je pense qu'aucune B Corp ne se prône parfaite. Même Patagonia, qui est LA B Corp que tout le monde regarde, eux-mêmes ne disent pas qu'ils sont sustainable, ça serait trop gros dire ça aujourd'hui. Donc en fait voilà, premièrement, c'était avoir cette certification, cette crédibilité, pouvoir le dire qu'on est responsable, qu'on met en place certaines choses, que nos pratiques sont mises en place et sont liées aux bienfaits sociétal (environnemental et social surtout). Et puis c'est vrai qu'une fois, quand on a eu la certification, on a vraiment voulu aller un step plus loin. Je ne sais pas si tu as déjà été voir sur l'outil du B Impact Assessment ?

Rosalie : Oui, oui !

Clara : Et donc en fait, nous on utilise vraiment cet outil, donc tu as 200 questions dans ce questionnaire et on s'est vraiment dit qu'on allait l'utiliser. Déjà, moi je suis arrivée chez The Skateroom, j'ai dû remplir ce questionnaire, évidemment avec l'aide d'information parce que je ne connaissais rien sur la boite. Et en fait, moi, ça m'a permis de comprendre tout sur cette boite. Donc ça c'était génial et je pense que n'importe qui rentre dans une boite qui a cette certification, devrait lire son rapport, parce que tu en apprends sur le fonctionnement de la boite, ça c'est très intéressant. Et en fait, on s'est dit que c'était un outil en fait, ce questionnaire. Donc oui, c'est un questionnaire, mais il faut lire à travers les lignes. Quand on te pose une question, et que cette question vaut

5 points et que toi tu en as que un, c'est que c'est une question qui a beaucoup de valeur, donc ça veut dire des pratiques qui doivent être mises en place. Si tu les as pas mises en place, il est temps de le faire penser à comment y arriver. Et donc nous, on s'est vraiment dit après la certification, que ça fait partie de notre bonus collectif. Donc on a un bonus à la fin de l'année qui dépend de quatre critères. En général, dans les boîtes, c'est genre le chiffre d'affaire, le profit, le score par rapport à la satisfaction des clients, donc tu vois il y a un peu plein de critères différent, et nous, un des quatre critères, c'est le fait que chaque année, bon donc, la première année, en 2019, c'était qu'on ait la certification B Corp, on l'a eu. Donc c'était un des quatre critères qui étaient remplis. Et pour les années à suivre, c'est qu'on s'améliore chaque année de 5% sur notre score. C'est quelque chose qui est 100% à l'interne, parce qu'on ne doit rien à B Lab. C'est juste nous, on s'est dit que pour avoir un peu une structure et un chemin, une stratégie pour faire en sorte qu'on s'améliore de jour en jour et pour essayer d'inclure toute l'équipe dans ce processus, on va le mettre dans notre bonus collectif.

Rosalie : Mais du coup, chaque année, c'est votre initiative de refaire le questionnaire, pour voir si vous vous êtes amélioré de 5% ?

Clara : Voilà, exactement. Alors que B Lab demande qu'une re-certification tous les trois ans, nous on s'est dit qu'à l'interne, et c'est moi qui lead ça et d'ailleurs, en ce moment même, c'est que on mettre en place un plan d'amélioration. Et tous les mois de juillet on doit arriver au score pour l'année. Donc c'est vrai que ça nous laisse entre juillet et décembre pour peaufiner certaines choses. Mais on doit vraiment avoir un score qui augmente de 5% chaque année.

Rosalie : Et ça par contre, donc du coup dans 3 ans vous devrez vous recertifier. B Lab ne demande pas du tout d'amélioration, donc il veut toujours que vous ayez minimum 80 mais il ne demande pas d'amélioration?

Clara : Non, il ne demande pas d'amélioration. Après, il y a ce qu'ils appellent les Best for the World Honorees, donc c'est un peu un award au sein des B Corp. Donc c'est pour toutes les B Corp qui ont réussi à avoir, je ne sais plus c'est quoi la règle, je pense que c'est un pourcentage sur un pilier, donc c'est même pas sur ton score total, c'est genre sur un des 5 piliers, je pense que tu dois avoir un certain pourcentages de score ou être dans les meilleurs 10% sur chaque pilier, un truc comme ça, je sais pas. Donc

évidemment, ils donnent des incentive pour que le B Corp s'améliorent, mais c'est pas du tout un critère pour eux. .

Rosalie : Ok. Et au niveau du processus de certification, combien de temps ça vous a pris pour devenir B Corp ? Du début jusqu'à l'obtention de la certification ?

Clara : Je dirais que j'ai commencé en avril, et on l'a eu en juillet. Avril, mai, juin, on l'a eu début juillet, donc 3 mois

Rosalie : Ok. Et alors, qu'est ce qui a été le plus facile? Et quelle était la partie la plus difficile du processus.

Clara : Alors, la partie la plus difficile, ça dépend des boites évidemment, nous on était encore une petite boite, on n'avait pas tout qui était organisé, mis en place, mis en format, dans les Excel, etc. Mais donc, je dirais que le numéro 1, c'est de collecter l'information. Évidemment, quand il y a des questions qui nous paraissent évidentes, les réponses nous paraissent évidentes et on se dit « bha oui, c'est d'office ça », mais après, il faut se dire « comment est-ce qu'on donne la preuve de ça ? ». Donc en fait c'était ça qui était compliqué. Un, être sûr que les réponses qu'on donnaient étaient les bonnes, parce ce que du coup il faut quand même, bon moi j'ai fait ça beaucoup en lead avec notre CEO, mais il fallait quand même qu'on vérifie certaines informations auprès de chaque membre de l'équipe qui pouvait nous fournir cette information. Donc, je dirais avoir validation de chaque membre de l'équipe et collecter les informations pour preuve, pour qu'on puisse prouver nos réponses par après. C'est ça qui est très important en fait, la preuve qu'on peut donner après.

Rosalie : Ok. Et du coup, une partie un peu plus facile où n'avez pas eu de difficulté ?

Clara : Bah en soi, le questionnaire, il faut se plonger dedans, il a des questions un peu plus compliquées que d'autres, mais si on est avec une personne qui connaît vraiment bien la boite à coté de nous et qui peut valider les réponses, ça peut se faire en une journée le questionnaire, voilà, c'est juste se plonger dedans. C'est toute la validation après qui est un peu plus rigoureuse.

Rosalie : Pour avoir l'assessment et tout ça ou quoi ?

Clara : Pour être sûr que toutes les réponses données sont validées et qu'on puisse les prouver, quoi. C'est vraiment plus la preuve qu'il y a derrière.

Rosalie : Oui mais ce que je dis c'est que la partie questionnaire est relativement facile mais c'est la partie Assessment Review qui est un peu plus longue ?

Clara : Oui, oui tout à fait, c'est ça. Donc remplir le questionnaire, c'est ce que je disais, si on est avec quelqu'un qui connaît bien, c'est assez facile. Après, évidemment, il y a plein de choses à aller voir. Par exemple, la consommation d'énergie, il faut aller voir les factures. Donc il y a des trucs qui prennent un peu plus de temps que d'autre mais dans l'ensemble, 85% du questionnaire est faisable comme ça, si on est a côté d'une personne qui connaît bien la boite, c'est faisable quoi.

Rosalie : Oui, ok. Et depuis que vous êtes devenu B Corp, est-ce que tu as constaté une amélioration de votre entreprise, est-ce que par exemple vous vendez plus, vous avez plus de partenariats ?

Clara : En termes de performance donc ?

Rosalie : Oui.

Clara : Alors je pense que c'est encore un peu tôt de le dire, parce que ça fait, oui ça fait en fait presque un an déjà, enfin ça fait 9 mois. Mais en fait on arrive pas vraiment à dire exactement si c'est un impact direct du fait qu'on est une B Corp ou non. Donc pour ça c'est un peu difficile de le dire aujourd'hui. Après, ce qui est sûr, c'est que, par exemple, notre Business Developper qui travaille sur le marché Américain, il a eu plusieurs fois des demandes uniquement parce qu'on était une B Corp. Donc c'est vrai qu'il y a des partenaires potentiels qui nous demande « est-ce que vous êtes une B Corp oui ou non ? Parce que nous on veut travailler qu'avec les B Corp ». Mais je dirais qu'en Europe, ça reste encore un peu restreint quoi.

Rosalie : Et alors au niveau de la communauté B Corp, est ce que grâce à cette communauté, vous avez réussi à avoir de nouveaux partenaires ? Parce que B Corp parle beaucoup de de cette communauté, de cette B Corp family. Est-ce que vous avez vraiment senti que vous vous faisiez partie du coup de cette communauté B Corp et que cela vous a avantagé quelque part ?

Clara : Oui, alors nous on s'est rendu compte de cette communauté quand on a été au B Corp Summit en septembre, à Amsterdam. Donc ils ont organisé une énorme conférence, qui était GENIALE, c'était vraiment super dynamique. Il y avait des B Corp et des non B Corp, tout acteurs différents, c'était pas que des B Corp. Mais c'est sûr

qu'à cette conférence, quand on est B Corp, les discussions vont très facilement. Par exemple, on a parlé avec Patagonia, The Body Shop, on a parlé avec toutes ces entreprises et ça nous donnait aussi une visibilité d'être-là. C'était clairement une ouverture à la communauté quoi. En termes de partenariats, je dirais que, comme ça, virtuellement, là, sur nos ordinateurs, on a pas encore vraiment vu les bienfaits de la communauté en termes de partenariats, parce que je pense qu'elles se font quand on va à des conférences. Mais donc depuis qu'on a été à cette conférence, on a pu activer pas mal de réseau et de connexion, et ça c'est clairement grâce au fait qu'on est une B Corp uniquement. Et même sur place, ça a été génial, parce qu'il y avait plein de workshop, de panel et de discussion différentes qui ont fait qu'on a pu s'inspirer, apprendre, connecter avec d'autres B Corp, et d'autres personnes de manière générale. Donc ça oui, c'est clairement un aspect super positif. Et puis, en termes de communauté, comme je le disais donc, la communauté est encore très petite en Belgique. Mais nous, on essaie vraiment, je pense que ça s'est fait un peu organiquement, d'agir en tant qu'ambassadeur si tu veux. On a été plusieurs fois parler à des panels pour présenter qu'est-ce qu'est B Corp, qu'est-ce que ça nous a apporté, comment faire la procédure de certification, un peu des Best Practices sur comment faire etc. Et donc oui, clairement, on sent la communauté Benelux je dirais, plus que belge, pour l'instant. Et nous, on essaie de passer les demandes à B Lab en disant qu'on aimerait activer beaucoup plus la communauté européenne, et on dit qu'on veut bien le faire aussi à travers la Belgique. Donc voilà.

Rosalie : Ok. Et vous pensez que ça vous donne un peu un moyen aussi de se différencier par rapport aux autres entreprises qui n'auraient pas ce label-là ? Ou vous ne pensez pas que ça change énormément, parce que au final, vos clients pourraient déjà penser « c'est vrai quand on voit qu'ils sont hyper investis dans des projets sociaux, etc. ». Du coup, ça change vraiment au niveau de différenciation le fait d'avoir cette certification ou pas spécialement ?

Clara : Alors il y a deux choses, déjà nous, on a pas vraiment compétiteurs. Donc, je pense que pour nous ça ne change pas grand-chose, à part le fait que, comme je disais, on confirme notre modèle, on confirme l'ADN de la boîte, on confirme plein de chose à travers ça. Qu'on est plus responsable etc. Mais je pense que par exemple, pour des boites qui ont un compétiteur, clairement, ça joue. Parce qu'en fait c'est pas seulement avoir une certification, et ça dépend aussi de la manière dont les entreprises

communiquent la dessus, parce tout dépend du storytelling. Mais, une fois que tu as la certification, c'est aussi de dire, on a fait tout ce processus de réflexion sur notre entreprise, c'est pas juste dire, on a la certification et basta. C'est dire qu'ils ont pris le temps de faire tout ce processus de réflexion et aussi d'aller de l'avant et de s'améliorer. Donc je pense que pour des entreprises qui ont un compétiteur clé, alors c'est assez intéressant, oui. Et alors, il y avait aussi une deuxième chose que j'allais dire. Nous, vraiment, comme je le disais, c'était plus avoir la reconnaissance pour nous du fait voilà, on a des pratiques en place et qu'on a un business model et cetera. Mais on veut aussi éviter de trop s'identifier par rapport à B Corp parce que nous, évidemment, on surfe sur la vague et on utilise ça comme un atout, mais on veut pas que ça fasse partie, évidemment, dans chaque présentation et chaque fois qu'on parle de The Skateroom, on mentionne qu'on est B Corp, mais on est avant tout The Skateroom. Je pense qu'il y a d'autres entreprises qui se prône d'abord plus B Cor et puis qui oublient un peu où ils sont quoi. Nous on veut vraiment garder notre identité The Skateroom, et confirmer et s'affirmer en disant qu'on est une B Corp. Donc ça dépend un peu en termes de communication aussi sur quel pied on se met quoi.

