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ABSTRACT

Sustainable tourism encompasses practices that lower businesses' greenhouse gas emissions, uphold workers' rights, protect biodiversity, minimize water consumption, and adopt various sustainable initiatives within the tourism sector. Companies can earn different certifications to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability. Notably, B-Corp certification uniquely recognizes organizations striving for sustainability, characterized by its dual objective of enhancing profits while benefiting society and the environment. This research investigates how an Italian B-Corp in the tourism industry employs prosocial practices and innovative technologies to weave sustainability into its business strategies. A survey of open and closed questions showed that ethical travel fosters connections between travelers and nature, history, art, and various cultures. The findings highlighted positive perceptions of B-Corp certification, emphasizing its organizational advantages. Embracing this progressive business model aligns seamlessly with the company's ethos. Beyond discussing B-Corp certification, the results underline how the company contributes to achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs) set in the Agenda 2030. This research presents theoretical, practical, and social implications. Furthermore, it enhances the scientific literature on sustainable tourism.

Il turismo sostenibile include pratiche come la riduzione delle emissioni di gas serra delle imprese, sostenere i diritti dei lavoratori, proteggere la biodiversità, ridurre al minimo il consumo di acqua e tante altre iniziative sostenibili nel settore del turismo. Le aziende possono ottenere diverse certificazioni per dimostrare il loro impegno per la sostenibilità. In particolare, la certificazione B-Corp riconosce in modo univoco le organizzazioni che lottano per la sostenibilità, caratterizzate dal duplice obiettivo di aumentare i profitti a vantaggio della società e dell'ambiente. Questa ricerca indaga come una B-Corp italiana nel settore del turismo impiega pratiche prosociali e tecnologie innovative per integrare la sostenibilità nelle proprie strategie di business. Un'indagine tramite un questionario con domande aperte e chiuse ha mostrato che il viaggio etico favorisce le connessioni tra i viaggiatori e la natura, la storia, l'arte e le varie culture. I risultati hanno evidenziato percezioni positive nei confronti della certificazione B-Corp, sottolineandone i vantaggi organizzativi. L'adozione di questo modello di business progressista si allinea perfettamente con l'etica dell'azienda. Al di là della certificazione B-Corp, i risultati sottolineano come l'azienda contribuisce al raggiungimento degli obiettivi di sviluppo sostenibile (SDGs) fissati nell'Agenda 2030. Questa ricerca presenta implicazioni teoriche, pratiche e sociali. Inoltre, arricchisce la letteratura scientifica sul turismo sostenibile.

Keywords: B-Corp, Sustainable Tourism, Sustainable Certifications, Tourism Sector, SDGs, Case Study Analysis.

