



# Bringing Prosperity and Planet together

## A Manifesto to Recognize Sustainable Enterprises

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What does your Manifesto call for?**

The Manifesto calls for a creation of a 'Sustainable Enterprise' status in Swiss legislation. This qualification would be open - but not mandatory - to any for-profit entity that is willing to commit to be assessed and to report on a comprehensive set of targets that are consistent with Environmental, Social and Governance indicators.

#### **Who wrote the Manifesto?**

The Manifesto was written by B Lab (Suisse) staff, in consultation with an initial group of companies that support its call to action.

#### **How do you define 'sustainable enterprises'?**

We define Sustainable Entrepreneurship as a forward-thinking business approach that targets commercial companies and supports them with integrating social, environmental, and stakeholder considerations into their governance, strategies and operations. Sustainable entrepreneurs aspire to create viable market solutions and to act as change agents who realize and exploit opportunities for sustainable development.

#### **Who should sign the Manifesto?**

The Manifesto is open to all actors of Swiss society that support progress on sustainable development. That includes, but is not limited to, companies, social enterprises, associations, experts, academicians, and citizens.

#### **Why do we need more regulation? Aren't Swiss companies already doing enough on sustainability?**

Switzerland's material footprint is growing, which is contrary to sustainable development. The consumption of natural resources necessary for the production and transport of goods and services consumed in Switzerland is increasing, in particular the share linked to imports leading to an increasing environmental burden abroad. Our proposal complements existing ongoing efforts by creating a mechanism that incentivizes and accelerates the contribution of the private sector to Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

#### **What additional burden on companies will this new framework entail?**

We propose the establishment of an option to qualify as a "Sustainable Enterprise" for all profit-making companies. Our proposal does not impose new obligations on businesses that do not wish to obtain this status, but encourages those who do wish to prepare for future obligations imposed by the EU and internationally.



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#### **Is this proposal for large companies only?**

Our proposal is addressed to any profit-making entity in Switzerland, of any size and sector. We believe that every business should have the opportunity to embrace sustainability.

#### **Can social enterprises qualify for 'sustainable enterprise' status?**

The 'Sustainable Enterprise' status is designed to be universally applicable across the entire spectrum of for-profit legal entities. This includes traditional corporations, small and medium-sized enterprises, startups, and social enterprises such as cooperatives. The key factor is not the type of entity, but rather its commitment to integrating sustainability principles into its business operations. This means that any for-profit enterprise, irrespective of its business model, can qualify for 'sustainable enterprise' status if it meets the designated criteria of blending social responsibility and environmental stewardship with profitable business practice.

#### **Are you proposing to create a 'benefit company' model in Switzerland?**

Our proposal builds on European and international best practices, including benefit company legislative frameworks. However it differs from it in different ways. The principal difference is that our approach requires Sustainable Enterprises to maintain rigorous standards of auditing and reporting on a comprehensive set of social, environmental and governance indicators that are aligned with UN, OECD, and existing and emerging European Union standards and regulations. This alignment seeks to achieve a globally recognized and respected standard of sustainability in enterprise.

#### **What would be the advantages of this regulatory framework for Switzerland?**

Our proposal would offer several advantages, including:

- meeting the needs of entrepreneurs who are asking for a “ready-made” model to guide their transition to sustainability
- protecting consumers against “greenwashing”
- assisting regulators in identifying companies that are serious about their social and environmental commitments
- improving business performance of companies that qualify as “Sustainable Enterprises” but also of those that undertake the process to prepare for future qualification or simply use the Sustainable Enterprise framework to guide their business operations
- accelerating Switzerland's progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda goals.
- strengthening Switzerland's position as an ideal sustainable finance location.