



# Certification Process Requirements for B Corps

Summary

## What is the Certification Process Requirements for B Corps document?

The Certification Process Requirements for B Corps is a normative guide issued by B Lab™ that outlines essential guidance and instructions on audits, certification, and license requirements that applies to all applicants and certified B Corps.

## What does it cover?

The document details the framework for achieving and maintaining B Corp Certification, which guides companies toward taking concrete actions aligned with B Lab's mission to transform the global economy. It is an essential resource that outlines the audit, certification, and license requirements companies need to understand and comply with for applying and maintaining their status throughout the certification cycle.

## Understanding the new Certification and License Process

The process for becoming a B Corp begins when a company registers in B Impact and ends with an Assurance Provider making a certification decision and B Lab issuing a license.



**Certification**

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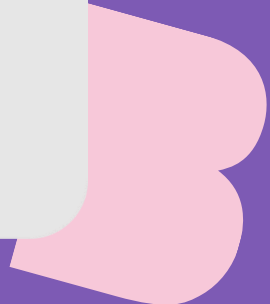
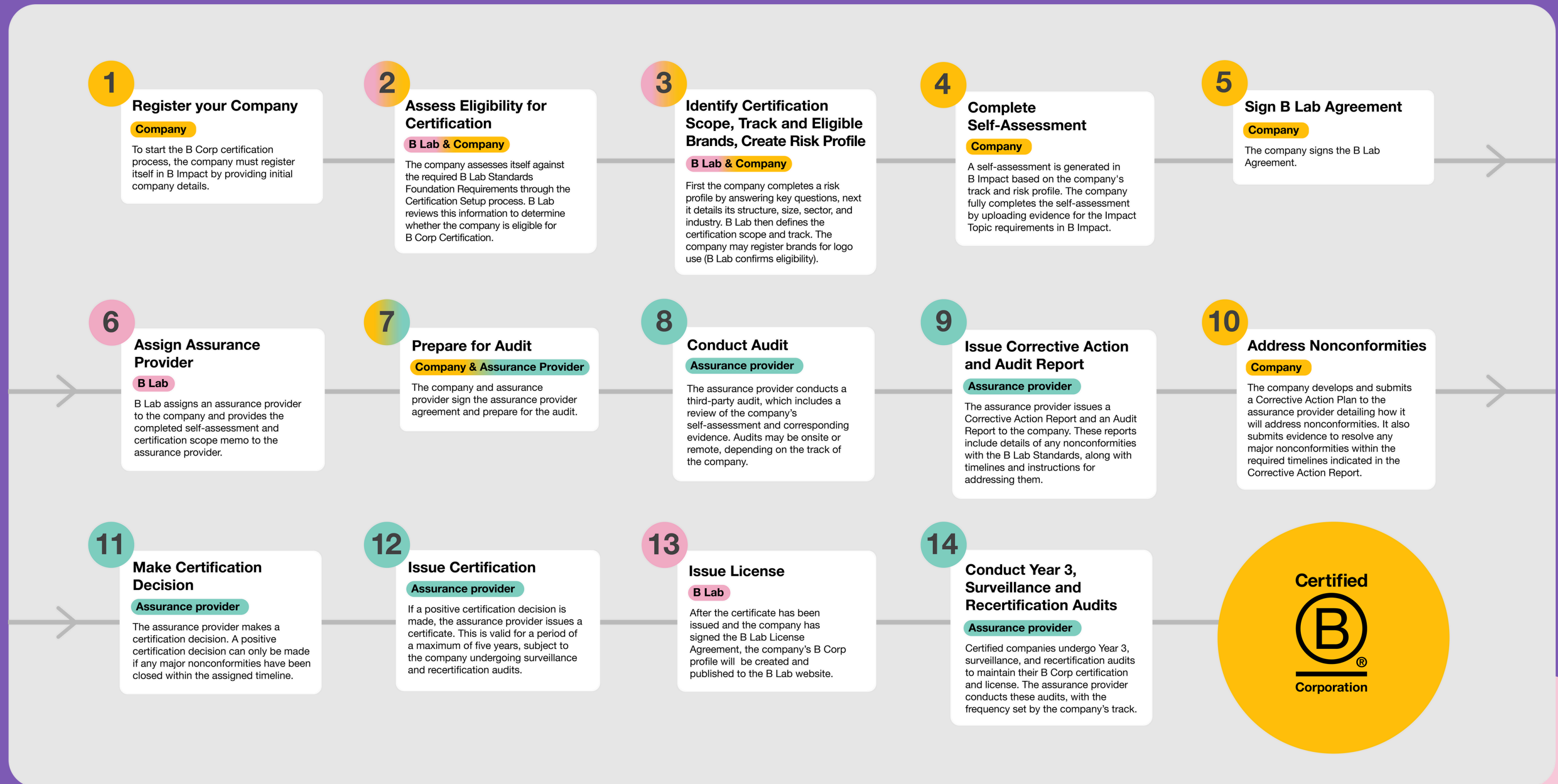


**Licensing**

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A company needs to get both certified and licensed to start making claims about certification and using the B Corp logo. See diagram below for the full certification process:





## Key things to know for B Corps:

### **Certification vs Licensing:**

Certification is granted by an independent, B Lab-approved Assurance Provider following a successful audit confirming conformity to the B Lab Standards. Licensing is granted by B Lab after the certificate is issued and the company signs the B Lab License Agreement, giving the company the right to use the B Corp logo and claims. The company must have both a valid certificate and license to use the B Corp logo and claims.