Rosalie : Oui. Et alors, aussi, là, B Corp c'est encore petit, mais ça grandit de plus en plus, il y a de plus en plus de gros acteurs qui commencent à devenir B Corp. Je pense par exemple à Danone, qui a été certifié il y a pas longtemps. Est-ce que vous n'avez pas peur que le fait qu'il y ait de plus en plus de gros acteurs qui, enfin quand on pense Danone, responsable n'est pas spécialement le premier mot qui nous vient en tête. Est-ce que vous n'avez pas peur que le fait que des gros acteurs deviennent B Corp, je dirais pas ternissent l'image, mais enlève un peu de la crédibilité de cette certification ?

Clara : C'est une très bonne question. Je pense que de nouveau il y a plusieurs choses. La première chose qu'on dit quand Danone est B Corp, les gens ont une réaction « mais enfin non, c'est une blague quoi». Et en fait, nous, on a eu aussi cette réaction au début. Et puis, au final, ce qu'on s'est dit, c'est que ce n'est qu'un mindset. Il faut justement se dire, qu'en fait, c'est justement bien parce que ce genre d'entreprise font un effort énorme, qui est un effort qui est beaucoup plus gros que le nôtre. Par exemple, moi je sais, je connais la Head of Sustainability de Danone qui s'appelle Sonia, et pour eux ça a pris vraiment 1 an pour faire cette certification, c'était un effort énorme pour eux. Et donc, je pense qu'il faut essayer de changer de mindset et se dire que c'est génial que ce genre d'entreprise passe B Corp justement. Après, je pense que B Lab se rend bien

compte de ça aussi et des potentielles critiques qu'il peut y avoir autour de ça et je pense qu'eux essaient de renforcer de leur côté la certification, les questions, tout le processus. Donc je pense que B Lab s'update aussi par rapport à ça. C'est un peu comme imaginer deux roues et il faut qu'elles tournent à la même vitesse et je pense que B Lab sait aussi qu'ils doivent évidemment s'améliorer et renforcer leurs questions et la certification d'année en année. D'ailleurs. c'est pour cela que par exemple, on était sur une version 5 quand on a été certifié, et maintenant le questionnaire est passé à une version 6, et ils font ça chaque année. Donc je pense qu'ils sont aussi hyper rigoureux par rapport au fait qu'il y ait des grosses entreprises qui rentrent et qui veulent aussi, pas que ce soit trop difficile, mais pas que ce soit trop facile non plus. Donc voilà, je pense qu'il faut juste un mindset de se dire, « voilà, c'est génial que certaines entreprises, et des entreprises pour lesquelles ça demande beaucoup de travail, fassent ça ». Et en fait, on espère qu'une chose c'est que dans un monde idéal, tout le monde soit B Corp.

Rosalie : Oui. Mais justement, tu ne penses pas que au contraire, B Corp pourrait se dire « c'est bien d'avoir des gros acteurs qui vont augmenter la visibilité de B Corp», et du coup, faire en sorte qu'on ne soit plus connu. Parce qu'en Belgique, B Corp c'est vraiment pas très connu. Ok aux Etats-Unis, c'est beaucoup plus connu, mais en Europe ça reste quand même une certification que tous les consommateurs ne connaissent pas s'ils ne sont pas un peu impliqués dans le développement durable, la responsabilité des entreprises, etc. Donc est-ce que tu penses pas que au contraire, ils pourraient se dire « cette entreprise est bien, un peu limite, mais on va quand même la laisser passer parce qu'elle va nous procurer une plus grande visibilité » ?

Clara : Alors je pense pas qu'ils aient besoin de visibilité en ce moment. Du coup je pense que non. Parce que je sais qu'ils ont énormément de demandes de certification. D'ailleurs, ils sont sous-staffés pour l'instant. Donc, il y a beaucoup trop de demande par rapport à ce qu'eux savent faire. Et donc, ça prend beaucoup plus de temps pour l'instant pour les B Corp de se certifier parce qu'il y a une liste d'attente qui est énorme quoi. En fait ça marche par pôle. Quand tu envoies un questionnaires, tu rentres dans un pôle, et c'est, je sais pas, peut-être une vingtaine de B Corp qui passent la certification au même moment, et donc qui ont les mêmes, enfin ils font ça par période et par pôle quoi. Donc non, honnêtement, je ne pense pas, évidemment que pour eux c'est génial d'avoir une si grosse entreprise qui l'ait fait, parce que ça leur donne de la crédibilité aussi, mais je pense pas qu'ils soient dans la demande, parce que je pense qu'ils ont déjà

énormément de demandes et énormément de visibilité. Je sais pas si tu as vu ou si tu as entendu parlé de ça, mais tu connais UNGC, UN Global Compact ?

Rosalie : Oui !

Clara : C'est quand même un organisme qui est assez énorme. C'est les Nations Unies et ils viennent de faire partenariat avec B Lab aux States sur les Sustainable Development Goals. Donc je pense vraiment pas qu'ils aient besoin de visibilité, au contraire, je pense qu'ils ont presque trop de demandes par rapport à ce qu'ils peuvent offrir pour l'instant.

Rosalie : Donc, le greenwashing dans B Corp pour toi, ça existe pas ? C'est pas possible qu'une entreprise utiliserait B Corp juste pour son image?

Clara : Après B Corp, enfin B Lab, ne peut que vérifier ce qu'il sait vérifier. Une entreprise peut évidemment rendre son image plus une belle à travers le BIA, mais je pense quand même que dans tout le processus qu'on fait pour devenir une B Corp, il y a toute cette réflexion qui est mise derrière aussi. Je pense que ça reste un big step pour une entreprise. Donc pour moi, déjà, rien que de prendre le temps de faire ces questionnaires et de réfléchir un peu, et faire un due diligence de où en est la boite, pour moi c'est déjà une pratique responsable qu'une boîte met en place après. Évidemment, ça ne veut pas dire pour autant que la boite opère de manière responsable et qu'il n'y a plus rien à faire. Donc, je pense qu'évidemment, il y a des boites qui peuvent utiliser un peu comme du greenwashing. Je trouverais ça évidemment dommage, mais je pense que B Lab s'en rend compte aussi. Et comme je le disais, je pense que B Lab va essayer de renforcer son questionnaire d'année en année. Mais bon ce qui est génial aussi avec B Lab c'est qu'ils ne veulent exclure personne. Une fois que tu rentres dans le questionnaire et dans l'assessment, si tu n'as pas de 80 points quand ils vont te donner tous les conseils pour arriver. Ça c'est aussi génial, c'est pas juste, passer un examen et rater. C'est vraiment rentrer dans un processus de progrès et d'amélioration quoi.

Rosalie : Est-ce que tu as eu l'impression que toutes tes infos avaient été vérifiée par un audit externe, parce que j'ai eu l'occasion de parler à d'autres B Corp, et notamment il y en a une qui m'a dit qu'ils avaient donnée toutes les informations, et les preuves, mais qu'ils auraient très bien pu faire, pas des fausses preuves, mais redorer ce qu'ils disaient. Est-ce que tu penses que la validation est faite de manière juste de la part de B Corp ?

Clara : Je pense qu'en effet, c'est aussi jouer un peu fair-play, tu vois. Pour moi, les entreprises, évidemment qu'il y a moyen de créer des fausses preuves, mais je pense que ce que B Corp attend c'est que les entreprises ne le fassent justement pas. Donc je pense que c'est juste une question d'être fair-play. Nous, toutes les preuves qu'on a données sont complétement transparentes, et on s'est vraiment mis à nu. Je pense aussi que c'est un risque que les entreprises prennent en se redorant, parce que ça peut leur retomber dessus. En devenant B Corp on accepte aussi d'être transparent et cela ajoute évidemment une pression sur les pratiques de la boite, mais ça fait partie du game et il faut l'accepter. Je pense que c'est positif comme c'est négatif. C'est positif parce que du coup on veut toujours faire mieux. D'une certaine manière c'est négatif parce que du coup ça met une pression additionnelle sur l'entreprise. Donc je pense que c'est juste le fait d'être fair-play, de bien jouer le jeu et de se dire « voilà, on est 100% transparent, et s'il y a des pratiques à mettre en place, on les mettra en place, quoi ». Je pense que c'est risqué honnêtement de se donner une image que ce qu'elle est réellement parce que ça peut lui retomber dessus. B Corp peut potentiellement venir visiter vos bureaux, venir rencontrer la boite, tout cela n'est pas exclu quoi. Nous, on l'a pas eu parce que voilà, ils sont encore très petits en Belgique et qu'ils n'ont pas les ressources pour le faire, mais, je pense que clairement c'est faisable, et s'ils remarquent après qu'il y a plein de choses qui sont fausses, avoir une dé-certification B Corp, je pense que c'est pire que de ne pas avoir juste la certification tout court.

Rosalie : En tout cas.

Clara : Ça n'en vaut pas la peine quoi.

Rosalie : Donc c'est vraiment jouer sur le fairplay et sur la confiance au final ?

Clara : Oui, oui. Je pense que c'est là-dessus que B Lab joue. Après il y a des clauses au debut et à la fin en disant que toutes nos informations sont justes et honnêtes mais voilà. Et après je pense que c'est comme quand on jour et qu'on triche, je pense qu'on n'a pas la même satisfaction en étant après certifié.

Rosalie : Non, ça c'est sûr. Et alors, je ne sais pas si tu as quelques des principaux avantages et inconvénient de B Corp ?

Clara : Avantage, comme on l'a déjà dit, la communauté. Ce qui est génial aussi, c'est ce que nous on a mis en place. En fait comme je le disais, nous on a vraiment un peu

pris le lead, même en Belgique sur le mouvement, mais aussi le fait d'agir un peu en tant qu'ambassadeur au Benelux. Et donc ce que moi j'ai fait par exmple avec une personne de B Lab, c'est qu'on a mis en place un groupe avec deux autres B Corp, avec plus ou moins la même la taille que la nôtre, enfin que notre boite. En fait, on se fait des calls tous les deux mois pour s'inspirer, partager les pratiques qu'on met en place. Et ça a commencé surtout avec le plan d'amélioration, parce qu'on avait tous envie de mettre un plan d'amélioration en place, mais je pense qu'on était un peu tous comme un poisson dans l'océan, il y avait plein de possibilités pour le plan d'amélioration et on ne savait pas trop comment commencer. Et donc on a commencé par juste se partager nos idées, comment faire, comment engager ton équipe là-dedans, comment être sûr que ton management soit ok, voilà, on s'est un peu partagé ce qu'on appelle des Best Practices. Donc on a fait un peu un groupe de best practices, et ça pour moi, c'est la grande valeur ajoutée d'avoir été B Corp ces 6 derniers mois, c'est ce groupe-là, qu'on a créé avec une entreprise qui s'appelle « Dopper », qui fait les gourdes avec les gobelets, je sais pas si tu connais ?

Rosalie : Ah oui, oui !

Clara : Et avec « Seepje » qui est une entreprise de savon écoresponsable.

Rosalie : Ok.

Clara : Donc ça c'était clairement une valeur ajoutée, parce que voilà, on rentre dans un réseau, et on s'entraide et il n'y a pas de compétition, donc ça c'est génial ! C'est juste « aidons-nous les uns les autres dans ce qu'on fait pour pouvoir s'améliorer ». Et puis, il y évidemment la communauté, la visibilité, la crédibilité. Dans les points négatifs, je pense que pour les entreprises, qui n'ont pas quelqu'un comme moi, full-time dessus, c'est peut-être juste le fait que t'as envie de donner plus de temps, mais tu ne l'as pas. Ce qui n'est pas le cas pour nous, parce que moi je peux être dessus quand même assez souvent. Il n'y a pas de point négatif d'être rentré dans le réseau pour moi. Comme je le disais, c'est ajouter une pression à la boite pour être le plus responsable possible, donc comme on le disait, si tu as donné des réponses dans ton questionnaires et en fait c'est pas ça que tu mets en place, c'est un risque quoi. Donc ça c'est juste le fait d'être 100% transparent, c'est quelque chose qui ajoute un peu une pression, mais on le savait en le faisant et on avait envie de le faire, et c'est pour ça qu'on l'a fait. Ce n'est même pas vraiment un point négatif, mais voilà, c'est une pression que ça ajoute. Et alors, juste un

point négatif par rapport à l'Europe, c'est qu'on est pas encore assez loin dans le mouvement par rapport aux US qui sont beaucoup plus loin et où c'est presque devenu politique quoi. Donc voilà, je pense qu'il y a encore beaucoup de choses à faire aussi en Europe, mais après c'est chouette aussi de faire partie du mouvement, et du début de B Corp en Europe. Et ça nous laisse aussi, bon ça n'a pas encore été le cas depuis qu'on est B Corp, mais ils font souvent aussi des réunions avec les B Corp pour brainstormer de « vers quoi vous voulez que B Corp aille ? », donc on est inclus un peu plus aussi dans les discussions stratégiques de B Lab.

Rosalie : Et justement alors du coup, comment est-ce que tu penses que le mouvement B Corp va évoluer ? Qu'est-ce qu'ils vont faire pour évoluer ? Quels sont les next steps de B Corp ?

Clara : Écoute, ça moi je suis pas trop au courant donc je pourrais pas te dire. Je sais qu'ils travaillent sur le fait qu'ils aient besoin de beaucoup plus de ressources à l'interne, pour pouvoir mener le mouvement sur base de la demande qu'il y a aujourd'hui, donc ça je pense que c'est leur premier focus. Et oui, comme je le disais, il y a tout ce partenariat avec UNGC sur les SDG's, et je pense que ça, ça va être un gros truc qui va commencer à se mettre en place aussi, pour être sur qu'on puisse traduire le travail des B Corp en SDG's et pouvoir s'aligner sur le langage universel du développement durable. Et puis voilà, clairement, je pense qu'ils veulent beaucoup plus, rendre la communauté B Corp beaucoup plus connectée en Europe.