1 – Introduction

Sustainability issues have never been as prominent as in the current global context, characterized by unprecedented environmental, social, and economic challenges. Sustainable development, defined as the development that “*meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*” (WCED, 1987), has become a widely acknowledged concept, to the point that it is often used improperly in many contexts (Valera, 2012). Climate change, the depletion of natural resources, and the growing social inequalities call for a profound rethinking of traditional business models. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), introduced with the United Nations Agenda 2030 in 2015, cannot be achieved solely through public resources (Scheyvens *et al.*, 2016) but requires the active participation of businesses operating in the private sector (Bebbington & Unerman, 2018; Van Zanten & Van Tulder, 2018). In this regard, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), first introduced in 1953 (Bowen, 1953), is particularly important. CSR is a set of policies and practices to align business operations with sustainable development goals (Preuss, 2013). Specifically, in line with the “*triple bottom line*” (Elkington, 1997), companies are expected to play a key role in addressing environmental, social, and economic sustainability challenges (Knudson, 2023). However, despite the growing academic and managerial interest in sustainability, economic objectives often dominate corporate decision-making processes. At the same time, environmental and social issues are relegated to a secondary priority (Hall & Wagner, 2012; Schaltegger *et al.*, 2016), often driven by external stakeholder pressures (Seuring & Müller, 2008). A sustainable approach must be strategically integrated within the corporate business model (Hallstedt *et al.*, 2010) for sustainable initiatives to succeed. This integration and the development of sustainable innovations help enhance brand visibility and market share, leading to significant economic benefits (e.g., Dey *et al.*, 2020; Forsman, 2013; Ghassim & Bogers, 2019; Hojnik & Ruzzier, 2017; Porter & van der Linde, 1995a, 1995b). In this context, recently, B Lab has launched the B-Corp movement, defining a new business paradigm that promotes an approach where economic objectives are intertwined with a positive impact on society and the environment (B Lab, 2019), thus redefining the role of businesses within contemporary capitalism (Zebryte & Jorquera, 2017). This movement aims to “*redefine business success through the use of innovation and the ability to grow rapidly, not only to make money, but also to reduce poverty, build stronger communities, restore the environment, and inspire us to work for a higher purpose*” (Honeyman, 2015, p. 19). Developing a B-Corp community is essential to demonstrate the genuine sustainability orientation of companies, thus addressing the issue of social washing (Marquis *et al.*, 2011). B Lab is, therefore, deeply committed to achieving the SDGs (Parker *et al.*, 2019), and through this initiative, it has significantly facilitated the growth of impact investing (Marquis *et al.*, 2011), driving private companies to generate substantial public benefits (Honeyman & Jana, 2019). In this context, similar to the concept of B-Corps, benefit corporations emerge as businesses that aim to pursue both profit and a positive social and environmental impact. In countries like Italy, they are legally required to publish an impact report outlining achieved results and future goals. This form of sustainability reporting reflects the growing

stakeholder demand for non-financial transparency and supports the development of related regulatory frameworks (Riso *et al.*, 2025; Gazzola *et al.*, 2019).

A still underexplored topic in the context of corporate sustainability is sustainable tourism. This paradigm is based on practices that minimize environmental impact, enhance local communities' well-being, and offer tourists authentic experiences (UNEP & UN Tourism, 2005). Progress in sustainable tourism requires strong commitment from all stakeholders involved in the process (Dragomir *et al.*, 2018).

Nonetheless, the existing knowledge about the prosocial practices implemented by businesses within their processes is still evolving (Pfister *et al.*, 2024). Similarly, the literature highlights the need for further studies to describe how B-Corps contribute to the SDGs (Kirst *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, analyzing the relationship between B-Corp and tourism represents a clear research gap. In fact, the only existing study on this topic dates back to 2021 (Acevedo-Duque, 2021).

Thus, based on the theoretical framework proposed by Pfister *et al.* (2024), this research offers new insights into how the business model of a B-Corp operating in high-impact sectors integrates prosocial principles into its daily operations, exploring strategies adopted to balance economic profit with social and environmental impact. To address these objectives, a case study was conducted on an Italian company operating in the tourism sector that received a B Corp certification in 2022.

The results show that the examined company integrates prosocial principles into its daily activities through fair, transparent, and innovative business practices, promoting the cultural, economic, and social development of the destinations in which it operates. The company adopts key environmental sustainability strategies, committing to offering low-emission tourism packages based on the use of renewable energy. Technological innovation and collaboration with public and private actors further strengthen the effectiveness of these strategies, contributing to the achievement of a sustainable competitive advantage.

This research provides important implications for managers of companies operating in the tourism sector, who will need to increasingly integrate prosocial practices into their business models, as well as for policymakers, who should promote the adoption of sustainable practices by these businesses. At the same time, given the limited information on the topic, this study offers a valuable contribution that sustainability scholars can use to further deepen their research.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. First, a theoretical background analysis is presented (Section 2). Second, the research methodology used is described (Section 3). Third, the study's main results are reported, followed by an in-depth discussion (Section 4). Finally, the paper concludes with a summary of the findings, the key implications, the main limitations, and future research (Section 5).

