

# Best for Geneva

2018  
Summary

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With the support of  
 REPUBLIQUE  
ET CANTON  
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*"Due to its international nature and multicultural tradition, Geneva offers the ideal location to launch Best For Geneva challenge. Best for Geneva successfully inspires and equips Geneva businesses to improve jobs, strengthen communities, and preserve the environment. It is a citywide movement of people using business as a force for good."*



Jonathan Normand  
Executive Director B lab Switzerland.

In February 2019, 340 local business of Best for Geneva program celebrates their commitment to join effort on the Sustainable Developpement Goals, creating quality jobs and shared prosperity. At the heart of the campaign is the "Best for Geneva" challenge, a powerfull online assessment that uses a customized version B Lab's Impact Assessment, the leading global tool for measuring, benchmarking and improving economic and social impact, businesses can assess their practices on issues such as diversity and inclusion,environnement, compensation, benefits and governance, and compare their businesses to more than 30,000 others to establish best practices.

## About Best For Geneva

B Lab (Switzerland) with the State of Geneva and 30 partners including the B Corp community have delivered a campaign and set of business tools designed to enhance business competitiveness and improve quality of life for workers.

Best for Geneva Challenge, a holistic online business assessment that calculates a company's performance across multiple categories, such as community impact, environmental impact, and job quality. Once complete, the Challenge generates a scored snapshot of the business's performance, at which point a business can compare itself to others their size and in their industry.

They also have the option of accessing workshops, best practice and improvement guides. Best for Geneva participants are given opportunities to strengthen their bottom line through marketing collateral, employee engagement strategies, and a connection to a values-aligned network.

## About the program

Commitment programs initiated by B Lab such as "Best For <sup>TM</sup>", Cities + B or Cities Can Be aim not only to make companies aware of their social and environmental impacts, but also to start measuring their activities' impacts.. Moreover, Best For programs equips companies taking part in the program with knowledge and tools to identify beneficial practices for employees, the community and the environment and in terms of governance. Pioneering city in Europe, Geneva has become the ambassador for B Lab's *Best For* international program by launching the Geneva territory initiative in January 2018.

As part of Best for Geneva, a total of 340 companies completed the short impact evaluation (60 questions), and more than 1000 people participated in the 38 workshops and 6 conferences organized by B Lab Switzerland and its 30 partners. The ultimate goal of this program was to provide a reference, knowledge and tools to enable companies to improve their social or environmental performance.

### *Businesses and sustainability*

The sustainable economy wants to benefit every individual and give everyone the opportunity to invest and contribute to local and global development according to their abilities and means. According to this economic model, it is essential for all population groups to be represented, and to have the opportunity to participate in decision-making and share the benefits of development while continuing to create opportunities. In this endeavour, Best for Geneva offers participants the opportunity to move from good theoretical intentions to the implementation of practices to quantitatively measure performance related to sustainable development goals and to improve their practices in their communities.

### *Measurement tool: B Impact Assessment*

The questions for the Best for Geneva program are based on the B Impact Assessment Tool (BIA) used worldwide. BIA is a free online tool for measuring the social and environmental impacts of a business. It is designed to be suitable for different industries and sizes. It identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement according to four categories: governance, collaborators, the community in which it operates and its impact on the environment.

# Program milestones



## Step 1: Assess

Thanks to the Best for Geneva questionnaire, companies self-assessed their impact online in regards to: Community, Environment, Collaborators, Governance

## Step 2: Receive support

Thanks to the 38 hands-on workshops, 4 'coffee-croissant' sessions and 6 conferences, the participating companies were able to meet, exchange, acquire knowledge and tools in order to achieve their sustainability objectives.

## Step 3: Communicate

Thanks to the "Best for Geneva Participant" logo offered to companies completing their evaluations, these became easily identifiable by their customers as well as other participants. This action was supported by extensive media coverage.

