



**Evolution of Standards for B Corp Certification -  
Consultant with ESG/Sustainability and Financial Sector Expertise  
Request for Proposals  
(June 7th 2024)**

***B Lab seeks a consultant to advise on standards tailored for the financial service sector as part of the Evolution of the Standards for B Corp Certification***

## **Introduction**

The [process](#) of Evolving the Standards for B Corp Certification is at an advanced stage after a multi-year process that started in December 2020 and two rounds of extensive public consultation. The financial services industry is a unique and diverse sector which has a distinctive business model and approach to managing its (potential) environmental and social impacts on society and the planet. Throughout the development process of the new standards, it was recognized that tailored standards would need to be developed for the financial services industry. The [original trajectory](#) was to develop distinct standards for the finance sector after or alongside the new standards for B Corporation were produced. Consequently, the current [draft standards](#) for B Corporation today do not fully factor the nuances of this industry and may not comprehensively apply to the financial services industry.

Companies from the financial services industry constitute up to 10% of the existing B Corp Community and span from sole proprietors to much larger companies with greater than 1000 workers. Until new finance standards are developed, B Lab is seeking to assess the extent of how the latest draft standards are, or may be readily adapted, to be relevant for the financial services industry.

For more context on the Evolution of the Standards, please see [this](#) page.

## **Overall Objective of this consulting engagement:**

- Review B Lab's latest [draft standards](#) for B Corp certification and current B Impact Assessment (BIA)'s finance addenda.
- Review best practices / standards from credible organizations on how financial services companies can manage their impact to inform the recommendations for tailoring B Lab draft standards for the financial services industry.
- Deliver recommendations for how B Lab's latest draft standards can be adapted to the financial services industry

## Consultant Scope of Work

In collaboration with the Standard Management Team (SMT) and B Lab Global, the consultant will:

- I. Review and understand how B Lab's financial service companies are recognized in its standards. This understanding should start with reviewing the current BIA V6 financial addenda<sup>1</sup> and for additional background information, reviewing the industries captured under B Lab's [track and sector/industry classification system](#). This is the approach used to classify and assess companies from the finance services sector against the current B Impact Assessment (Version 6) and its financial addenda.
- II. Review best practices / standards from credible organizations<sup>2</sup> on how financial services companies can manage their governance, environmental, and social impact that overlap with B Lab's [draft standards](#) a subset of Impact Topics<sup>3</sup> and produce a summary.
- III. Review the [draft standards](#)<sup>4</sup> for B Corporation Certification and per financial services category (excluding financial services institutions that generate greater than 1 billion in revenue)<sup>5</sup> analyze and produce the following:
  - A. Identify what draft sub-requirements are already applicable, i.e. the sub-requirement is feasible and relevant for a finance service company (per category) to meet.
  - B. Identify what draft sub-requirements are not applicable i.e. the sub-requirement is not (currently) relevant for a finance service company (per category) to meet.

---

<sup>1</sup> The financial services industries covered by the BIA financial addenda include: Deposit Banks; Other Credit/ financial services; Microfinance; Investment Advising; and Equity Investing. Assess and pair how these categories align with other international framework common categories Banking, Insurance, Asset Management and Investment Funds.

<sup>2</sup> Including following standards: [Principles for Responsible Investment](#), [Global Impact Investing Network](#), [Global Alliance for Banking on Values](#), [Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials](#), [UNEP FI Principles for Responsible Banking](#), [UK Sustainability Disclosure Requirements](#), [Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation](#), Capital Requirements Directive (CRD) Pillar 3, [Paris-aligned Benchmarks](#)

<sup>3</sup> Impact Topics include: Purpose and Stakeholder Governance, JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion), Workplace Culture, Fair Wages, Human Rights, Climate Action, Environmental Stewardship and Circularity, Governmental Affairs and Collective Action. Impact Topics excluded: Complementary Impact Topics. See the [draft standards](#) for more details on the Impact Topics.

<sup>4</sup> To get a sense of the content to review, please see the section [Impact Topics overview](#). Sub-requirements (e.g. PSG1.1) are grouped under requirements (e.g. PSG1). Ensure no filters apply (for size and sector) to view all sub-requirements.

<sup>5</sup> B Lab already recognizes that for very large financial services institutions new standards are required to be developed to evaluate the governance, environmental, and social performance of these types of companies. For the purposes of this scope of work financial institutions generating a revenue >1 billion will be out of scope.