Rosalie : Oui, ok. Mais du coup, il y a quand même quelque chose que je ne comprends pas : toutes les entreprises qui sont B Corp, vous êtes toutes hyper enjouées par le mouvement, par la certification et cetera. Mais il y a, comme on l'a dit, peu d'entreprises en Belgique qui sont certifiées, alors qu'il y en a quand même pas mal qui vont dans ce sens, essayer d'être plus responsable, être conscient de ses pratiques, et essayer de s'améliorer. Et du coup, ce mouvement n'attire pas plus d'entreprise ? Qu'est-ce qui pourrait freiner, selon toi, les entreprises à commencer ce process ?

Clara : Ca prend du temps, ça prend vraiment du temps. Il faut qu'il y ait une personne qui soit full time, ou en tout cas au moins pendant trois mois, qui soit deux jours/semaine dessus. Donc c'est des décisions qu'ils doivent prendre en fonction aussi du temps qu'ils ont et des priorités que la boite a. Je pense que c'est toujours ce genre de truc qu'on met de côté parce qu'on a jamais le temps au final. Donc ça, ça dépend un petit peu de la

stratégie des entreprises, et de vers où ils veulent aller. Nous c'était notre priorité pour 2019, et donc on a décidé, enfin The Skateroom a décidé de mettre en place, quelqu'un en full time pour pouvoir le faire quoi. Donc oui, ça prend du temps, après, il faut pas quelqu'un en full-time. Je connais plein de gens, dans la communauté B Corp, j'ai déjà été en contact avec plein de gens qui sont pas full time sur B Corp. D'ailleurs moi je suis pas en full-time sur B Corp non plus, je fais plein d'autres choses à coté, mais il faut quelqu'un qui soit responsable pour ça quoi. Et du coup il faut que l'équipe soit engagée, que l'équipe comprenne pourquoi on le fait. Ca prend du temps quoi, donc il faut que tout le monde soit informé de pourquoi et quels sont les avantages de B Corp pour que l'équipe soit motivée de donner aussi les informations nécessaire, de donner le temps nécessaire, donc voilà.

Rosalie : Oui, donc vraiment la plus grande barrière c'est le temps ?

Clara : Oui, je pense que c'est clairement le temps et les informations nécessaires, pour pouvoir le faire.

Rosalie : Ok, bon et bien je pense que tu as répondu à énormément de mes questions, donc merci beaucoup ! Je sais pas si tu voudrais encore rajouter quelque chose qu'on aurait pas spécialement abordé ?

Clara : Non, je pense que tu as la majorité, ou en tout cas les points les plus importants ! Je serais ravie d'avoir ta recherche quand elle est finie!

Rosalie : Ok, je pourrais te l'envoyer alors !

Clara : Ok parfait ! Un grand merci Rosalie et bonne chance pour la fin de ta thèse !

Rosalie : Merci, bonne journée !

Appendix 16: Interview Guide for Non-B Corporation Companies

General Introduction:

Dear,

First and foremost, a big thank you for the time you take to help me in my thesis.
I would like to do this interview with you in order to gather information on my research subject: the sustainable development, CSR and the B Corporation Certification.

Concretely, I'm here today to discuss two different things. Firstly, I would like to discuss the CSR initiatives that you are taking in your company, the motivation behind these actions, the consequences of them and so forth. In the second part of this interview, I would like to dig deeper into the B Corp topic: understand what drove you to get the certification, how the process happened, the advantages/disadvantages of the certification and so forth.

To clarify all of this, I propose to begin this interview and I will turn now to the questions.

5. **General Questions about the Company:**

- Can you tell me about your company? How has it started?
- What do your company do? What is your work?
- What are your company's values?
- How did it grow?
- What is the mission and vision of your company?

6. **Questions regarding CSR initiatives:**

- What are the initiatives you take regarding CSR?
- Why do you take CSR initiatives at first?
- Do you see any improvement regarding your company's reputation since the beginning of your initiatives?
    - If yes, how do you see it? What has changed?
    - If not, does it impede your motivation of being socially responsible?
- Do you see any financial performance?
    - If yes, how do you see it? What has changed?
    - If not, does it impede your motivation of being socially responsible?

- According to you, what are the main advantages of getting committed into CSR?
- On the contrary, what are the main disadvantage/difficulties of getting increasingly committed into CSR?
- How do you track and measure progress of the initiatives you are taking?
- Do you think taking CSR initiatives can help you anticipate trends and customer's and market's expectations?
    - Can you explain me how and why?
- Do you see changes in the motivation and involvement of the personnel thanks to CSR activities? Can you explain how and what has changed?
    - Does taking CSR initiatives have help you to retain staff?
- Does CSR initiatives help you to have a long-term relationship with your suppliers, consumers and employees?
    - If yes, does it help you to create a prosperous and an innovative environment?
- What investment are you willing to do to take CSR initiatives in terms of time and money?
- Do you find it hard to convince management/shareholders/stakeholders to pursue CSR activities?
    - If yes, how did you manage to make it happened anyways?
    - If yes, who was hard to convince and why?
    - If not, why not?
- Are you hoping CSR initiatives will have a financial return eventually?
    - If yes, how do you prove that?
    - If not, are you afraid that CSR initiatives might don't bring any financial value?
- How do you choose what initiative to take, at what time?
    - Do you have a concrete CSR Strategy?
    - To what extent is it integrated in the core strategy?
- Do you have a CSR manager? An expert in that field?
- Does the Belgian legislation support CSR implementation?

7. <u>Questions regarding the (B Corp) Certification:</u>

- To what extent are you interested into certifications/labels?
- Do you have any certifications/labels? Which one?
- What are the advantages of having a certificate?
- Conversely, what are the disadvantages of being certified?

- What do you think is the point of having certifications if you control your sustainability initiatives yourself?
- What is the financial investment and in terms of time and money that you are ready to take to obtain a certification?
- Do you know the B Corporation Certification?
    - If yes, how did you get to know the B Corporation Certification?
- There are a lot of certifications promoting sustainable development. How is B Corp certification better than any other? Do you see any interest in becoming a B Corp more than another certification?
- According to you, what are the main advantages of the certification of B Corp?
- On the contrary, what are the main disadvantages of B Corp?
- According to you, what are the main barriers of the B Corp certification?
    - Could these barriers dissuade you from taking the step to become a B Corp?
- Do you think B Corp certification has limits? Which ones?
- If you are not interested in B Corp, do you see other alternatives to demonstrate a company's commitment to sustainable development?
- Would you recommend a certificate other than B Corp? If yes which one?
- Do you notice that consumers are willing to pay more to get sustainable goods if a company if certified?
    - Would that be a driver of getting the certification?
- Do you think that investors are keener to invest if you are certified? Why yes/not?
- Do you think that having a certification can lead to getting a competitive advantage compared to a non-certified company? Why yes/not?
    - Do you believe that having a certification is a way of differentiating yourself? Why?
- Do you think certification can lead to decreased employee turnover? Why yes/not?
- It is said that when you join the B Corp movement, you are part of a real community. Do you share this point of view?
- To what extent are you afraid of the “greenwashing” effect?

8. **<u>Questions regarding possible evolution of the system</u>**:

- How do you believe the B Corp movement will evolve?
- If you self-monitor your sustainable actions, why would you need a certification in the first place?

- Do you think there are alternative to B Corp's? If yes, which ones?
Closing - Do you have anything else to add? Is there anything you would like to share? Again, I would like to thank you very much for all your very useful answers. This will help me a lot in my research! Best regards, Rosalie Alsberge

Appendix 17: Interview with Michael Solomon (Responsible 100)

Michael Solomon dim. 8 mars 23:59 (il y a 4 jours)

À moi

Hi Rosalie

We have just made a new site live: https://www.responsible100.com/
If you could read and let me know if it all makes sense, and if you find any typos, and if everything looks and works like you think it should, or not. That would be very helpful.
Here is my 30 mins pass on your 19Qs (summarizing much of my 18 years of experience working on this stuff):

1. **Can you explain a little bit more about Responsible 100?**

See https://www.responsible100.com/ and the old website, esp the FAQs, now at http://cms.responsible100.com/about/faq/

2. **How it has grown?**

It has not grown much because we have had all sorts of problems building the web platform.

3. **What is its purpose? Its values?**

Purpose: to catalyse a "race to the top"
Values: Pro-business, pro-profit, but not anti-people or anti-planet. Again, so much in the websites, esp the new FAQs

4. **Can you tell me a little bit more about the Responsible 100 community?**

It is a little stale ATM. We have been rather inactive for 2 years. I am hoping to get it all back together in the coming weeks and months.

5. **What are your views on the B Corporation?**

We would not exist without them, we shared an early investor/funder who would not have supported us if had he not supported B first, this is back in 2008 btw. She shares the same aims and goals.

6. **Why would you be against it?**

I know and like the people in B Lab, I respect them, and the community of B bizs, I just don't think the formula can achieve real scale and thus real impact. At this late stage, doing a little bit of good here and there is not going to arrest the climate crisis. A recent blog from me below. Plus read this one by a friend:

My friend Ed Gillespie published a brilliant blog yesterday, all of which I wholeheartedly recommend to you. My favourite line, among many gems, relates to a maxim from XR and what it really means right now: *'Tell the truth. And act like that truth is real' is a reasonable demand in unreasonable times. The essential transition happens on our watch. In our careers. In our lives. It needs to be radical.*

7. **According to you, why would a company would be attracted into becoming a B Corp?**

To demo their ethical creds, to join a community, to better understand and improve their responsibility performance. To improve their standing in the eyes of their stakeholders, to be the ethical choice. All reasons for joining R100 too!

8. **What are the positive aspects of becoming a B Corporation?**

To the extent to which it delivers them, see everything listed above under #5.

9. **According to you, what are the main barriers that would prevent a company from becoming a B Corp?**

Time, effort, cost, too hard to do, not enough brand recognition / public awareness

10. Besides, what are the limits of the certification?

Unless there is a radical new upswing in take up, the B Corp movement won't fix the way the world works

11. What do you think about the cost and timing to being certified?

They are not commensurate with the benefits.

12. If you are able to self-monitor your sustainability initiatives, why do you need a certification?

It is not so much about being able to self-monitor or not, the need is to differentiate as ethical. ISEAL Alliance exists because bizs make up claims about being responsible, etc. People do not trust businesses to tell the truth.

13. There are a lot of certifications promoting sustainable development, in that sense, to what extent is the B Corp certification different from other certifications? T

There are a range of differences that you can research and identify, I assume you will be doing so of the work here! You could also use the attached if you like, written for Pioneers Post. It is a bit old now but still of value I suggest.

14. To which other certifications would you compare the B Corp?

See #11

15. Are you against the B Corp movement or the fact of being certified?

Neither.

16. If it is "just" against the B Corporation, which other certification would you rather advise for a company?

R100 is the best, or will be, when we have fixed all the things not working great ATM. Both B and R100 are trying to do difficult things.

Re 14-19, I risk repeating the above, not much else to add at this stage....

BLOG for ICAEW:

Capitalism has lifted billions out of poverty, it has been the engine of mankind's advancement in countless ways. And it could and therefore should do so again. However, in its current form, it is dangerous and out of control, not just unsustainable.

Tens of millions of people are locked in slavery in industries such as construction and agriculture. People in low paid work are locked in poverty, likely in greater numbers, and increasingly within the world's richest economies. While those at the top enjoy mind bending wealth. Extreme inequality is destroying the fabric of society, and arguably democracy too.
The various environmental crises we face pose perhaps greater existential risk. 'The stability and resilience of our planet is in peril. International action – not just words – must reflect this, according to the latest research.'

You know things are bad when the Harvard Business School says so. In their recent article 'Where ESG Fails', Michael Porter, George Serafeim and Mark Kramer argue: 'it is no wonder that so many citizens have lost faith in capitalism. At a time when economic inequality has increased and social needs are greater than ever, ignoring the synergy between corporate success and social progress emboldens critics and puts the future of capitalism at risk.'

Any business that isn't prepared to offload and exploit runs the risk of ceding market share to less scrupulous competitors. To those which have no qualms about doing what is needed to reduce their costs further. As such, there is incredible pressure on businesses to compete in a race to the bottom.

In their article, Porter et al are scathing of the inadequacies of ESG investing and CSR programmes. I suggest ESG and CSR are not just ineffectual, they are now actually part of the problem, indeed they perpetuate our broken system.
Doing ESG and CSR are integral to business as usual ('BAU'), due to a number of related factors.

1. Too often it's disingenuous or simply a façade. According to Porter et al: 'Most corporate leaders view their sustainability efforts primarily as a way to enhance their reputations and attract socially aware consumers, employees, and investors.'
2. Business claims of being responsible are often unbelievable and without credibility. For example the $31m a year boss of JP Morgan became a signatory to – and a face of – the

Business Roundtable's Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation, a cadre of benevolent CEOs committed to 'lead their companies for the benefit of all stakeholders – customers, employees, suppliers, communities and shareholders', just a few months after having failed to explain or justify the eye-watering pay inequalities within his firm which lock his employees into in-work poverty.

