



## B Lab Eligibility Statement on Zoos, Aquariums, and Animal Parks

In response to interest from companies and stakeholders regarding B Corp Certification for companies that operate zoos, aquariums, or other animal-based recreation or parks, B Lab's independent Standards Advisory Council has rendered the following decisions regarding eligibility for B Corp Certification for all new companies pursuing certification that fall within the industry:

- (1) Zoos, aquariums, and animal parks are eligible to achieve B Corp Certification only if they are accredited by the [Association of Zoos and Aquariums \(AZA\)](#) or an equivalent accreditation focused on animal well-being and positive industry practices.

All companies involved in the industry are still able to use the [B Impact Assessment](#) as an internal impact management tool, get [GIIRS Rated](#) to become more visible and attractive to impact investors, and register as [benefit corporations](#) in jurisdictions where that option exists.

### **Rationale:**

The B Impact Assessment primarily focuses on the positive impact and proactive impact management of a company. The B Impact Assessment alone, however, is insufficient in assessing the potential negative impact of certain industries like zoos and animal parks. The B Impact Assessment is customized based on the size, sector, and geographic market of the company, but that does not always allow it to analyze the the potential controversial aspects of a specific industry or product in depth.

Critics of zoos range express concerns about the fundamental principles of keeping animals “captive” in an unnatural habitat, or more specific concerns about negative practices like inadequate care services, cramped or low-quality habitats, or the capturing of wild animals to be brought into captivity. Many of these ethical concerns arise from the history of zoos and animal parks, where the initial intent of these institutions has been human entertainment at the expense of animal well-being.

Simultaneously, zoos, aquariums, and animal parks can be a force for education, awareness, and conservation. They provide opportunities to educate students and others about biology and zoology and can increase awareness about the environmental issues that threaten animal populations and ecosystems. Most zoos host schools field trips and have specific programs to educate their customers. They can also play active roles in conservation, facilitating research

and developing captive breeding programs for endangered species with the potential of re-introduction.

Recognizing the guiding principles of the B Corp Certification, as well as the legitimacy of concerns regarding their negative impacts, it is necessary to ensure that zoos, aquariums, and animal parks that achieve B Corp Certification not only achieve the minimum performance requirements of the certification regarding their business performance as a whole, but must also meet best-in-class practices in the industry to ensure that those potential negative impacts are minimized while positive impacts are optimized. [AZA Accreditation](#) sets the most rigorous standards available in the market, and will therefore be relied upon to confirm that zoos, aquariums, and animal parks are eligible for B Corp Certification.

This disclosure is intended to recognize that reasonable stakeholders may disagree with the position outlined by the Standards Advisory Council and all should have a right to make their own judgment regarding the company's social and environmental performance.

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This statement is effective as of April 2016 until further judgment from the Standards Advisory Council. This document, and the decision of the Standards Advisory Council, was based on research into the regulatory implications in the industry and its positive and negative impacts.

In preparation for future revisits by the Standards Advisory Council on this issue and B Lab's continuous improvement of its standards, please send your feedback or questions to B Lab's Standards Development Manager Dan Osusky at [dosusky@bcorporation.net](mailto:dosusky@bcorporation.net).