2 – Background

2.1 – Sustainable Tourism and Certification in the Tourism Sector

Sustainable tourism includes all eco-friendly endeavors within the tourism industry. Various definitions exist for sustainable tourism. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) describes it as an approach that balances tourism development's environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects to ensure long-term sustainability (UNEP & UN Tourism,

2005). The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) defines tourism as thoroughly considering its economic, social, and environmental effects, addressing visitors' needs, the industry, the environment, and local communities (GSTC, 2025). In essence, sustainable tourism represents society's progress. Indeed, sustainable tourism progress is only possible if all stakeholders, such as travel agencies, customers, workers, local communities, etc., actively participate and contribute so that it continues to develop and consolidate (Dragomir *et al.*, 2018; Angeloni, 2013; Tigu & Tuclea, 2008). Promoting sustainable tourism means introducing practices to reduce the climate-changing gas emission of a business, protecting workers' rights, safeguarding the ecosystem's biodiversity, and limiting water consumption and food waste, etc., in the tourism sector. In this context, Benefit Corporations are gaining relevance, with 82 Italian Benefit Corporations operating in the tourism sector, reflecting a growing commitment to embedding sustainability goals within corporate missions (Società Benefit, 2024).

Verifying whether businesses genuinely practice sustainable tourism can be done through certification that confirms the services and tourist activities meet certain standards. A certification system outlines the guidelines, processes, and administration involved in certification. The UNWTO reports that more than 200 certification programs for sustainable tourism and ecotourism worldwide cover competencies related to tourism's effects on economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions (Dragomir *et al.*, 2018). Some of the most well-known sustainable tourism certifications include the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), Green Key, Travelife, Green Globe Biosphere, and many others. Specifically, the GSTC, while not a direct certification system, has developed international standards that align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to promote sustainability in travel and tourism. They are categorized into four pillars: (A) Sustainable management, (B) Socioeconomic impacts, (C) Cultural impacts, and (D) Environmental impacts. Moreover, the GSTC Criteria differ based on the type of recipient: GSTC Industry Criteria for the sustainable management of the private-sector travel industry (Hotels and Tour Operators); GSTC Destination Criteria for sustainable management of Tourism destinations; GSTC MICE Criteria for sustainable management of Venues, Event organizers, and Event and Exhibitions; GSTC Attraction Criteria (GSTC website, 2025). Green Key is one of the most common certifications for accommodation facilities, promoting ecological management, energy efficiency, and waste reduction. Green Globe, an international certification body, includes 44 sustainability criteria supported by over 380 compliance indicators that apply to geographical areas and other factors. Travel Life (Travelife) encourages sustainability among travel agencies and tourism organizations by emphasizing environmental, social, and governance factors. It encompasses 163 assessment criteria and, starting in 2023, mandates that operators track emissions related to energy, water use, and waste production. Beyond the environmental dimension, the certification also ensures that the rights of workers and the cultural heritage of local communities are honored. Biosphere evaluates various activities, including amusement parks, mobility solutions, large events, and low-impact camping. The certification process, created by the Responsible Tourism Institute, aims to advance the 17 SDGs outlined in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Tourism.

To guarantee the reliability of these and other certifications, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) is the only accreditation body recognized by the United Nations. The B Corp certification, described in the following paragraph, is not limited to sustainable tourism; it shows that an organization operates sustainably, regardless of its business activity.

2.2 – B Corps as sustainable firms

The notion that companies bear a responsibility toward the society in which they operate has been developing since the early 20th century, rooted in the idea that there should be harmony between industry and society (Ferioli, 2022). This concept has gained even greater relevance today, in the era of the two major transitions—environmental and digital (Aagaard & Vanhaverbeke, 2024). The literature has codified this notion into Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which is widely defined as a set of policies and practices to align business operations with sustainable development goals by integrating social and environmental concerns into their core activities (Preuss, 2013).

As businesses are increasingly perceived as economic actors that interact with their surrounding social environment, it becomes essential for them to create shared value (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Beyond merely implementing sustainable practices, firms must orient their business models toward sustainability (Shakeel *et al.*, 2020). Within this perspective, companies can develop and communicate a sustainable value proposition to stakeholders while maintaining or regenerating natural, social, and economic capital beyond organizational boundaries (Knudson, 2023; Gazzola & Mella, 2004). Consequently, businesses are expected to impact society significantly, shaping a sustainable socio-economic development model from both environmental and social standpoints.