3. Public trust in business has been lost. Businesses' claims that they are ethical, responsible, values-driven, are often met with bemusement and utter disbelief. Such claims render businesses less trusted, not more.
4. People are increasingly disempowered and apathetic. For example, a fascinating 'Deep Adaptation' movement, for those who have given up on hope and are preparing emotionally and intellectually for the end of humanity, is growing at an incredible rate.

I suggest that there is hope, because there really is a choice. And it is there for you to make.
If your business cannot tolerate the climate crisis, plastic-choked oceans, the burning Amazon, unprecedented biodiversity loss, and ecosystems entering collapse, if it truly wants to dismantle BAU and be part of something better, then take the vital first step of saying so.

The choice is to either:

- Make it abundantly clear you consider the current system to be broken, and that we must act now, unequivocally, to create one that gives the planet and humanity a chance. Acknowledge the various crises and their enormity, and accept that you are duty bound to act, and will do everything you can in your business - while delivering goods and services people need - to help build and be part of a better system. Or
- Double down on BAU. Despite the very terms CSR and ESG being tainted, even toxic, continue to use them. Insist that, for your business, it is genuine, not about reputation enhancement or duping those gullible 'socially aware consumers, employees, and investors', and that we should take your word for it.

Choose to compete in a race to the top. Choose to pursue and celebrate the financial success that flows from innovating for the public good and to increase your positive impacts on people and planet. Harness your entrepreneurial instincts to do what business does best: unleash the creative power and talent of your employees. Challenge, partner, experiment and collaborate with your stakeholders.

As consumers, employees and investors, people really do want to identify, support and reward businesses that are genuinely committed to being part of the solution. Be that choice.
We can create the critical economic incentives and rewards to make real responsibility a driver of profitability and rehabilitate and reform capitalism in so doing. We must. Pick a side.

Author
Michael Solomon - Founder and Director, Responsible 100 and UK Enterprise Director, CoGo
michael@profitthroughethics.com

Appendix 18: Interview with François van den Abeele (Sea2See)

Rosalie : Merci beaucoup déjà de prendre le temps de parler avec moi !

François : Il n'y a pas de problème

Rosalie : C'est via Valentine Boone qui a fait un stage chez vous que je voulais un peu vous parler. Tout d'abord de Sea2See et de tout ce que vous faites en matière de CSR et aussi un petit peu de B Corp. Donc voilà, déjà vous pouvez peut-être, si ça vous dit de me parler un petit peu de Sea2See, comment ça a commencé ? Pourquoi ? Quelles sont les valeurs, etc. ?

François : Il me faut des questions concrètes, parce que sinon je vais parler pendant deux jours. Sea2see, ça a commencé en 2016. Si tu fais un peu de recherches tu verras, il y à pas mal de trucs dans la presse. Tu m'entends ?

Rosalie : Oui très bien !

François : Ok. Sea2Sea ça a commencé en 2016 pour différentes raisons. Moi je suivais différents projets qui visaient à essayer de récolter du plastique marin, dont OceanCleanup qui maintenant est bien plus connu, The Boyan Slat. Je suivais des marques aussi et je portais des marques qui utilisaient de la fibre recyclée et qui avaient déjà essayé d'intégrer l'économie circulaire dans leur manière de produire. Et puis, bon on ne tombe pas de son lit en se disant qu'on va produire des lunettes avec du plastique recyclé. Ça venait de… C'est à dire que moi j'ai vécu en Afrique, j'ai travaillé pendant quelques années, j'avais aussi essayé de monter des projets qui avaient toujours une finalité sociale ou durable. Et puis j'ai commencé à porter des lunettes aussi. Il y avait une startup espagnole qui faisait des lunettes low-cost qu'ils bombardaient sur les

réseaux sociaux pour acheter ces trucs à, tu vois, une ou deux paires à 30 euros, etc. Et un jour je me suis dit, c'est dingue, moi j'avais des lunettes en main que je venais d'acheter en pharmacie, du plastique, du plastique, tac, les problèmes, les problèmes de plastiques marins, peut-être qu'on peut faire du plastique avec ça quoi, des lunettes avec ça. Et donc j'ai commencé à investiguer les différents types de déchets qu'on retrouvait en mer et quels étaient les plus nocifs, ceux qui prenaient le plus de temps à se dégrader, et cetera, et cetera. Et je me suis rendu compte que les activités de pêche étaient terriblement contaminantes, et en fait, au niveau de la pêche il n'y a rien qui se fait, ou il y a très, très peu qui se fait au niveau du recyclage. Et donc voilà, j'ai commencé à aller voir les ports, à discuter avec les communautés de pêcheurs, puis j'ai été voir à Barcelone les gens qui s'occupent de la collecte des déchets, et puis je me suis mis en contact avec une société qui fait du ramassage de déchets et de la gestion de déchets, et voilà, on a commencé à placer des containers dans les ports, essayer de sensibiliser les pêcheurs par rapport à ça, et faire un tri au départ dans les ports. Parce que forcément, d'abord, sensibiliser les pécheurs et les faire travailler là-dessus, c'est compliqué, parce que c'est quand même des vieux métiers, tu vois, c'est comme si demain, je te dis tiens, je te mets 6 poubelles à la maison et maintenant tu vas trier tes déchets, et bien les pêcheurs ils ont la même réaction quoi, ça les emmerde !

Rosalie : Oui, oui, je comprends.

François : Et donc il y a des ports qui le font bien, des ports qui le font pas bien, moins bien et cetera, et cetera. Donc on a commencé à faire ça ici, ça c'était il y a 3 ans. Maintenant, il y a 27 ports qui font ça. On a été contacté par différents ports aussi, en France, dans le Sud de la France, donc on a commencé là aussi. Là, il y a moins de volume, mais ils le font quand même, le tri est relativement bien fait, et puis j'ai commencé à faire ça au Ghana et au Sénégal aussi. Au Ghana et au Sénégal c'est encore plus gratifiant parce que le problème, il est réel. Parce qu'en fait ce qu'on fait c'est qu'on crée une nouvelle source de revenu grâce aux déchets qui trainent. Des pécheurs qui gagnent 2/3 dollars par jours, tout d'un coup ils peuvent gagner un dollar en plus, rien qu'en collectant des vieux filets qui trainent, qui sont là et qui sont dans la mer, qui sont sur les plages, qui trainent partout quoi ! Et ça c'est génial ! Et donc, là, j'ai mis une équipe en place au Ghana, donc j'ai un responsable à Accra. On a 4 responsables sur les côtes et ces responsables sur les côtes sont les personnes qui, ensuite, payent les pécheurs, qui viennent leur donner leurs vieux déchets, ou qui viennent ramasser ça. Et

ça, c'est génial, moi ça me plait encore plus de faire ça là. Ici on le fait, parce qu'il faut le faire, mais là-bas, ils le font parce qu'ils voient vraiment que d'abord il y a un impact sur l'environnement mais aussi il y a surtout un impact pour leur portefeuille quoi. Il dit « Ah génial, mais il y a de l'argent partout ! ». Le sénégalais, il me disait « on commence à ramasser tout de suite quoi, on voit du pognon partout ! ». Donc tu vois, là c'est vraiment, on va sourcer. Pour nous c'est une matière première, forcément. Donc l'idée, c'est de faire ça là, donc au Ghana, c'est déjà déployé, et les sacs commencent à se remplir. On a mis 1200 sacs séparés sur la côte. Enfin sur la cote, il y a 600 km de côte donc tu vois, il y a 4 points, 5 points, avec des responsables, et cetera. Et puis aussi, c'est responsables-là, moi je les paie tous les mois, le salaire minimum au Ghana il est de, je crois que c'est 2 euros par jour. Et moi je leur double ça tu vois, donc ils ont une activité, et en plus je leur paye un double salaire. C'est clair que bon pour moi, c'est une dépense qui est, les gens sur place me disent « mais tu dois pas leur payer autant », mais moi je suis ravi de payer un peu plus, eux ils sont contents, ils sont responsables, ils paient les pécheurs ensuite, et tu vois, tu crées, finalement tu as quelque chose qui est positif depuis la source quoi.

Rosalie : Mais donc toutes vos activités de CSR et cetera, c'est plus vraiment, au sourcing même quoi ?

François : C'est au sourcing. C'est à dire que nous, la matière constitue notre produit, c'est 100% fait avec ce qu'on a récupéré nous-même. Donc on est intégré verticalement, depuis la collecte jusqu'à la transformation du déchet et ça rejoint l'Italie, c'est ça qu'on utiliser pour faire des lunettes.

Rosalie : Ok. C'est très intéressant en tout cas. Pour vous, c'est quoi tous les avantages de s'investir dans le CSR ? Parce que cela prend quand même énormément de temps, ça coute plus cher aussi…

François : C'est très simple. C'est clair que je pourrais acheter du plastique pour faire mes lunettes, mais alors je serais une marque de lunette comme les autres, et je trouve que tu vois, moi je vis dans l'industrie optique mais si tu regardes dans l'alimentation, si tu regardes dans le textile qui ensuite deviennent des vêtements, et cetera. Si tout le monde faisait un petit peu plus, finalement ça serait moins le bordel et on vivrait sur une planète un peu plus propre quoi ! Moi c'est très simple, je dis toujours, je vais pas sauver la planète, ni les océans. Par contre, on a créé une matière, on a créé un outil, simple,

qui doit être porté par 50% de la population, qui permet de faire prendre conscience d'un problème réel. Tu vois, c'est facile, « ah tes lunettes c'est fait avec du plastique marin recyclé ? Ah c'est génial ! » tu vois ? Donc en fait tu fais prendre conscience du problème, mais aussi, tu te rends compte que chaque personne qui porte Sea2See, finalement il en parle, il se dit « Ah bah ça serait peut-être bien que je recycle chez moi, … ». Donc tu fais prendre conscience d'un problème, et tu génères une attitude ou un comportement qui peut peut-être faire changer les choses, tu vois ? Moi je trouve que si tu veux vraiment apporter du changement, il faut qu'il y ait le plus de produit recyclé de qualité dans le plus de maisons possibles.

Rosalie : Oui, ça c'est sûr.

François : Tu vois ? Si on avait tous une brosse à dent en bois, bah ça serait déjà moins un problème, tu vois ? Les brosses à dents, il y en a, ça traine. Des cotons tiges, si tu vas sur les plages, il y a des milliards de cotons tiges. Parce que les gens, c'est en plastique, les gens les « flush » dans la toilette quoi. Tu vois ? Donc il faut essayer de faire prendre conscience, en produisant plus, avec des produits qui sont fruit de l'économie circulaire, c'est une chose. Mais deux, il faut qu'on puisse faire les choses différemment.

Coca-Cola, maintenant ils ont promis de commencer à injecter leur bouteille avec une partie de recyclé, ok très bien, mais moi je vais en Afrique et je peux te dire, je peux t'envoyer des photos, où sur des plages entières, je marche sur de la bouteille quoi. Donc c'est juste pour faire prendre conscience et pour prouver que même dans des secteurs comme la mode, parce que les lunettes font partie de la mode ou des accessoires, il a moyen de faire des trucs bien avec de la matière recyclée. Donc t'as un impact sur l'environnement, ça c'est un. Utiliser du plastique recyclé, forcément, c'est mieux que si je devais racheter du plastique et nous on a un impact social aussi, et moi personnellement, c'est juste que j'apporte ma petite brique, ma petite goute à l'édifice quoi.

Rosalie : Oui ça c'est sûr.

François : Et c'est ça je trouve qui est important. Tu sais il y a des milliards de lunettes qui sont produites chaque année. Pourquoi on n'utilise pas plus des matières recyclées ? Nous ce qu'on a fait maintenant c'est qu'on a créé une matière, que Valentine connaissait, parce qu'elle a travaillé là-dessus pendant un moment. On est en train de faire des tests de fils. On a fait les premiers tests de fils l'année dernière, on recommence

maintenant à faire des tests de fils, et j'ai été contacté déjà par Adidas qui est intéressé de potentiellement acheter notre matière pour faire du fil.

Rosalie : Ah waw, c'est chouette !

François : Oui

Rosalie : Donc ça grandit bien quoi !

François : Bon ça s'est résumé à trois emails hein. Mais ils sont super intéressés. Mais pourquoi ? C'est pas juste parce qu'il veulent le recyclé, c'est parce qu'ils veulent l'histoire aussi. Tu vois ? Alors il faut faire attention à ce niveau-là. Tu parles beaucoup du B Corp. Alors nous, on a certifié Cradle2Cradle, donc ça c'est quand même génial. Donc sur la matière, mais Cradle2Cradle c'est une certification, fin c'est une grosse certification, la meilleure au niveau de l'économie circulaire. Mais le B Corp, alors B Corp, j'ai répondu à tous les questions et cetera, ça prend des plombes. Après ils ont changé leur méthodologie à la fin de l'année dernière, si je me souviens bien. J'ai pas recommencé le truc, mais là je vais en profiter qu'on soit en quarantaine pour essayer de terminer ça quoi. Mais ce qui se passe, c'est que je dois recommencer, parce que j'avais déjà une ponctuation assez élevée, forcément, dû à la matière qu'on utilise. Donc c'était surtout dans la partie matière. Et maintenant qu'on a commencé à travailler en Afrique, qu'on commence à sourcer là-bas et qu'il y a un impact aussi social, forcément, les points vont encore monter quoi.