Out of the 340 participants, 15 percent of them moved forward by improving their practices and taking the more comprehensive 180 question BIA in an attempt to obtain the B Corp certification.

## Results

The Best for Geneva questionnaire is composed of 54 to 64 questions. The questionnaire of each company varies according to the size of the organization, its sector of activity and some answers given throughout the questionnaire. A total of 339 companies initiated the questionnaire. A subgroup of 204 organizations has completed more than 90%. As a self-assessment, companies were free to choose which questions to answer.

### *Trends highlighted by the program*

Overall, BfG participants have a slightly higher socio-environmental performance than the benchmark average. This result is in line with the positioning of BfG companies in the face of sustainable development issues. Indeed, 28% of them address the social and environmental impact as the main measure of their success, and 32% of them systematically integrate the social and environmental impact into their decision-making process. Thus, sustainable development previously occupied a relatively important place with BfG companies.

However, these results also confirm that there is still a lot of work to be done to integrate the management of societal and environmental practices within companies as strategic elements. For example, despite the availability of sustainable energy infrastructure on the market, only a minority use it today, often due to a lack of awareness or knowledge, rather than for financial reasons.

In the following graphics, you will find insights on the performance of BfG participants for each of the four impact areas.

Position of Best for  
Geneva companies in  
regards to the  
sustainable  
development issues

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**29%** Impact measurement is the main  
measure of success

"We approach the social and environmental impact as a key measure of the success of our business and make it a priority, even when it does not guarantee profitability."

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**32%** Impact is always integrated into the  
decision-making process

"We systematically integrate social and environmental impact into the decision-making process, as we consider it important for the success and profitability of our business."

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**16%** Impact is considered  
but not a priority

"Social and environmental impact is often taken into account, but it is not a priority."

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**13%** The positive impact is desirable, but  
not key.

"Positive social and environmental impact is desirable, but not key to our business."

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**11%** The impact is considered only  
occasionally

"We only occasionally consider the social and environmental impact in some aspects of our business."

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# Workers

## Optimisation in the workplace

Businesses are getting ready for the future by adapting:

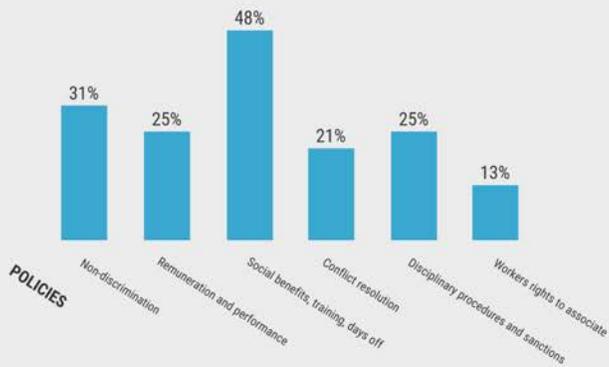
- workspaces
- transports logistics
- production equipment and machinery

 80% of businesses are already in an improvement mindset, and had already taken action in the last 12 months.

 50% of businesses are getting ready for the future, and will make improvements in the next 12 months.

## Employee handbook

In companies that have an employee handbook, what topics are addressed?



 55%

Have an employee handbook

 0%

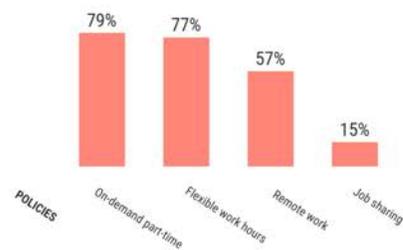
Have a policy against harassment

 0%

Have policies on working hours



## Work flexibility





## Governance

### Diversity within board of directors



Is the share of businesses that have **less than 25% of women and underrepresented individuals** in their board of directors.