In this context, B-Corporations (B-Corps) have emerged as an evolution of traditional business models to maximize positive societal impact (Arena *et al.*, 2023). Specifically, the term B-Corp refers to a business that has obtained certification for its level of responsible business conduct (B Lab, 2024). The B-Corp movement represents a shift in capitalism by urging companies to focus on being “*better for the world*” rather than merely “*better in the world*” (Villela *et al.*, 2021; Kirst *et al.*, 2021). The movement continues to grow, with 9,486 certified B-Corps across 160 industries in over 102 countries as of February 2025 (B Lab, 2025). B-Corps can thus be understood from a prosocial perspective, aiming to transcend the traditional economic growth paradigm based on profit maximization at any cost (Pfister *et al.*, 2024).

Existing literature has primarily focused on the practices adopted by prosocial enterprises, highlighting their environmental, social, and financial benefits (Battilana *et al.*, 2015). Other studies have examined governance and the motivations behind companies adopting such practices. Scholars have explored the role of B-Corps in society by investigating three key areas: the motivations for obtaining B-Corp certification, the determinants of the certification process, and the impact of certification on corporate performance (Diez-Busto *et al.*, 2021). Another stream of research has examined the environmental performance of B-Corps (Liute & De Giacomo, 2022). Regarding certification motivations, scholars have identified the need to respond to contextual demands and gain legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders (Boni *et al.*, 2024; Sharma *et al.*, 2018).

However, the literature on the prosocial aspects of business operations remains an evolving field (Pfister *et al.*, 2024). Despite the growing interest in B-Corps, the existing research should adopt a broader perspective, particularly concerning performance measurement, integrating aspects that contribute to shaping sustainable development. Kirst *et al.* (2021) emphasized the need for further research on how B-Corps positively contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and leverage the actions and outcomes of the SDG Action Manager.

To the best of our knowledge, the sole paper connecting B-Corps with tourism is Acevedo-Duque’s 2021 study, which examines the role of B Corps in tourism following the COVID-19

pandemic in Latin America. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to explore how the Italian B-Corp that operates in the tourism sector utilizes prosocial practices and innovative technologies to integrate sustainability into their strategies, addressing the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: How does a B-Corp's business model in sustainable tourism incorporate prosocial principles into its daily operations?

RQ2: What strategies do B-Corps employ to balance economic profit with social and environmental impact in high-impact sectors?

3 – Research Design and Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach referred to as a case study. Case study research offers a comprehensive understanding of a particular phenomenon and generates extensive qualitative data, yielding valuable insights into the characteristics of specific occurrences (Easton, 2010; Ridder, 2017). Many scholars (e.g., Stake, 1995; Sturman, 1997; Simons, 2009) have tried to clarify the concept of a “case study”. A “case study” is *“a comprehensive description of an individual case or unit, which involves an iterative process of gathering, analyzing, and reporting evidence”* (Yin, 1984; Gerring, 2004; Stake, 2011). Analyzing one case is suitable when it exemplifies a unique, representative, or critical instance that can offer broader theoretical insights for an in-depth study of a phenomenon (Gerring, 2004). Studying a single case aims to provide an in-depth and contextualized understanding of the analyzed unit. This approach then uses the collected empirical evidence to inform broader themes and address gaps within the literature concerning the connection between theory and practice (Gerring, 2004; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Chiuichi, 2014). Therefore, our study examined a prominent leader in the sustainable tourism industry. While numerous case studies are available (Yin, 1984), our research adopts a descriptive method to analyze the sole Italian B Corp in the tourism sector. Building upon the theoretical and descriptive bases presented in the literature section, the aim is to examine the depth and extent of the analyzed case (Zainal, 2007). For these reasons, in the wake of other scholars (e.g., Acevedo-Duque *et al.*, 2021; Diez-Busto *et al.*, 2021), we investigated the motivations of the selected company to obtain a B-Corp certification, the determinants of the certification process, and the impact of certification on corporate performance, specifically in the tourism sector.