**Two Pillars of Standards:** To certify, a company must meet both Foundation Requirements and Impact Topic Requirements.

### **Foundation Requirements:**

These are the fundamental eligibility requirements. Companies must:

- Be legally incorporated, in operation for at least 12 months, and generate a majority of revenue from a competitive market.
- Commit to Stakeholder Governance by adopting the B Corp Legal Requirement and signing the B Corp Declaration of Interdependence.
- Conducting a Risk Assessment using B Lab's tool to determine additional requirements.

### **Impact Topic Requirements:**

These require businesses to take meaningful action across seven areas to demonstrate leadership in responsible business practices.

- Purpose & Stakeholder Governance
- Fair Work
- Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (JEDI)
- Human Rights
- Climate Action
- Environmental Stewardship & Circularity
- Government Affairs & Collective Action

### Sustainability Management System:

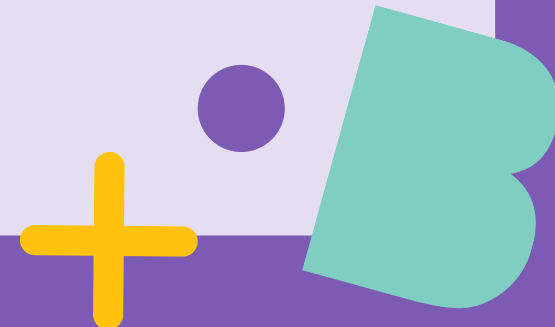
A core requirement certification is having a single Sustainability Management System (SMS) that covers all entities and sites within the certification scope.

**Five-Year Cycle:** Certification is valid for five years but requires active maintenance. It is not a one-time event; a Y3 and surveillance audits ensure companies uphold the standards throughout the cycle. For more information, study Appendix A from the Certification Guide.

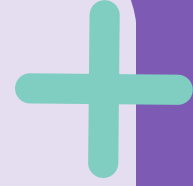

### Audit Frequency and Types:

To maintain certification, companies must undergo periodic audits based on their certification “track”.



Audits include:



Audit type	Pre-audit actions (company)	Pre-audit actions (assurance provider)
Surveillance audit	<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and update self-assessment</li><li>• Report changes to the certification scope, total # workers and revenue</li><li>• Review and update brands</li></ul> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Three months before audit due</p>	<p>The assurance provider schedules an audit 12, 24 or 36 months from the last audit date.</p> <p>The assurance provider may advance or delay the surveillance audit's timing by up to three months before or after the due date, as necessary, to coordinate a suitable date.</p>
Year 3 audit	<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and update self-assessment, provide evidence for B Lab Standards Year 3 requirements</li><li>• Report changes to the certification scope, total # workers and revenue</li><li>• Review and update brands</li></ul> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Six months before audit due</p>	<p>The assurance provider schedules an audit 36 months from the initial audit.</p>
Recertification audit	<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and update self-assessment, provide evidence for B Lab Standards Year 5 requirements</li><li>• Report changes to the certification scope, total # workers and revenue</li><li>• Review and update brands</li></ul> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Six months before audit due</p>	<p>The assurance provider schedules an audit (at least 60 business days) from the certificate expiry.</p>
Special audit	<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and update self-assessment (if applicable)</li></ul> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Three to six months before audit due</p>	<p>The assurance provider schedules an audit as required.</p>




**Managing Nonconformities:** If an audit identifies gaps, an auditor issues a Major or Minor Nonconformity.

- **Major Nonconformity:** A total failure to implement or meet a requirement, or failure to conform that indicates an imminent significant risk (e.g., human rights violations, lack of fair wage practices, or failure to comply with regulatory requirements).
  - **Minor Nonconformity:** An isolated lapse in performance or control that does not indicate a breakdown of systems (e.g. some employees were found not to receive a living wage due to the timing of their hiring).
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**Report Major Changes:** Companies must notify B Lab within six months of any significant changes that affect their certification scope, such as a large increase in workers, a merger, or an acquisition.

**Suspension and Withdrawal:** Failure to close a Major Nonconformity during a surveillance or recertification audit, or failure to meet contractual obligations or pay required fees, may result in the suspension of the certification and license for up to six months. If issues leading to suspension are not resolved, certification and license may be withdrawn. When suspended or withdrawn, a company shall not make any claims of certification or use the B Corp logo.





## Certification Process Requirements for B Corps

Version 0.1



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# Ready to dive in?

[Read full guide](#)