

*Disclaimer: Each group was asked to briefly share a reflection of their group project at the end of their report. Due to our confidentiality agreement with B Lab and the participating companies, we anonymized any company identifying words/terms. You will notice that students also reflect on their collaboration with the "B-Leader". Each group was assigned a B-Leader. B Leader refers to professionals who have gone through a training program organized by B Lab that provides knowledge and methods to professionals who want to lead their organization through to the B Corp certification. We assigned each group to a B-Leader to get support on the BIA and solve any questions where needed.*

### **Group 1**

The progress of our report was good throughout the semester. Regarding the challenges encountered by the group, specific information was hard to find, because the market is clearly not transparent. We had a lot of ideas, but we did not know the financial amount that COMPANY would like to invest. Also, some of our ideas combined more than just Customers and Environmental issues and we would have liked to work together with the other group in order to combine our ideas. COMPANY CEO gave us a lot of interesting and important information concerning our sections. Somehow, it would have been great to speak also with more specific employees such as the HR that would have provide us more information to make our report more precise concerning the recommendations and make a deeper analysis. Otherwise, everything went well, COMPANY CEO and the B leader NAME were always available to answer our questions and open to a meeting. We really appreciated working with them to accomplish this report.

### **Group 2**

Regarding the progress of the project, there were no problems that we had encountered during the interactions with the company. The report went smoothly along the two meetings scheduled with the company: the first time to get to know the company, its objectives and priorities and the second time to get more in the details of the section we have analysed. There were no issues encountered regarding the completion of the assessment as it is the company that did it. The main challenge was to make recommendations that may be applicable to the company while staying realistic. Besides, the fact that the company try to incentivize clients to buy products while staying durable was a challenge for us in order to make appropriate recommendations. To conclude, with our coaching by the B Leader and the company's motivation towards the project was very helpful for us, thus there was no thing that we could to differently next time.

### **Group 3**

We really enjoyed working on this group project and appreciated the contact with both companies involved. First of all, we want to thank our B Leader, NAME, who has been present to guide us through the whole process. He gave us useful tips and often pointed out the right element to think about. He also brought good support during our first exchanges with COMPANY. Secondly, we usually do not have the opportunity to work directly with enterprises during academic projects, so it has been a rewarding experience. Moreover, in our case, as we were not working for the company but with the company the perception we had on the project changed and communication with the CEO, NAME, was facilitated. He has been really kind to us and tried to help us as much as he could to provide us with relevant information. Thus we have been able to answer almost all the BIA questions. In the end, we did not succeed in obtaining the certification for COMPANY, which disappointed us. But the main goal was in any case reached; we managed to go through the BIA to find the main problems the company faces and therefore we were able to elaborate recommendations for the organisation to improve its positive impact. We have no doubt that COMPANY will be certified in the near future. Regarding more specifically the work we did in groups, it was maybe a little more complex to organise meetings and coordinate the work between the two groups (eight people) that collaborate with COMPANY. However, it is obviously a good thing to divide the categories of the BIA in between two groups otherwise we should have covered all the questions of the test. But if the groups are well organised and communicate effectively, it should be feasible.

#### **Group 4**

Overall, the BIA consultancy project has been an enjoyable experience. The process itself was intriguing, especially considering that it allowed us to discover new dimensions of a business, to analyze its impact on the society and environment, and to better understand what are the key elements that are employed in delivering such positive results. Having the opportunity to schedule meetings and to connect with the company also added value to the whole process, both our meetings were welcoming and very helpful. As a suggestion, setting up a second individual meeting for discussions regarding our findings could help better understand what are the elements that require improvement and how to approach these enhancements. Receiving constructive feedback and advice, during the development of the process could help improve the final aspect of the project and its qualitative content.

#### **Group 5**

The project progressed at a regular pace for our group. We started by gathering data from the website in order to complete the BIA as much as possible. This is where we faced the first challenge, most of the BIA questions are too detailed or asking for data unavailable to us, so we were not able to do much on the BIA in the first place. We then met with the other group working on the other sections of COMPANY'S BIA to set an appointment with the company's CEO, NAME. During the first meeting with the company, we found out that COMPANY had only answered the questions to have the "Best for Geneva" label, the BIA being then only completed at around 10%. But, the company still wants to complete the BIA in order to have the certification. However, there were many uncertainties when it came to correctly understand the questions and the requirements to actually get the points when the verification process would come. Fortunately, with the help of the B-Leader, we had some clarifications so the company and ourselves had a better idea when answering the different questions. It was eventually decided that COMPANY would take some time to complete the BIA themselves, which was much simpler and time saving than completing it together. The BIA completion went from around 10% to 95%, which allowed us to identify more easily the questions or the sections where COMPANY could improve their BIA score. Thus, next time, we would be more direct and ask the company through email if their objective is to complete the BIA and have the certification, so that, once their objective is made clear to us, they can already complete the BIA as soon as possible before the first meeting for us to gain some time. After analysing all the questions, we were able to come up with the suggestions we had. However, after the second meeting, COMPANY CEO clearly told us that he didn't want small suggestions or small changes to get only a few more points in the BIA. He wanted bigger suggestions that could help him and his company to have a bigger impact on the society, so the BCorp certification was not the ultimate goal but more a secondary goal that could help them in achieving their main goal of doing good to society. Consequently, we changed our approach and we were able to find more general and long-term suggestions, which we hope will help COMPANY to achieve their respectable goal of doing good in the future.