3.1 – Analysis Procedure

Consistent with methodologies used by other researchers (e.g., Zebryte & Jorquera, 2017; Ciolelli *et al.*, 2024), we utilized information from multiple sources to support data triangulation and enhance the validity and reliability of our research results and their interpretation (Zohrabi, 2013). In this research, we gathered information from official documents on the company's website and data from a questionnaire sent directly to the company. The questionnaire consists of 28 open-ended and 10 closed questions. The responses were gathered from the company's sustainability manager. We initially sent the questionnaire in Italian and later translated the answers into English. The questions were categorized into four distinct sections. The first section contains 17 questions about the company profile, essential for understanding its strategic position within the tourism industry. This part also includes inquiries into the technologies the company uses to enhance its services while minimizing environmental and social impacts. Next, 12 questions focus on the company's journey to obtain B Corp certification and other

sustainability certifications, including the reasons for adopting these standards, necessary internal changes, and the challenges faced. The third section, with eight questions, addresses achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), featuring seven questions. Lastly, a question assesses the company's future priorities, emphasizing innovation, sustainability, and the evolution of its business model from a B Corp viewpoint.

3.2 – Case Study Selection

To address our research questions, we conducted a case study of an Italian company operating in the sustainable tourism sector that has integrated prosocial practices into its core business model. The company was selected based on its relevance and representativeness. As a certified B-Corp, it demonstrates a strong commitment to embedding social and environmental values within its operations (Preuss, 2013). Moreover, its innovative approach to responsible tourism exemplifies how B-Corps can transcend traditional profit-driven models by adopting a prosocial orientation (Pfister *et al.*, 2024). This case illustrates how prosocial principles and technological innovation can be combined to support sustainable business practices. The analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of the strategic and operational dynamics characterizing B-Corps in the tourism industry.

3.2.1 – Company Profile

Company X is an Italian tour operator founded in the 1970s in Milan, Italy. Its mission focuses on providing ethical and responsible travel experiences that immerse travelers in nature, history, and art and foster connections with people and cultures. The company offers travel experiences for solo travelers and small private groups, catering to customers' desires with genuinely customized packages and providing its services online.

The company's main objective is to generate a positive environmental, social, and governance impact on the planet, promoting regenerative tourism practices that are suitable for helping to preserve ecosystems and provide communities with an opportunity to increase their resilience. To achieve these goals, the company has always placed a strong emphasis on sustainability. In August 2022, it earned the B Corp certification, scoring 86.3 on the B Corp Impact Assessment, which is well above the median score of 50.9 for traditional companies. Table 1 shows the B Impact Assessment score in all fields (Governance, Workers, Community, Environment, and Customers).

Table 1 – Company X - B Impact Assessment Score (Source: B Corp Website, 2025)

Categories	Score
Overall B Impact Score	86.3
Governance	21.0
Workers	31.1
Community	20.3
Environment	9.0
Customers	4.7

Additionally, the company received the Tranlife certification in September 2023, showcasing its commitment to social and environmental sustainability. This recognition highlights the company's dedication to a more sustainable future and emphasizes the need to communicate its social value to stakeholders for enhanced social impact.

Company X actively contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically goals 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, and 17 (Figure 1). With the help of the SDG Action Manager tool, created in collaboration with B Lab, the company can evaluate and benchmark its progress toward these goals.



Fig. 1 – Primary Sustainable Development Goals pursued by the Company X
(Source: Company X Impact Report 2024)

4 – Results and Discussion

The questionnaire findings are analyzed using content analysis to address the two research questions. The APPENDIX includes the questions and key results from the four topic groups. Initially, all relevant information about the company is included. By conducting data triangulation, that is, analyzing the responses from the questionnaire alongside information gathered from various documents on the company's website, it emerged that the company has been operating as a travel agency and tour operator across different tourism sectors for over fifty years. Among the key services provided, the company organizes trips in small groups led by experts. According to the response to question 4 and the 2024 Impact Report, the company's mission is to deliver ethical and responsible travel experiences that connect travelers with nature, history, art, and the chance to engage with diverse cultures and people. The company's key success factors focus on making a positive societal impact through transparent and innovative fair business practices while fostering the culture of every location you visit. Moreover, the firm seeks to improve the unique qualities of Italian and foreign regions suggested as travel destinations. This initiative aims to promote their economic, tourist, and social development while fostering connections between travelers and local communities. The firm's activities seek to enrich the cultural, social, and environmental heritage of minority countries and communities through events and demonstrations. It also strives to forge a positive

influence by partnering with businesses, public organizations, non-profits, foundations, and associations to advance sustainable development efforts and strategic innovation in Italy and its chosen destinations.