**Only 21.67%** of businesses have reached parity in their board of directors.

### Open Innovation

**Open innovation is based on sharing and collaboration with a diverse set of stakeholders.**



**38%** of businesses have engaged in open innovation activities.

**36%** of businesses would consider it in the future.

**26%** of businesses don't consider integrating open innovation in their activities.

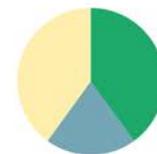


### Organisational models

**60%** of businesses have collaborative methods in place that encourage autonomy and taking initiative amongst employees.

**Cocreation** is a method used to develop products or services in collaboration with a business's users or clients.

Do businesses engage in cocreation?



Yes (green), It's considered (blue), No (yellow)



# Community

## Civic engagement programs



24% of businesses have put in place pro bono or volunteering activities



35% of businesses have made donations in kind or in cash

## Supplier evaluation process



46% put in place a formal supplier evaluation process

Please note that not all respondents are involved in production, therefore this question is not relevant for all businesses.

Amongst companies who evaluate their suppliers, two groups can be identified:

25% of businesses verify that their suppliers conform to the law (evaluating negative practices)

38% of businesses evaluate their suppliers based on positive practices, which go beyond legal obligations (e.g.: environmentally-friendly production)

## Local suppliers and purchasing

36% of businesses make more than 60% of their purchases locally.

59% of businesses make more than 20% of their purchases locally.

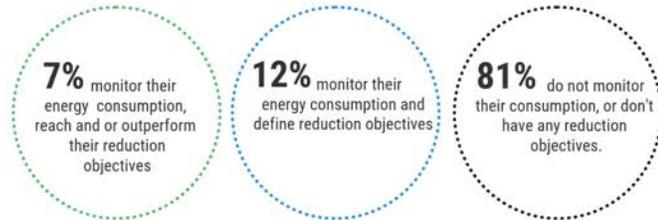


20% of businesses use complementary currencies

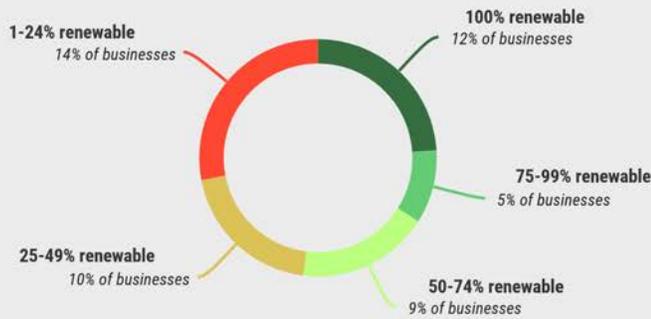


# Environment

## Energy consumption and reduction objectives



## Share of energy consumption from renewable energy sources



... and 44%

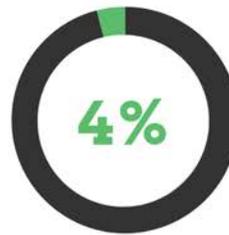
of businesses don't know how much renewable energy they use



## Transportation and travel environmental footprint



of businesses subsidize or encourage workers to use public transport, car-share, or to bike to work.



of businesses have a written policy to limit business trips. des entreprises ont une politique écrite pour limiter les voyages d'affaire

## Conclusion

BfG successfully brought together a significant number of enterprises, especially considering BfG was a pilot program. Moreover, key partners and organisations were engaged in the process, allowing not only for positive quantitative results, but also qualitative exchanges

We find that the challenge today is not just to engage the private sector in measuring their impacts and improving their performance, but to "connect" them to confirm that they are participating in a collective effort. Once this new dynamic is initiated, we observe that many companies participate in initiatives and solutions available in the canton of Geneva.

We have summarized these learnings and the insights we have gained in this report in order to raise awareness and encourage other regions to implement similar initiatives to support their sustainable local development. The progress made shows how the "seed" of Best for Geneva was able to pave the way for a national program under preparation: the "Swiss Triple Impact" initiative, similar to the Best for Geneva program, including a challenge and the creation of a national index of sustainable enterprises.