#### **Group 6**

We had a very good group dynamic and NAME CEO gave us a lot of his time during the meetings or by email. We chose to write a very precise agenda in which we set ourselves objectives to ensure that we were always on time. NAME, our BLeader, also provided us with good support and guidance throughout the semester. She took the time to accompany us to each meeting to supervise the conversation and clarify the more unknown points of the BIA. This work is really the result of teamwork, where everyone has brought its imagination, creativity and know-how. These various recommendations open the door to future certification, but the road is still long and no longer within our control. We hope that this will have convinced CEO NAME and his team and that COMPANY will soon become a B Corp.

#### **Group 7**

The project was really appealing. The possibility to work with a company in a concrete way represented a huge opportunity for us to familiarize with the professional world and daily short-

term and long-term challenges they are facing. First of all, we want to address a special thank you to COMPANY and particularly to COMPANY EMPLOYEE for welcoming us in their premises and for the contribution made. We want to thank PhD Judith Schrempf-Stirling and TA Rebecca Elliott for accompanying us through the project and the B leader NAME for the provided support. However we faced a few difficulties, such as not really grasping the meaning of some questions from the BIA, or the fact that a lot of questions could not be answered for several reasons. But overall, this project was gratifying. So we strongly recommend it for future students.

### **Group 8**

Our group had a wonderful experience working with COMPANY. COMPANY EMPLOYEE, our correspondent at the company, was very supportive and helpful. She made time to meet with us on three separate occasions, and always followed up by email to pass on information we needed that she had to get from a colleague; consequently, our communication with COMPANY was strong. We felt very welcomed by her and the rapport we established lent to a successful project. However, a challenge our group had to overcome was that of a language barrier, as COMPANY EMPLOYEE is a French speaker and not all group members can speak French. Additionally, all company documents which were supplied for context and more information were in French. Our group thus had to have strong communication amongst ourselves, with French group members passing on information gleaned from the meetings and documents to the others. Overall, though this was a challenge, it provided an opportunity to double-check everyone's understanding of the information passed on through summary meetings we had as a group. Completing the BIA was fairly straightforward, a process our group did together with COMPANY EMPLOYEE in two of our meetings. It was helpful that the BIA was available in both French and English. Nonetheless, there were some questions that were difficult to relate to a Swiss real estate company whose primary operations are focused on the rental market. Though the B Leader was present for the first meeting, her expertise in the BIA would have been helpful in the following two as clarification on certain questions was needed. As well, despite the fact that COMPANY'S social efforts heavily focus on the environment, because two groups were assigned to COMPANY the other group was given the environmental category of the BIA. Therefore, despite the many recommendations this report provides, which we believe will benefit the company, recommendations which support COMPANY'S environmental efforts are potentially more valuable to COMPANY. As a result, we did include environmental themes within our recommendations, but it was challenging to divert our attention from one of the organization's priorities. Nonetheless, doing so did shine a light on other areas which COMPANY potentially overlooked while focusing on the environment. Overall, our group worked really well together. The diversity of our team, coming from a variety of backgrounds and countries, lent to a variety of ideas in brainstorming sessions and interesting discourse. Though finding time to meet as a group was at times challenging, owing to differing class and work schedules, the group's similar work ethic and commitment to the project meant we were able to find time and work on the project continually throughout the semester.

### **Group 9**

By looking back, we can say that the whole experience was a great success for all parties. The whole assessment gave us insights in the world of sustainability ratings and made us more confident in working with external companies under time pressure. We had our doubts in the beginning if we can finish the project on time, because the first meeting with COMPANY was scheduled later than expected. For a few weeks, we could not do anything more than just wait and prepare the meeting. This was a bit difficult because we were eager to start the project. Nevertheless, after the first meeting was over, the collaboration with COMPANY went flawless. COMPANY filled out the questionnaire within a short time which gave us the opportunity to focus and reflect on how to improve their score. For future semester classes, we would suggest several points to consider in order to improve the development of the project. First of all, communicate only in one language: English. It assures that there is no knowledge gap due to language barriers within the team. By starting in communicating in French for example with the B-Leader, it is difficult to change this in a later state. So it's better to stick to one language from

the beginning on. Secondly, try to persuade the company to fill out the questionnaire on their own. They know their business better than anybody else and therefore can answer the questions in the most efficient way. In our case, this process was very effective, and we were able to gain valuable time. Last but not least, the responsible people from the companies are generally always busy. For COMPANY, the CEO, NAME, had not much time. To reach our goals on time, we always had to fix deadlines and to remind COMPANY if we did not receive some documents on time. It is important not to wait too long. At the end, both parties profit when the assignment can be finished on time. For our group members, learning more about sustainability issues was very interesting. Every company has a different view on the term sustainability and sets its goals according to their needs and values. COMPANY for example had its focus more on governance and the worker part but had minor interest in ecological to the recommendations for the, we also gave COMPANY in a face-to-face meeting tips for their challenge with finding the right employees. By positioning themselves as an employer who cares about sustainability issues could prove their efforts in the future, with the B-corp certification. They will be able to attract candidates who want to work for the company on purpose reasons and not only because of the money. Although the project work was challenging due to the high organizational effort, it was a great experience for all team members. We hope that future classes can also profit from this collaboration between the University of Geneva and B-Lab because the learning effect was very high. Finally, our fingers are crossed that COMPANY receive the B-certification in 2020.