The organization is classified as a small and medium enterprise (SME), employing fewer than 250 individuals. Its hierarchical structure in human resources includes the CEO, four managers, and staff members. Responsibilities are allocated equitably based on the objectives assigned to each role. When employees were asked whether they hold degrees in tourism or related to this field, they reported that between 20% and 40% of staff members are graduates. The company considers oral communication skills, interpersonal skills, the ability to formulate critical thinking, adaptability in the workplace, marketing and sales skills, and customer service skills necessary for work in the tourism sector.

The company's strategies for gaining competitive advantages include transparency, high-quality service, and attention to detail. Furthermore, it uses strategic technological innovations, such as the content management system (CMS), to improve its social and environmental impact. The CMS is a software tool installed on a web server designed to facilitate website content management, relieving the webmaster (the person in charge of managing a website) from needing specific technical knowledge of web programming. Furthermore, the company uses apps, websites, and web TV streaming to improve its offerings.

The firm targets both national and international markets. In question 14, we asked about the main customer segments. The company has selected multiple answers:

- a. Responsible and aware travelers seek sustainable travel experiences, prioritizing eco-friendly accommodations, genuine and respectful interactions with local culture, and transparency regarding their travels' social and environmental impacts.
- b. Families are interested in educational travel experiences for children, activities for kids, and authentic and safe family experiences.
- c. Luxury travelers possess high purchasing power and seek premium experiences through exclusive accommodations and services.
- d. Senior travelers over 60 who have the time to enjoy comfortable facilities and organized trips that blend relaxation with culturally enriching experiences.

The company directly engages with its customers, providing extensive communication options both online and offline. This encompasses a robust presence on social media, websites, and podcasts, along with offline advertising in magazines and newspapers. Additionally, the company gathers customer feedback through a questionnaire administered after each trip.

The company successfully addresses one of the major challenges faced by tour operators and travel agencies—seasonality—by targeting various customer groups and offering diverse destinations in its travel packages.

Moving on to the second set of questions regarding sustainable certifications, the company obtained B Corp certification in August 2022 and Travel Life certification in September 2023.

Among the main motivations for pursuing B Corp certification was the desire to embrace the B Corp philosophy in the business system. The primary goal of Benefit Corporations and B Corps is to positively impact society and the environment while aiming to maximize profits. Often, reconciling these two objectives can be challenging. Specifically, the company's main difficulty is balancing economic profit with social and environmental impact by sustainably

developing the supply chain while ensuring high-quality services. Furthermore, procedural changes were among the main internal changes required to align with B Corp standards. The B Corp certification offers the firm numerous advantages, including networking opportunities and enhanced market positioning. No disadvantages are perceived. B Corp certification has brought costs to the company, such as consultancy costs, certification fees, staff hours, and implementing activities such as training and company welfare.

The questionnaire specifically requested programs or initiatives to enhance the company's environmental impact, including emission reductions, renewable energy, responsible tourism, and more. To create a positive impact, the company has opted to offset some of its CO₂e emissions through a certified project and invest in habitat regeneration by planting mangroves. The first certified project is situated in Brazil and focuses on conserving and protecting the Amazon rainforest from deforestation threats. The second project, located in Madagascar, aims to restore mangrove forest ecosystems through tree planting. Additionally, the company partners with Green Future Project, a climate tech firm that assists businesses on their journey to Net Zero in researching environmental, social, and community initiatives. Since the B Lab questionnaire indicated that the Environment category received the lowest average score (9), the company was asked about its plans to improve this score and continue reducing its environmental impact. The sustainability manager informed us that the upcoming 2025 impact report will feature new initiatives to further decrease environmental impact through responsible tourism, emissions reduction, and renewable energy activities, which have increased to 100%.