Rosalie : Vous vous souvenez de combien vous avez eu ?

François : Je ne me souviens pas. Aide-moi, le minimum c'est 80 ?

Rosalie : Oui, et c'est sur 200.

François : Oui, je crois qu'on était dans les 125 nous.

Rosalie : Ah quand même, parce que c'est énorme ça !

François : Oui, je crois que c'était ça. Alors d'abord, au début, on avait trop. J'ai parlé au mec de B Corp qui m'a dit « François, c'est trop, diminue, diminue ».

Rosalie : C'est trop ?

François : Oui parce qu'au début, j'avais, je sais pas ça avait été trop, donc j'ai enlevé pas mal de trucs pour essayer d'être plus raisonnable. Mais je crois qu'on était dans les 120 ou 125.

Rosalie : Hé bien, c'est bien !

François : Oui c'est pas mal. Alors B Corp, oui moi je trouve que c'est bien. C'est bien de faire partie de la famille B Corp et cetera. Mais moi je connais des sociétés B Corp qui ne devraient pas l'être.

Rosalie : Ah oui ?

François : Oui.

Rosalie : Donc c'est un peu un problème aussi qu'on laisse trop facilement des entreprises rentrer dans les B Corp?

François : Moi je connais des gens qui disent qui font du truc recyclé et cetera, mais il y a aucune traçabilité sur leurs produits quoi. Et en fait c'est des trucs faits en Chine avec de la matière achetée en Chine. Ils disent que c'est du recyclé, mais il n'y a rien qui est traçable quoi. Et moi, c'est souvent, enfin, moi je souffre plus parce que je mets quand même, enfin pour moi c'est important. Et du greenwashing il y en a. Il y en a beaucoup du greenwashing.

Rosalie : Dans B corp aussi ?

François : Dans B corp, ça je sais pas. Je dis dans le textile, tu vas avoir des marques vêtements, qui te disent je sais pas quoi sur l'étiquette, dans la vitrine « recyclé, recyclé », et puis tu regardes sur l'étiquette et en fait il n'y a que 10% de recyclé. Et c'est même pas du post-consumers, c'est du post-industriel. Tu vois, donc il faut quand même faire attention. Et le problème, ce qui va se passer, c'est que, c'est comme dans la nourriture : il y a 10 ans, il y a 15 ans, il y a 20 ans, je me souviens, quand j'habitais en Belgique. On commençait à avoir des produits bio, et c'était bio de la ferme, c'était bio tu vois, mais maintenant tout est bio, et tu sais plus ce qui est vraiment bio et ce qui est pas bio. Les œufs, il y a 12 bio différents, il y a du bio un peu plus, un peu moins, du bio de poule qui a couru dans la nature, du bio d'une poule qui a mangé du grain je sais pas quoi, ça devient compliqué de faire la différence quoi. Et le problème c'est que le consommateur il se perd.

Rosalie : Et vous pensez qu'avec B Corp ça risque d'être pareil alors ? Plus ça grandit, plus on aura du mal à savoir si c'est vraiment B Corp ou pas quoi.

François : Ils en vivent aussi hein. C'est comme les certifications. Moi la par exemple, on fait ces tests de fils, donc c'est des énormes fileurs, des énormes fileurs italiens qui travaillent pour toutes les grosses marques, pour Intimissimi, tous ces trucs-là. Et il faut une certification qui s'appelle GRS, Global Recycling System, très bien. Mais moi je leur ai dit j'ai le Cradle2Cradle Gold, c'est énorme, enfin je veux dire, c'est beaucoup plus que ça quoi. Ah non il faut le GRS, parce que dans le textile, ... Mais je dis oui mais d'accord, mais je veux dire, il faut être flexible, tu t'en fous si c'est pas le truc, votre truc là. Ah non il faut absolument ! Tu vois ? Mais pourquoi ? Alors tu vois, moi j'appelle le GRS. Ok, il y a pas de problème, ben écoutez dans un mois et demi vous l'avez. Ok très bien, ça coute 2500 euros, tu l'as, ça sera pas compliqué, je l'aurai. Et tu vois c'est ça, c'est les ISO, c'est les trucs, finalement il y en a tellement que le problème c'est que, c'est comme, regarde un truc qui s'appelle OceanWorks.

Rosalie : OceanWorks ?

François : OceanWorks, oui. C'est un truc où ils disent qu'ils vendent du plastique des océans et le plastique, blablabla. Il y a même pas 5% de ce qu'eux font qui vient de la mer. Tu vois ? Et maintenant ils ont créé une espèce de certification qui s'appelle OceanWorks, Certified Ocean Works. Mais c'est normal, si demain moi je crée ma certification Sea2See, quelle crédibilité ça va avoir ? C'est juste que le consommateur va se dire « ah bah oui ok, ah bah oui ils sont certifiés Sea2See, ok mais c'est quoi ? ». Donc le B Corp c'est bien, je trouve que c'est bien parce que c'est quand même une de celles qui qui « stand out » quoi, comment on dit ?

Rosalie : Qui se démarque ?

François : Oui, qui se démarque, mais il y en a beaucoup d'autres.

Rosalie : Par exemple lesquelles ? Vous préférez alors Cradle2Cradle ? Pour vous c'est mieux ?

François : Bah les fondamentaux sont pas les mêmes, Cradle2Cradle c'est vraiment l'économie circulaire. Mais alors, tu vois, il y en a qui vont dire Cradle2Cradle c'est bien, d'autres vont dire l'autre c'est mieux, donc … Après le problème c'est que, tu vois, ça devient…

Rosalie : Comment choisir ?

François : Oui, c'est difficile de choisir lequel tu vois. Le B Corp je l'ai pris, parce que je connaissais le mec ici, et parce qu'il faut que je sois B Corp, après, ça prend des plombes tu vois. Une fois que j'avais terminé mon questionnaire, finalement ils m'ont dit « ok, we are going to need 6 months » « on aura besoin de 6 mois pour faire ton assessment ». Comment ça 6 mois, déjà que ça m'a pris 6 mois de faire les questions, moi j'ai pas quelqu'un, j'ai pas quelqu'un pour s'occuper de ça en interne tu vois. Donc tu fais, dans les petites sociétés, dans les start-up comme ça, t'as tellement de truc à faire, donc bon ok, c'est accessoire.

Rosalie : Et en termes de couts ? Ça coute aussi ? Je sais que ça dépend un peu de la grandeur de l'entreprise, des revenus de l'entreprises ?

François : Oui, ça dépend de la facturation oui.

Rosalie : Mais est-ce que c'est un frein pour vous ?

François : Oui c'est un frein. Parce que souvent, ce qu'il se passe c'est que tu as les petites sociétés comme les nôtres qui essaient de faire les choses bien. Et puis parfois, ils font face à ces couts, voilà ça te coute 5000 euros par an parce que tu facture autant. Ou ça te coute 15000 parce que tu facture autant. Moi je peux les assumer aujourd'hui parce que les choses vont mieux. Mais au début, c'était comme le Cradle2Cradle, c'était 15000 euros ou 16000 euros la première année. Je dis mais c'est pas possible quand t'en facture 60, tu vois ? Et là, une fois que tu l'as, bon ben c'est pendant deux ans.

Donc le B Corp, le B Corp, il faut que je le termine, absolument. C'était une de mes priorités depuis qu'on est en quarantaine, il faut que je termine ce truc. Mais le frein c'est que derrière, une fois que tu fais cet énorme questionnaire, qui est quand même assez pointu, et ça je trouve bien, tu vois ça je trouve bien. Attendre 6 mois pour le Assessment, ça, ça m'a tué quoi.

Rosalie : C'est pas très encourageant quoi.

François : Non, ah bah non ! Mais d'un autre côté, c'est normal qu'ils soient rigoureux, parce que sinon il y aurait de l'abus.

Rosalie : Oui. Mais bon après vous me dites, qu'il y a déjà plus ou moins de l'abus, vu que vous connaissez des B Corp qui ne devrait pas spécialement être des B Corp.

François : Moi j'en connais parce que je suis dans le secteur et je connais des marques de lunettes où heu. Pour moi c'est important que la matière première soit traçable tu vois. Et si tu me dis que tu as acheté tes trucs en Chine pour faire tes lunettes recyclées, ça dépend ce que les gens veulent vendre hein, c'est toujours ce greenwashing, tu vois. Ce qu'il se passe c'est que comme nous, on récolte nos déchets et on le transforme, on fait tout nous-même, bah ça t'énerve que les gens essayent de vendre la même chose alors qu'ils ont été achetés en Chine apparemment recyclé tu vois. C'est juste ça, mais ça qu'est-ce que tu veux ? Moi j'ai du mal à vivre avec ça. Mais bon, de toute manière il ne faut pas se battre pour les autres, mais il faut se battre pour soi.

Rosalie : C'est sûr. Mais donc c'est un peu compliqué, parce que en même temps, vous qui êtes vraiment genre, vous pouvez complètement avoir le B Corp, vous trouvez que c'est un frein du fait que ça dure si longtemps tout ce processus. Mais d'un côté, s'il n'y a pas tout ce processus long et rigoureux, ça va se perdre un petit peu. Donc comment faire ?

François : Comment faire ? Bah il faut se dire que ça prend du temps, et que voilà. Je le ferai quand j'ai le temps, pourquoi ? Parce qu'il y a des priorités. Et les priorités c'est qu'il faut vendre.

Rosalie : Il faut que l'argent puisse rentrer aussi pour pouvoir ensuite payer les certifications.

François : Exactement, exactement. Et puis parfois, bah tu te dis « bon bah c'est pas grave hein ». Moi avec 5000 euros, j'ai pas de B Corp mais avec ça, je paie 3 mecs au Ghana pendant 1 an tu vois.

Rosalie : Mais est-ce que vous voyez vraiment une différence par rapport à quand vous êtes certifié et pas certifié ? Par exemple, là, avec Cradle2Cradle, est ce que vous voyez une différence sur vos performances ?

François : Alors ça je le vois qu'avec les gens qui connaissent, je ne le vois que avec les gens qui connaissent les certifications, ou les gens qui sont, on va dire, dans le même monde de ce qu'on fait nous. Mon père il a 76 ans il ne sait pas ce que c'est le B Corp. Par contre il sait ce que c'est un ISO. Mais B Corp, tu vois les gens qui sont dans le durable, dans le recyclage, ça, ils savent ce que c'est B Corp.

Rosalie : Mais donc, le consommateur lambda il connaît pas ?

François : Non, non non, ça il sait pas.

Rosalie : Pour lui c'est juste un autre petit label qui est sur le site web, mais c'est tout ?

François : Oui, ça j'en suis sûr. Ou sur la boite on mettra B Corp, « Ah t'es B Corp ? ». Et comme il va le revoir, revoir, revoir, il va se dire bon bah ok. We are B Corp, on est Vegan, on est B Corp, on est Cradle2Cradle, on est je sais pas quoi, donc c'est tous des petits labels en plus.

Rosalie : Mais du coup, si au final, ça n'a pas vraiment d'impact sur le consommateur, pourquoi est-ce que vous avez tellement envie de devenir B Corp ?

François : Bah parce qu'il faut. Tu vois moi je dois. Je dois dans le sens ou c'est assez unique ce qu'on fait. On est les premiers à faire ça dans le secteur optique et donc c'est bien d'avoir le cachet en plus B Corp.

Rosalie : Mais donc ça veut dire que ça change quand même quelque chose quelque part ?

François : Oui c'est sûr, c'est sûr. Mais pour le consommateur lambda non.

Rosalie : Oui, donc pour le consommateur avisé oui ?

François : Oui pour le consommateur avisé oui. Et aussi il y a quelque chose qui je pense est intéressant mais ça on le verra, c'est pour la communauté B Corp. Dans la communauté B Corp. Moi j'ai eu par exemple, suite à notre certification Cradle2Cradle, on a été contacté par un truc qui s'appelle « Material Library » qui est une espèce de bibliothèque de matériaux à New York. Tu vois ? Tu envoies ta matière première, ça passe devant un jury et tout le truc. Trois semaines après, ils m'ont dit qu'on avait été accepté, et suite à ça, il y a Adidas qui m'a appelé. Ils se sont dit « ah du plastique de polyamistis qui vient à partir de déchets de filet de pêche et tout ça, ça nous intéresse ». Donc l'un a amené à l'autre, qui a amené à l'autre. Le B Corp je pense que ça peut faire ça aussi. Ah t'es B Corp ? Tu rentres dans la famille B Corp et du coup ben...

Rosalie : Un peu l'effet de réseau quoi ?

François : Voilà, l'effet de réseau, tout à fait. Il faut avoir des marques qui se disent « tiens, on n'a pas de lunettes, on va faire une collaboration ». Tu vois il y a des trucs à faire quoi.

Rosalie : Oui, et du coup, par exemple, votre partenariat avec Adidas pourrait d'autant plus les attirer si jamais en plus de tout ça, vous êtes B Corp ?

François : OF COURSE ! Bien sûr ils vont se dire « Ah vous êtes B Corp, très bien ! » Ça c'est sûr.

Rosalie : Donc c'est un gage de qualité et de responsabilité ?