- C. Identify possible alignment with international frameworks common differentiated categorization for Banking, Insurance, Asset Management and Investment Funds.

Specifically for each sub-requirement (per category) that is not applicable, evaluate if and which of the following options are possible to produce relevant sub-requirements:

1. **Minor Adjustment:** With adjustments the sub-requirement could become relevant and feasible.

Produce content recommendations to revise the sub-requirement.

2. **Major Adjustment:** The sub-requirement is not relevant currently but if a new approach/framework/etc. was taken to achieve the given sub-requirement's intended governance/social/environmental outcome, it could become relevant.

Produce high level recommendations of why and what would be needed to develop tailored requirements.

3. **Omit:** The sub-requirement is not relevant for the finance sector and the recommendation is that the sub-requirement and its intended outcome is omitted from the draft standard.
4. **Requires a new ESG impact area (s) /consideration(s):** Identify and recommend relevant ESG impact standard management considerations, areas, and/or requirements for where there are existing gaps, prioritizing gaps in the core Impact Topics as well as identifying at a high level any other major gaps outside the core Impact Topics, for measuring and evaluating high ESG performance. Acknowledging that the most material impacts of financial services companies occur downstream and are related to their portfolio, the focus shall be, notably, to develop specific additional sub requirements related to the companies' investments.<sup>6</sup>

## Schedule of Activities and Deliverables:

---

<sup>6</sup> See examples of downstream the Impact Topics of Human Rights and Environmental Stewardship and Circularity Impact Topics sub-requirements 3.6 and 2.7. These sub-requirements are for companies in the service sector that will need to assess the potential negative environmental and human rights impacts of working with prospective clients and projects and take necessary mitigation actions on any potential or known material impacts.

Activities/Deliverables	Description
Kick-off call with representatives of the B Lab the standards management team	Consultant and standards management team representatives have a call to go through the scope of the work, align on expectations of the deliverables, and clarify the key points of contacts at B Lab that the consultant will liaise with on the project.
Review B Lab B Impact Assessment Version 6 financial services categorization <i>and review the financial addenda</i>	<p>Consultant gains a good understanding of B Lab's current classification of financial services companies for its applicable for the next deliverable.</p> <p>The consultant gains a good understanding of B Lab's current standards for certain types of finance companies (Finance Addenda in V6 of BIA), including how they differ from and overlap with the new performance requirements.</p>
Conduct analysis, produce, and submit a report of recommendations	Consultant produces a recommendation report for how B Lab's draft standards for B Corp Certification could be tailored for the financial services sector, including references to best practices / standards from credible organizations.
Present findings and recommendations	Host a virtual call with B Lab Global standards management team and other interested parties on the report findings and recommendations
Finalize report.	Consultant reviews and addresses comments and questions from B Lab standards management team and other supporting governance body/team members and updates and finalizes the report accordingly.

## Suggested Project Timeline

- Project Initiation: as soon as possible
- Analysis and report production: By early August
- Final report submitted: By mid/late August

## Budget

The budget for this project is USD12,500.

## Selection Criteria and Submission Process

### Selection will be based on:

- Experience in the financial services industry with a global perspective

- Knowledge of sustainability standards and best practices, with a focus on impact materiality(not just financial materiality), linked to the financial services industry<sup>7</sup>
- Previous related work experience with examples of objectives and results from prior, similar projects
- The proposed price compared to B Lab's budget and other consultant proposals received
- Knowledge of B Lab standards for B Corporation certification is an advantage

### **How to respond to this RFP**

Please provide the following in response to this RFP:

- At a minimum, proposals should contain a statement of interest and alignment with the selection criteria outlined above and highlighting similar/relevant work conducted globally.
- A brief overview of your company including your mission, location, and prospective team member(s) to work on this project
- What do you consider to be your competitive differentiators as it relates to this RFP?
- What role do you consider the financial services sector playing in bringing about meaningful systems changes?
- What strategies would you employ to ensure that the recommendations factor into a Global lens for a wide variety of sizes and types of financial services sectors companies?
- Proposed project process overview and timelines, cost and payment schedule.

**Please submit a proposal in response to this RFP by 21st June 2024, at 5 pm EST to [standardsmanagement@bcorporation.net](mailto:standardsmanagement@bcorporation.net)**

---

<sup>7</sup> See footnote 2 for knowledge expected to relative sustainability standards and best practice for the financial services sector industry.