Additionally, in its Impact Report 2024, the company has outlined six common benefit objectives, detailing the goals achieved over the past year, the corresponding percentages, and the actions and objectives it plans to pursue in the future (Table 2).

Table 2 – Common Benefits (Source: Company X Impact Report 2024)

Common benefits	Actions and % of achievement	Future Actions
1) Improving the details of Italian and foreign regions suggested as travel destinations fosters economic, tourist, cultural, and social development and promotes connections between travelers and local communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of cultural projects on-site (20%) - Reopening of Saharan and sub-Saharan destinations (90%) - Training project for guides in Namibia (65%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expansion of on-site cultural projects - Analytical analysis of destinations from a cultural, social, economic, and political point of view
2) Development of a sustainable and high-quality tourism model through the selection, use, and promotion of local productive activities (such as operators in the hospitality, catering, wellness, tourism, leisure, and other sectors) whose products and services align with the company's philosophy and objectives, supported by actions that promote their economic, professional, social, and cultural development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of products that involve activities related to environmental issues (80%) - Strengthening initiatives in Egypt (100%) - Development of a plan for "sustainable indices" to analyze each product (100%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of products that contain activities related to environmental issues - Application of the "sustainability indices" plan for each itinerary - Start of collaboration with Slow Food Travel - Implementation of an analysis section on travel sustainability within the tour leaders' post-trip report

3) Enhancing and sharing the cultural, social, and environmental heritage of countries, communities, and minorities through communication activities, events, and demonstrations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a podcast project (100%) - Hosting complimentary live conferences (100%) - Coordinating events for travel agencies (100%) - Arranging familiarization trips to our listed destinations for travel agents (120%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Organization of free live conferences - Programming of events dedicated to travel agencies - Arranging familiarization trips to our listed destinations for travel agents
4) Collaborating and fostering synergy with professionals, companies, and public institutions is essential for designing and implementing sustainable development and strategic innovation initiatives in Italy and the proposed destinations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating projects in collaboration with various universities and our experts (80%) - Testimonials in university classes from our CEO and President (100%) - Building relationships with B Corp companies: INVENTO PROJECT (100%) - Establishing connections with B Corp companies: SUPPLIERS (Alisea, Patagonia, 24Bottles, etc.) (40%) - Partnering with DMC to promote responsible plastic travel in the destinations visited (30%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expansion of projects with universities - Expansion of partnerships with companies to promote the regenerative tourism theme - Development of relationships with B Corp companies - Enhanced collaboration with DMC to support responsible plastic travel
5) Collaboration and synergy with non-profit organizations, foundations, and similar entities whose purposes align with those of the company, focused on sustainability and maximizing the positive impact of their work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel planning for non-profit organizations organizations (33%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizing travel for non-profit organizations - Establishing a foundation - Building partnerships with other foundations - Joining The Code - Signing the Glasgow Declaration - Becoming a FAI corporate golden donor
6) Training and promoting sustainable innovation practices and models, both within and outside the company, along with economic and social systems—especially the legal structure of Benefit Companies and the B Corp model—drawn from principles of sustainability, transparency, knowledge sharing, and the common good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase internal training on sustainability (70%) - Develop a sustainable office (80%) - In addition to packaging, create sustainable gifts (70%) - Account for the company's progress as a society oriented toward the common benefit (70%) - Travelife certification pathway (100%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing internal training on sustainability issues - Develop a sustainable office - In addition to packaging, create sustainable gifts - Timely tracking of CO2 emissions and research into a new compensation method - A site dedicated to the foundation showcasing all the projects that will be implemented - Creation of a new stakeholder Committee

In the ongoing questionnaire, the company is inquired about its employee, partner, and supplier engagement regarding prosocial principles. It achieves this by offering continuous training programs in collaboration with external consultants, participating in conferences and seminars alongside suppliers, and asking suppliers to complete questionnaires on relevant topics. Additionally, Table 2 outlines various initiatives focused on suppliers and partners the company has undertaken in the past year and plans to continue this year. Furthermore, the company has implemented policies to ensure sustainability throughout the supply chain by designating an internal figure responsible for overseeing and supervising the selection of services utilized during the itineraries. It also achieves this through a supplier code and an internal company management system policy.