François : Oui, voilà, exactement.

Rosalie : Donc au final, cette certification, ça peut quand même être un moyen de se différencier ?

François : Si, mais je ne critique pas hein !

Rosalie : Non, non je sais !

François : Je dis que ça l'est ! Je dis que moi ça fait un an que je suis dessus, tu vois ? Parce que ça m'a mis des plombes avec le premier questionnaire.

Rosalie : Donc là maintenant c'est un nouveau questionnaire qu'il faut faire ?

François : Non je vais essayer de voir comment je peux pas utiliser déjà le premier. Parce qu'il y avait eu une adaptation, je sais pas trop quoi, et il faut terminer ce truc quoi. Alors tu vois, on te dit qu'on t'appelle dans les 6 mois. Mais moi je voyage comme un fou alors je sais pas si les deux dernières fois qu'ils ont essayé de m'appeler j'étais au milieu du Ghana, du Sénégal ou je sais pas quoi, mais c'était pas le moment de parler et puis ok on repasse ça dans deux semaines. Mais il faut juste coordonner hein, c'est pas grave, c'est juste que moi j'ai pas une personne pour s'occuper de ça.

Rosalie : Non, c'est sûr. Donc ça pourrait être un peu plus facile, si imaginons, vous aviez un CSR Manager qui pourrait s'occuper de tout ça, alors c'est plus facile quoi.

François : Si mais d'accord, mais à part ça, il devrait faire beaucoup d'autres choses, parce que le CSR manager, je n'ai pas assez de choses à lui donner. C'est sûr que si j'avais quelqu'un pour s'occuper de ça, heu. On rêve d'avoir 10 personnes hein, mais quand on commence, on fait le travail nous-même.

Rosalie : Bien évidemment. Mais je veux dire, par exemple, maintenant il y a par exemple Danone qui a été certifié. Eux par exemple, des plus grandes entreprises comme cela, ils ont des CSR managers.

François : Bien sûr, ils ont des départements entiers !

Rosalie : Oui, et dans ce cas-là, c'est plus facile. Mais du coup, B Corp, c'est quand même plus compliqué quand on est une jeune start-up ?

François : Bah c'est clair. Danone, ok ils sont B Corp, ok mais heureusement ! Après ils sont B Corp sur quoi ? C'est comme Danone est certifié Cradle2Cradle sur certains de leurs produits ok, mais sur 95% des autres ils ne le sont pas. Adidas a mis 25% de son marketing sur ses nouvelles pompes qui sont en plastique recyclé mais ça représente 0.4% de leurs revenus. Pourquoi ? Parce que les 3 paires de pompes qu'ils font en recyclé, ça ne représente rien sur l'immensité de leurs ventes générées par le reste. Mais on en parle beaucoup plus. Ok c'est clair Danone est B Corp, mais dans quoi ? Parce c'est tellement énorme, que c'est impossible d'être B Corp dans tout, tu vois ?

Rosalie : Mais ils ne le sont pas d'ailleurs ! C'est pas tout le groupe Danone qui est certifié B Corp, c'est juste certaines plus petites parties qui sont certifiées mais c'est pas Danone le gros groupe qui est certifié en tout et pour tout.

François : Ah ok !

Rosalie : Mais du coup, selon vous, si jamais il y a des barrières qui pourraient dissuader de commencer tout ça, c'est quoi ? Le temps ? La motivation ?

François : Le temps je sais pas, non pas le temps. D'abord le manque de connaissance de ce que ça représente. Et deux, heu, si je commence à voir que Adidas, Danone, ils sont tous B Corps, je vais me dire, bon bah ça va, ça sert plus à rien de le faire. S'ils sont prostitués avec les grands, qu'est-ce que ça veut dire ? Tu perds en crédibilité.

Rosalie : C'est entre guillemets ce qui risque de se passer, parce que B Corp, ça commence à grandir, il y a quand même de plus en plus de gros acteurs qui commencent à être certifiés, donc pour les PME et les petites start-up, ça va plus être un moyen de se différencier par rapport entreprises, si elles l'ont de toute façon.

François : Non, c'est clair. Alors ce qu'ils devraient faire, tu vois, je sais pas, c'est faire différents types de B Corp. Mais alors là, l'ISO il a dû commencer 1 et puis 2 et puis la maintenant il y en a combien des ISO ?

Le Cradle2Cradle, il y a des différents niveaux. Tu vois t'es Basic, Bronze, Argent, Gold et Platinium. Et là, quand même pour les gens qui connaissent, nous on est Cradle2Cradle Gold, c'est bien quoi. Tu pourrais faire un truc comme ça, en fonction de ta ponctuation, bah t'es B Corp Gold ou Platinium ou SuperBCorp, j'en sais rien.

Rosalie : Oui, mais le label qui serait écrit sur le site web sera toujours le Cradle2Cradle normal…

François : Oui, ça de toute manière.

Rosalie : Mais donc c'est un peu plus ou moins une impasse. Parce qu'en même temps il faudrait que le mouvement grandisse pour que de plus en plus les consommateurs connaissent ce que c'est, mais d'un autre côté, plus ça va grandir, plus les grandes entreprises l'auront aussi, donc moins ça va représenter un avantage pour les petites entreprises. Donc c'est compliqué. Vous vous pensez que le mouvement il va continuer comme ça et grandir de plus en plus ?

François : Mais oui, aujourd'hui tout le monde veut sauver la planète, ou prétendre qu'ils le font.

Rosalie : Oui, donc ils cherchent tous les moyens de montrer qu'ils sauvent la planète, et parfois ils cherchent plus le moyen de montrer qu'ils sauvent la planète, plutôt que de vraiment sauver la planète.

François : Exactement, exactement !!

Rosalie : Merci beaucoup en tout cas. J'ai aussi quelques questions par rapport à, si vous avez encore le temps, si je peux vous embêter encore un peu, par rapport à la production de vos lunettes. Parce que mis à part mon mémoire sur les B Corp, j'ai aussi un Business Project sur le « Sustainability in Logistics ».

François : C'est intéressant ça !

Rosalie : On regarde du coup un petit peu dans tout ce qui est la production vraiment, donc le sourcing vous m'avez déjà un peu expliqué, mais par rapport à la production

vraiment, est ce que vous avez des choses mises en place pour être plus durable ? Par exemple, des énergies renouvelables, des systèmes de gestion des eaux et tout cas ?

François : Pff, non parce que moi j'ai pas encore d'usine de recyclage. Pour le moment, moi je collecte le déchet, je le sépare, par contre, pour être certifié Cradle2Cradle, eux ils évaluent ça. Sur l'usine de recyclage qu'on utilisait à l'époque, qu'on utilisait pour faire notre matière, ils te disent « ok, il y a des panneaux solaires, oui ? qu'est-ce que ça représente ? » « Quelle énergie j'utilise ? Elle est durable ? elle est photovoltaïque ? » Elle est je sais pas quoi, elle est solaire, tout ce que tu veux, d'accord ? Et en fonction de ça, on te donne des points. Mais nous on récolte dans les ports, on sépare ça dans un hangar, et je fais transformer ce dont j'ai besoin pour les lunettes. Et je garde, je sais pas aujourd'hui je pense que j'ai assez pour faire je sais pas, 750.000 paires de lunettes.

Rosalie : Mais donc vous envoyez votre matière première que vous récoltez, dans des usines qui font des lunettes ?

François : Chez un tiers, qui eux font de toute manière, heu en l'occurrence c'est des fileurs, qui ont un réacteur et ils veulent bien que je recycle pendant 2 jours, j'utilise leurs réacteurs et je ressors cette matière et après eux continue à faire leur business.

Rosalie : Et du coup c'est où que sont vraiment produites vos lunettes ?

François : En Italie.

Rosalie : Et ça c'est vous qui les envoyez là-bas dans ces usines ou vous les contrôlez aussi un peu ?

François : Non, non. Moi je prends le déchet, je le retransforme en granules réutilisable. Et ces granules-là que j'envoie en Italie pour fabriquer les lunettes.

Rosalie : Et là-bas, est ce que vous regardez si les usines sont écoresponsables ?

François : Ils essaient, il y a quand même des normes. Il y a des normes par exemple sur le déchet qui génèrent, de la réutilisation du déchet. Par exemple nous on génère très très peu de déchet, ce qu'on génère on peut le réutiliser. Après, pour moi, c'est compliqué d'aller vérifier comment ils font leurs lunettes. Mais tu sais quand t'utilises du plastique et des peintures, tu sais tout ça est très, très rigoureux tu peux pas balancer tes peintures usagées dans le ruisseau a côté, tout ça est très, très fort contrôlé.

Rosalie : Non, non bien sûr.

François : Mais moi ce que je trouve intéressant dans ce que tu viens de dire, où il faudrait peut-être approfondir c'est justement, les bénéfices de l'utilisation des matières recyclées par rapport à des matières non recyclées, par exemple dans le textile et dans l'optique, tu vois, parce que là il y a vraiment des métriques que tu peux trouver « quelle est l'avantage d'utiliser du recyclé ou du pas recyclé ? ». Et, c'est ça que je voulais dire ! Ce que tu peux avoir, parce que souvent on me dit « tu vas récolter du déchet en Afrique, tu mets ça dans un container, tu fais ça recycler en Espagne, et puis t'amènes ça en Italie pour faire tes lunettes ? » Ok, oui c'est vrai ! Mais qu'est ce qui est mieux ? J'en parlais justement avec un ingénieur qui gère toute la boite de consultance qui fait le Cradle2Cradle. Il dit « les effets négatifs d'un plastique en plein air, au soleil, dans une décharge en Afrique ou sur une plage en Afrique sont nettement supérieurs à ton transport dans un transport déjà existant, pour après, recréer de la matière ». Tu vois ? Tout le monde me dit « Aaah l'empreinte carbone », je dis « mais l'empreinte carbone, vas voir ».

Rosalie : Par rapport à tout ce que vous économisez entre guillemets, ce que vous émettez est hyper réduit ?

François : Bah c'est moins ! c'est moins ! Je dis toujours : « qu'est ce qui est mieux ? De générer des nouvelles sources de revenus pour des gens qui sont ravis de récolter des déchets et de gagner de l'argent avec ça, un. Deux, un impact sur l'environnement, un impact sur leur conscience aussi. Et ensuite, on crée un produit qui vient du déchet, ça l'industrie pourrait le faire parce qu'avec moi ce que j'ai, si on monte notre usine de recyclage, je peux donner du plastique à beaucoup de monde et puis ensuite tu as un impact qui est difficilement mesurable, mais qui est réel, c'est sur le consommateur ! Parce que moi souvent les gens je leur dis « ah on fait des lunettes avec du plastique marin recyclé » et ils me disent « ah mais moi je recycle à la maison », mais je dis « je ne te l'ai même pas demandé ! ». Donc t'arrives quand même à générer cette conscience, ou à faire penser qu'il y a moyen de faire les choses différemment. Et tout ça, c'est important ! C'est pas juste l'impact sur l'environnement.

Rosalie : Comment vous mesurez que l'un est mieux que l'autre ? Est-ce que vous avez des moyens de mesurer ce que vous émettez par rapport à ce que vous émettez ?

François : Non ça j'ai pas. Mais ça aussi, c'est quelque chose que GRS pourrait faire, c'est faire une analyse comparative entre l'un et l'autre. Il y a une étudiante en optique qui avait fait un truc l'année dernière, mais moi j'ai pas le temps de le faire, j'ai pas le temps.

Rosalie : Mais donc si jamais vous avez cette certification GRS ?

François : GRS c'est juste par rapport au produit.

Rosalie : Et eux pourrait vous mesurer tout ça, et comparer ?

François : Non parce qu'ils le font pas eux, tu vois c'est des gros recycleurs portugais. Moi j'ai déjà la certification de la matière. Les inspecteurs GRS iront voir comment ils travaillent, comment fonctionnent leurs réacteurs, leur machin, ok GRS, 2500 euros terminé ! Mais ils vont pas aller plus loin, parce qu'ils s'en foutent. Moi je le ferai, parce que ça m'intéresse moi.

Rosalie : Mais du coup, comment est-ce que vous êtes persuadé que le transport émet moins ?

François : A non, ça c'est tout à fait mesurable !

Rosalie : Et du coup vous le mesurez comment ?

François : Ah mais ça je l'ai pas encore fait. Je te le dis parce que j'ai été déjeuné avec des gens qui s'occupent de la certification Cradle2Cradle. Il m'a dit qu'il y avait tout à fait moyen de mesurer l'impact négatif k que peut avoir un plastique laissé au soleil dans une décharge, au Ghana. Parce que ça émet, tu vois ? et ça c'est tout à fait mesurable, mais je ne l'ai pas encore fait.

Rosalie : Et vous comptez le faire ?

François : Bah j'aimerais bien le faire, oui.

Rosalie : Et ça B Corp ne vous le demande pas, par exemple ?

François : Non, c'est beaucoup trop technique ça. B Corp c'est beaucoup plus sur les valeurs de l'entreprise.

Rosalie : Mais donc ça reste un peu en surface au final, B Corp ?

François : B Corp c'est pas technique hein, c'est très généraliste B Corp. C'est beaucoup de questions mais quand même très généraliste.

Rosalie : Oui mais du coup au final, si ça va pas dans les détails de ce que vous émettez, … ?

François : Non mais c'est parce que ce n'est pas des techniciens, c'est pas des chimistes. C'est pour ça, tu fais le Cradle2Cradle qui est beaucoup plus pointu par rapport à ce que nous on recherche, ce qui est l'économie circulaire et le recyclage. Mais B Corp c'est pas un truc sur le recyclage, c'est pour ça que moi j'ai une ponctuation énorme dans tout ce qui est la partie matière. Mais eux par exemple il y a tout un truc sur la culture d'entreprise. « Est ce que vous avez des poubelles pour mettre des trucs recyclés ? », « Est ce que vos employés je sais pas quoi ? », blablabla, … Mais nous on est 4 ! Donc, c'est beaucoup plus sur les valeurs de l'entreprise que techniquement sur la matière du produit, la manière dont tu arrives a produit cette matière.

Rosalie : Mais du coup, au final, est ce que B Corp n'est pas un peu simpliste entre guillemets ? Enfin, si c'est un peu en surface « est-ce que vous avez des poubelles pour trier ? », « est ce que vous faites bien attention aux employés ? », est ce que ce n'est pas un peu à la portée de tout le monde entre guillemet d'être B Corp ? Est-ce que c'est quand même pointilleux quelque part ?

François : Bah c'est pointilleux parce qu'ils sont pointilleux dans leurs questions, mais en effet, c'est, comment dire, c'est pointilleux sur des sujets qui sont un peu vagues. Tu vois ? Ok j'ai une poubelle recyclée, et si c'est pas vrai, ils vont dire que oui. Est-ce que vos employés ont une pause à 1h30, est ce que vos employés ont je ne sais pas quoi ? Tout le monde va dire oui forcément. Par contre, « est ce que vous utilisez des panneaux solaires sur votre usine pour recycler votre matière ? » « Quels sont les taux de titanium dans le produit final ? », ça, ça devient très très pointu et ça, c'est pas du B Corp. B Corp c'est plus sur la valeur d'entreprise, Cradle2Cradle c'est plus sur la matière. C'est beaucoup plus pointu mais c'est parce que l'objectif est : l'économie circulaire, la circularité, le recyclage. Et il faut juste pas confondre quoi. B Corp il faut l'avoir, il faut l'avoir parce qu'ok t'es B Corp, voilà tu vois. Si t'es B Corp, bah très bien, t'es fair, t'es equal, t'es good values, et tout ça. Un peu simple, mais quand même avec un questionnaire qui te prend la tête quoi.

Rosalie : Oui mais donc au final, ils ont tout un énorme questionnaire qui est quand même pointilleux mais au final, c'est une certification simple, comparé à Cradle2Cradle qui va vraiment aller dans les détails.

François : Il faut juste pas comparer. Le B Corp va te dire « ah bha non, le Cradle2Cradle c'est que l'économie circulaire ».

Rosalie : Ce qui est vrai. B Corp c'est aussi la société et comme vous le disiez, la culture d'entreprise.

François : Voilà c'est ça.

Rosalie : Ok, merci beaucoup en tout cas ! Je ne sais pas si vous avez envie de rajouter encore quelque chose sur les B Corp.

François : Non, j'espère terminer ces trucs-là. Cette certification elle m'angoisse parce que maintenant qu'on a presque terminé. J'ai l'impression qu'on fait, sur 100 mètres, je suis arrivé au 90, on m'a dit que tout était bien, mais j'ai pas passé la ligne encore.

Rosalie : Oui, mais du coup, la maintenant, vous devez de nouveau attendre l'assessment après ?

François : Certainement.

Rosalie : Ok, bon courage en tout cas.

François : Mais je le connais le mec de B Corp ici, il est adorable. Et en plus il me suit depuis le début. Quand il faisait la promotion de B Corp on avait été sélectionné les deux dans un truc sustainable, Sustainable Sunday, on était tous là. Et c'était au tout début tout début de Sea2See quoi, j'avais même pas encore vendu à un opticien. Et il était là, on s'était rencontré depuis tout début. Il connaît Sea2See, il sait très bien ce qu'il se passe, et je sais qu'il aimerait bien qu'on soit B Corp, depuis le temps ! Mais je lui dis « Pablo, moi j'ai pas le temps de terminer votre histoire de 120 pages là.

Rosalie : Oui j'ai vu toutes les questions, c'est vrai qu'il y en a un paquet !

François : Ah c'est une prise de tête ! C'est comme ça

Rosalie : Et si jamais vous aviez 5 certifications que vous rêvez d'avoir pour Sea2See, ça serait lesquelles ?

François : 5 ??

Rosalie : Ou certaines que vous avez envie ? Parce que là vous avez Cradle2Cradle, B Corp ? Est-ce que vous en avez envie d'autres ?

François : B Corp je ne l'ai pas encore, mais je l'aurai. J'aimerais avoir le GRS, parce la, il faut que je l'aie parce que j'aimerai vendre mes billes pour faire du textile, et pour le moment je suis là-dessus. Après il y en aura peut-être d'autres, qu'on m'imposera. Mais je sais qu'avec le GRS et le Cradle2Cradle, pour le textile c'est bon. B Corp, c'est bon parce que c'est la culture d'entreprise et voilà. Cradle2Cradle c'est bon parce que c'est par rapport à notre matière, et ça évite d'avoir heu, c'est surtout par rapport à la traçabilité parce que Cradle2Cradle c'est quand même assez rigoureux. Et, après la certification Vegan : « Are you Vegan ? ». Ok on a reçu le truc de Vegan, mais bon c'était un mini questionnaire, ça a pris 3 secondes. Et tu vois les gens heu, les Vegan ils comprennent, alors les consommateurs ils vont se dire « ah ils sont vegan, génial ». Ils vont plus comprendre le Vegan que le B Corp alors que le Vegan c'est 12 questions et ça vaut rien quoi.

Rosalie : Bon bah ça va. Merci beaucoup en tout cas pour votre temps et courage dans votre parcours pour devenir B Corp !

François : Haha, pour le moment on fait face à la quarantaine ici.

Rosalie : Oui, courage pour ça aussi !

François : Ça, ça va être le gros problème !

Rosalie : Mais vous arrivez toujours à vendre ? Vu que c'est un site en ligne ?

François : Non, moi je vends à des opticiens, je suis B2B ! J'ai 3000 opticiens en Europe ! En ligne je ne vends rien, presque rien !

Rosalie : Ah oui, donc c'est un peu la catastrophe.

François : Tous les opticiens ils sont fermés la presque. En France, ils commencent à être fermés, en Allemagne, ils travaillent un peu, en Autriche, c'est fermé, le reste est fermé.

Rosalie : Ce qui n'est pas encore fermé, va être fermé.

François : Tout ce qui n'est pas encore fermé, va être fermé. Et puis bon attends, mais ce qu'il se passe c'est que les conséquences économiques qui se passent là, la crise de 2008, ça va vraiment être une grosse grosse blague à côté.

Rosalie : Vous pensez vraiment ?

François : Ah mais c'est clair, c'est clair ! Ça va être un grain de sable par rapport à ce qu'on va vire.

Rosalie : Je pense qu'on est vraiment en train de se rendre compte que c'est vraiment la catastrophe là, ce qui est en train d'arriver.

François : Mais, par contre, c'est peut-être une pause nécessaire. Moi je trouve, ça te permet de te remettre à l'heure sur beaucoup de choses, tu sais on vit dans une société qui est ce qu'elle est, ou il y a une perte de valeur énorme, ou les choses importantes, on passe au-dessus, on est centré sur les réseaux sociaux, et combien de like, tu vois tout cette espèce de monde faux. Cette nouvelle génération, qui est basée sur des conneries, vraiment des conneries. Nos systèmes de consommation, nos systèmes de production, tout ! et je pense que ça va permettre de se remettre à l'heure, mais on va se prendre une énorme claque, mais une énorme claque !

Rosalie : Vous vous risquez beaucoup ?

François : Moi je risque, non, moi je pense, moi je risque pas, je pense que les gens auront toujours besoin de lunettes. Mais forcément, la manière dont on fait nos lunettes peut aller dans notre sens, tu vois ? Achetons mieux, soyons plus conséquents.

Rosalie : Oui justement, qu'il y ait un changement de mentalité, que les gens se rendent compte !

François : Oui, ça c'est bien mais sinon, le problème c'est que tout est connecté. Ils ont fermé les frontières au Ghana et en Côte d'Ivoire. Si les virus arrivent dans des pays comme ça où les systèmes de santés sont… Tu sais si tu as un taux de mortalité de 3-4% dans les pays comme l'Italie et l'Espagne où les systèmes de santés sont supposés être correct, mais imagine en Afrique, où il n'y a rien quoi ! Mais ça peut monter à 25% tu vois ! C'est un grand nettoyage quoi ! Les vieux crèvent, les jeunes sont pas touchés, c'est vraiment un grand nettoyage. C'est curieux ce qu'on vit là. On voit ça dans les films d'horreur, dans des drames. T'as un ennemi invisible. Là je suis dans la rue à

Barcelone, mais tu vois tous les gens avec des masques et on a jamais vu ça ! Des masques et des gants en plastique ! Ils font la queue dans la rue tous à 1 mètre de distance, tu vois ça dans des films, des films du futur !

Rosalie : C'est la science-fiction qui arrive dans la réalité en fait !

François : Science-fiction ! On vit avec des masques, le mec enlève même pas son casque de moto !

Rosalie : Oui, c'est une épreuve.

François : Oui !

Rosalie : Merci mille fois en tout cas pour votre temps !

François : Avec plaisir ! et bonne chance à toi !

Rosalie : Oui merci ! Bonne journée !

François : Bonne journée !

Appendix 19: Interview with Camille Navarro (Exki)

1. **Quelles sont les initiatives écologiques et sociales que vous prenez chez Exki?**

EXKi se concentre sur 4 axes dans son programme de développement durable : la santé, l'environnement, le travail et la communauté.

Ecologiques : changement de packaging (réduction du plastique, proposition de vrac…), privilégier le local (max 350km), bio et de saison.

Sociales : actions solidaires (soupe solidaire, share a coffee…) = dons aux sans-abris. Actions en restaurant lors de Earth Day, FairTrade Day… Bien-être au travail pour les employés (sport et soins à petit prix), événements…

2. **Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous intéressé par les certifications/labels ?**

Actuellement en train d'essayer d'avoir le label Great Place To Work.

Nous avons déjà les labels FairTrade, Agriculture Biologique.

Les labels attestent d'une qualité dans les produits / le bien-être / l'impact social et environnemental et donnent plus de crédibilité auprès des parties prenantes.

3. **Avez-vous des certificats/labels ? Si oui, lesquels ?**

FairTrade, Agriculture biologique sur la plupart de nos produits (cafés, chocolats, thés…)

4. **Quels sont les avantages à avoir un certificat ?**

Donner plus de crédibilité aux actions.

5. **A contrario, quels sont les inconvénients à être certifié ?**

Plus de contrôle (mais pas vraiment perçu comme une contrainte car ça nous force à être plus assidus)

6. **Selon vous, à quoi cela sert-il d'avoir des certifications si vous contrôlez vous-même vos initiatives de développement durable ?**

Si nous contrôlons nous même nos initiatives en termes de DD et qu'il n'y a aucun contrôle externe, le label sert pour la communication. Il montre aux clients et investisseurs que l'entreprise est sérieuse et tient ses engagements.

7. **Quel est l'investissement financier et en terme de temps que vous être prêt à mettre pour obtenir une certification ? Et pour obtenir le certificat B Corp ?**

Aucune idée…

8. **Connaissez-vous les B Corp ?**

Oui, bonne image !!

9. **Voyez-vous un intérêt à devenir B Corp plus qu'une autre certification ? Si oui, lesquels ?**

En tant qu'entreprise qui se veut responsable il est logique d'avoir la certification B Corp plus qu'une autre.

10. **Il y a énormément de certifications promouvant le développement durable. En quoi la certification B Corp est mieux qu'une autre ?**

C'est une certification reconnue au niveau global.

11. **Quels sont, selon vous, les avantages de la certification B Corp ?**

Attester de la bonne fondation de nos actions.

12. Quelles sont les barrières de cette certification ?

Processus de certification peut-être / On ne pense pas forcément à faire certifier notre entreprise

13. Est-ce que ces barrières pourraient vous dissuader d'entreprendre les démarches pour devenir une B Corp ?

Processus long ?

14. Selon vous, la certification B Corp à des limites ? Lesquelles ?

Parfois des entreprises ayant la certification ne sont pas toujours très responsables dans leurs activités. Mais elles tentent de l'être et de respecter leurs engagements.

15. Avez-vous peur que les B Corp ou les certifications en général, soient perçu comme du greenwashing par les consommateurs ?

Pas forcément. Je trouve que les B Corp sont bien perçues par les gens en général.

16. Si vous n'êtes pas intéressé par les B Corp, voyez-vous d'autres alternatives pour prouver l'engagement d'une entreprise dans le développement durable?

Des actions concrètes montrées aux consommateurs en direct via des moyens de communication (actions sociales, campagnes…) Important de communiquer sur ce que l'on fait réellement et non sur des engagements.

17. Recommanderiez-vous un autre certificat que B Corp? Si oui, lequel ?

Je pense que B Corp est une certification sérieuse donc je n'en recommanderais pas d'autres. Nous sommes en processus d'avoir le label Great Place to Work (j'ignore pourquoi celui-ci et pas un autre)

Appendix 20: Interview with Koen Saels (Coca-Cola)

Rosalie: (…) En terme de certifications, je ne sais pas si vous essayez d'être certifié, est ce que vous cherchez à avoir des certifications ?

> Koen : Oui, par exemple, vous pouvez le vérifier, on a un certificat CDP, et on a un A-Ranking. Donc ça veut dire, en terme de climat/CO2, qu'on est sur le A-Ranking. Ce sont les 6.000 plus grandes entreprises qui sont dedans et il y en a juste 35 qui sont sur le A-Ranking. On est donc vraiment sur le top.

On a aussi le Dow Jones Sustainability Index. On est aussi avec les meilleures entreprises dedans. Donc ça, ce sont les deux plus importants Ranking qui existent dans le monde de durabilité.

Rosalie: Je ne sais pas si vous connaissez le certificat B Corporation ?

Koen : Oui B Corp, je connais oui. On travaille sur ça. C'est un nouveau certificat et on travaille sur ça, mais je peux pas donner plus de détails.

Rosalie: Du coup vous aimeriez bien devenir une B Corp ?

Koen : Si c'est possible oui.

Rosalie : Donc vous êtes en plein en train de commencer le processus ?

Koen : Oui, on regarde tous les certificats.

Rosalie: Pourquoi maintenant est ce que vous avez envie d'avoir la certification B Corp ? Est-ce que c'est plutôt une pression extérieure ou c'est plutôt en interne, vous investissez énormément en termes de durabilité et du coup vous avez envie de montrer ça aussi ?

Koen : Oui pour nous c'est important en interne et externe. C'est pour montrer ce qu'on fait et qu'on est vraiment un leader dans le monde de la durabilité, donc c'est juste pour ça.

Rosalie: Et alors, mis à part B Corp, il y a d'autres certification que vous aimeriez bien recevoir ?

Koen : Est-ce que tu as des exemples ?

Rosalie: Par exemple, je pense aux normes ISO ? Est-ce que vous n'avez pas envie d'être certifié pour ces normes-là ?

Koen : Oui mais on est déjà certifié sur ça, ISO et tout ça.

Rosalie: Donc au final, B Corp sera juste une autre certification parmi une longue liste ?

Koen : Oui, mais B Corp c'est une nouvelle certification, qui n'existe pas depuis longtemps donc c'est pour nous un processus dans lequel on est. Ca prend du temps hein, on ne peut pas dire « on va se certifier B Corp » du jour au lendemain. Mais on a tous les certificats. On a surtout les meilleurs.

Rosalie: Si vous êtes déjà chez les meilleurs, et que B Corp c'est une nouvelle certification, est ce que ça va vraiment apporter quelques chose ? Parce qu'on dit beaucoup que B Corp c'est bien mais que ce n'est pas encore très fort connu des consommateurs et du coup est-ce que ça va vraiment vous apporter quelque chose de positif ?

Koen : Je peux pas…. C'est une question très difficile. Pour l'instant oui, on travaille sur ça, et on apprend aussi sur ça. Donc moi je peux pas donner, excusez-moi, je ne peux pas donner de détails concernant ça.

Rosalie: Et est-ce que vous pouvez quand même par hasard me dire les principaux avantages et les principaux inconvénients de B Corp ?

Koen : Pourquoi ? Et avec quoi est-ce que tu veux comparer ?

Rosalie: Non pas comparer, mais par exemple, les avantages par exemple que ça vous apportera plus de visibilité, ou que ça pourra peut-être encourager les investisseurs à investir encore plus chez Coca. Ou bien des inconvénients comme par exemple que le processus pourrait être très long. Ce qui vous séduit le plus chez B Corp et ce qui est le plus difficile en fait au final?

Koen : Non mais moi je pense pas que ce soit plus difficile que les autres certificats. C'est juste parce que B Corp c'est maintenant un peu celui qui est sur le « picture », pour l'instant. C'est pas un certificat comme un autre.

En terme de climat et en termes d'eau, comme CDP, c'est le top, mais c'est presque la même chose. C'est juste qu'avec B Corp, il y a aussi le paramètre Supply Chain dedans : où est ce qu'on achète nos produits et tout ça. Donc ça c'est par exemple une différence entre B Corp et un autre certificat.

Rosalie: Est-ce que vous n'avez pas peur de l'effet « greenwashing » parce que B Corp c'est un certificat qui est très bien, mais qui est aussi surtout sur la culture d'entreprise plutôt qu'aller dans des détails techniques. Donc vous n'avez pas peur que ce soit un effet de « greenwashing » pour le consommateur ?

Koen : Non et c'est pour ça qu'on ne travaille pas seulement sur B Corp, CDP ou Sustainability Index ou quelque chose. Pour nous c'est global. Je prends juste l'exemple, on a les initiatives qu'on prend sur le Supply Chain, donc l'achat de nos produits. On peut très simplement suivre les règles du Fairtrade, mais on ne fait pas ça. Nos règles sont plus strictes. On dit pas « oui pour avoir des certificat on peut mettre, très simple,

partout des Fairtrade sur tous nos produits », mais on ne le fait pas. C'est pour ça on veut pas faire du greenwashing, juste on veut être un leader dans le sustainability.

Rosalie: Et est-ce que vous pensez que B Corp pourrait vous donner l'avantage de faire partie d'une vraie communauté ? Parce quand on parle de B Corp on parle beaucoup de ce « network » de cette « community of B Corps ». Est-ce que vous espérez d'avoir cet effet de communauté ? Cet effet de réseau ?

Koen : J'ai pas bien compris quelle était la question.

Rosalie: Coca c'est plus une très grande entreprise, mais il y a beaucoup d'entreprises qui espèrent pouvoir rentrer dans cette communauté de B Corp, vraiment avoir cet effet de réseau, un réseau d'entreprise « sustainable ». Et par exemple être associé à d'autre grandes marques qui sont aussi B Corp. Est-ce que ça, ça vous plairait de rejoindre cette communauté ?

Koen: Non, c'est pas pour se comparer aux autres. Pour nous c'est juste pour être, comme j'avais dit, leader et que les autres, et ça c'est plus important, on espère que les autres nous suivent. Je prends un exemple de ce qu'on avait fait l'année passée, et on va le refaire cette année, bon ok peut-être que tout va changer un petit peu, mais c'était prévu. Donc par exemple, on a pris l'initiative, l'année passée, d'utiliser nos marques dans les publicités pour stimuler les gens à recycler. On avait pris tous nos budgets marketing de l'été, et ça c'est un budget énorme pour investir dans des campagnes de recyclage.

Rosalie: Et votre budget justement pour tout ce qui est durabilité, ça représente combien ? Une grande partie ?

Koen : C'est un budget européen. Donc oui c'est une grande partie. On ne peut pas dire qu'il y a un budget, parce que c'est un budget partagé. Par exemple, je prends l'exemple des publicités, on avait pris tout le budget de publicité de l'été pour investir dans les campagnes. Quand on a changé nos bouteilles par des bouteilles qui contient 100% PET, c'est un investissement énorme. Mais tout le budget, je veux bien dire mais je ne connais pas le budget exactement de tout ça, mais c'est énorme.

Rosalie: Merci beaucoup en tout cas !

Appendix 21: Interview with Eloïse Faris (Telos Impact)

1. **Quelles sont les initiatives écologiques et sociales que vous prenez concrètement?**

Notre « core business » est une initiative écologique et sociale car nous conseillons des fondations et fonds d'investissement au sujet de leurs dons avec un impact écologique ou social. Le but étant de maximiser leurs impacts sur la société.

A côté de cela, nous faisons du bénévolat de façon occasionnelle et volontaire (l'entreprise organise des évènements/moments de bénévolat où les employés peuvent participer), et nous avons quelques initiatives écologiques (minimiser le plastique, entreprise de nettoyage qui utilise des produits écologiques, papier recyclé, …)

2. **Comment avez-vous pris connaissance de la certification B Corp ?**

Plusieurs personnes au sein de l'entreprises connaissaient la certification.

Nous avons décidé de faire le pas quand nous avons découvert l'initiative de la LSM (B Corp Live Expérience) où des étudiants analysaient notre entreprise et nous donnaient leurs recommandations pour obtenir la certification (octobre 2019).

Nous avons continué le process sur base du travail fournir par les étudiants, et avons récemment soumis notre candidature officielle. Nous attendons un retour de leur part quant aux prochaines étapes et à notre performance.

3. **Qu'est-ce qui vous a séduit au mouvement ? Pourquoi avez-vous décidé de faire les démarches afin de devenir une B Corp ?**

Nous apprécions le fait qu'il s'agisse d'une certification externe et indépendante. Elle garantit une analyse objective des efforts menés par les entreprises candidates ; contrairement à d'autres initiatives qui peuvent être assimilées à du greenwashing par leur manque de rigueur.

4. **Telos Impact, étant une entreprise déjà éco- et socio-responsable, pourquoi ressentez-vous le besoin de devenir une B Corp ?**

B Corp est devenue une certification de référence ; ne pas l'avoir alors que nous en avons les moyens serait dommage ! De plus, l'exigence du process de sélection nous poussent à toujours aller plus loin dans nos efforts éco-/socio-responsables.

5. **Il existe énormément de certifications promouvant le développement durable, pourquoi avez-vous choisi B Corp spécifiquement ?**

Il s'agit d'une certification (objective) et celle-ci aborde tous les sujets importants (holistique). De plus, elle est reconnue au niveau mondial.

6. **Avez-vous hésité avec d'autres certifications ? Si oui, lesquelles ? Qu'est ce qui a fait que B Corp pèse plus dans la balance ?**

Non

7. **Avez-vous eu « peur » que le certificat B Corp soit seulement une manière de faire du greenwashing ?**

Non, car nous estimons que le greenwashing est compliqué avec B Corp : ils organisent des audits qui vérifient l'intégralité des informations transmises pour s'assurer de leur véracité.

8. **Quand avez-vous commencé le processus pour devenir une Bcorp ? À quel stade êtes-vous ?**

Nous avons commencé la réflexion en octobre 2019. Nous avons soumis notre candidature en mars 2020. Nous sommes dans la phase « review », durant laquelle nous devons compléter des informations complémentaires et nous attendons que les membres de l'équipe B Corp confirment nos réponses à l'« assessment » via leur audit.

9. **Quand espérez-vous avoir fini le processus ?**

Nous aimerions avoir fini pour juin 2020.
Mais B corp nous a expliqué que beaucoup d'entreprises étaient actuellement en attente de la certification, et que le temps pour obtenir la certification était plus long que d'habitude.

10. **Jusqu'ici quelle a été la plus grande difficulté dans le processus ?**

Comme nous devons pouvoir « prouver » ce que nous avançons dans nos réponses, nous n'avons pas pu répondre positivement à certaines questions même si ce sont des choses que nous faisons déjà dans l'entreprise, car nous n'avons pas de documents formels prouvant cela.

11. **A contrario, qu'est ce qui a été relativement facile ?**

Comprendre le processus. Nous savons à quoi nous attendre pour la suite. De plus, les équipes de B-Corp sont réactives et nous accompagnent tout au long du processus Nous avions quelques questions lorsque nous répondions à l'« assessment » et l'équipe B Corp a été très disponible pour y répondre.

12. Selon vous, quelles sont les plus grands avantages de B Corp ?

C'est une certification objective qui aborde tous les sujets importants et qui est reconnue au niveau mondial.

Cela permet de rester exigeant dans notre façon de travailler au quotidien ainsi que de faire partie d'un réseau intéressant d'acteurs sociaux/environnementaux.

13. Au contraire, quelles sont les plus grandes barrières, les limites du certificat ?

Comme nous avons deux entités au sein de notre entreprise (l'une fait de la philanthropie et l'autre de l'impact investing), nous avons eu des difficultés à identifier notre catégorie au début de l'« assessment ». En effet, il faut choisir parmi une liste de catégories, mais aucune ne correspondait à 100%.

De plus, nous sommes relativement petit (11 ETP), mais trop grand que pour faire partie de la catégorie de petite entreprise (jusqu'à 10 ETP). Nous sommes donc dans la catégorie au-dessus, et devons répondre à des questions supplémentaires, qui ne sont pas toujours pertinentes et réalistes pour une entreprise de notre taille.

De façon générale, il est parfois difficile de s'identifier parfaitement dans les catégories qui sont proposées, et cela ne reflète pas toujours la réalité dans les faits.

14. Quel est l'investissement financier et en terme de temps que vous être prêt à mettre pour obtenir une certification ? Et pour obtenir le certificat Bcorp ?

Le coût de la certification.

1 personne essaye de consacrer quelques heures par semaine pour avancer dans la procédure de certification (mais cela dépend du temps disponible, en plus du travail quotidien).

15. Pensez-vous qu'il y a d'autres alternatives aux B Corp ? Si oui, lesquelles ?

Non

16. Comment pensez-vous que B Corp va évoluer au fil des années ?

L'exigence de B Corp va augmenter au fur et à mesure.

LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE | BRUXELLES | MONS | TOURNAI | CHARLEROI | NAMUR
Place des Doyens, 1 bte L2.01.01, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgique | **www.uclouvain.be/lsm**