The company communicates to its stakeholders the added value obtained from B Corp certification through Non-Financial Reporting, social media, the Company's Website, Workshops, and partnerships. Once the certification deadline has expired (3 years), the company intends to renew it.

The third topic addresses the company's contribution to achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs), which is a crucial issue for the firm. Indeed, to develop the six common benefits mentioned earlier, the firm considered the 17 SDGs. To better orient company activities, the SDGs of priority focus were identified, considering the areas most connected to the business and the skills possessed within the company. To make the impact of the activities more concrete, goals n. 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, and 17 were selected. Goal n. 4 is significant for the company, as it seeks to cultivate growth and cultural understanding in national and international territories. The aim is to promote and share various countries, societies, and communities' cultural, social, and environmental heritage. Even in tourism, the female figure can be enhanced in various ways (Goal n.5). Company X pays particular attention to gender equality, annually increasing job creation for women and resulting in income generation. Concerning goal n. 8, which focuses on decent work and economic growth, the company aims to support workers through training projects that promote both professional and personal development, even in light of the challenges posed by the pandemic. Pursuing goal n. 10, the company aims to use, where possible, small local suppliers and to pursue projects to support the reduction of inequalities. Regarding goal n.13, the company is trying to define strategies to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by increasing the use of renewable energy and offsetting the emission of greenhouse gases generated in its services. Additionally, it supports university research that contributes to the measurement of climate change. The company also shows its commitment to achieving goal n.14. For over three years, it has contributed to protecting the marine biosphere through Citizen Science projects in collaboration with the University of Bologna. This effort involves monitoring the seas and helps raise awareness among citizens. The company adheres to goal n.15, which refers to the environmental legislation of the countries in which it operates, and incorporates the conservation of biological diversity into its business strategies. In 2022, it developed products designed to protect biodiversity areas by utilizing electric machinery that does not disturb animals or cause pollution. Finally, the company collaborates with different actors in the public and private sectors, civil society, and the university world, contributing to achieving goal n.17. Although not directly stated, the company plays a role in achieving goal n.12 by educating customers about sustainable practices during their trips or stays. This is facilitated by experts who travel with them, raising awareness of the practices to adopt and the activities designed to promote these ideas. Using the SDGs Action Manager tool, the company consistently evaluates its progress toward the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). This tool, developed in partnership with B Lab, focuses on assessing the level of goal attainment concerning the SDGs and provides more specific metrics based on the type of activity. The company conveys its commitment to the SDGs to its stakeholders through newsletters organized by channels or by publishing the achievements of the objectives on its website.

The final question in the questionnaire focuses on the company's future priorities related to sustainability and innovation as a B-Corp, which include developing a materiality matrix and a new governance structure plan.

5 – Conclusions

This research provides important implications on a theoretical, practical, and social dimension.

From a theoretical perspective, this study, through a detailed analysis of how a B-Corp operating in the tourism sector integrates prosocial principles into its business model, contributes to the existing literature on the prosocial aspects of business operations and, more importantly, on the link between B-Corps and sustainable tourism, a topic that remains underexplored. Therefore, this study provides an important foundation that sustainability scholars can use to deepen their research on the topic.

From a practical perspective, this research provides valuable implications for managers of tourism businesses looking to integrate sustainability into their operations. It illustrates the main strategies adopted by a B-Corp to incorporate prosocial principles into its daily operations, balancing economic profitability with environmental and social impact. Among the various points, the importance of technological innovation and partnerships with external organizations should be emphasized. Therefore, the results support the idea that sustainability should be strategically integrated within the business model rather than treated as a secondary aspect (e.g., Hallstedt *et al.*, 2010). Policymakers, on the other hand, should adopt targeted policies to promote the adoption of sustainable processes within tourism businesses, facilitating the development of an innovative and collaborative ecosystem between organizations and promoting education and awareness about responsible tourism among consumers.

The study also highlights important social implications. By promoting responsible travel practices, the analyzed company raises awareness among travelers about the environmental and cultural impact of tourism. The company's commitment to gender equality, local economic development, and biodiversity conservation aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), further strengthening the positive role that tourism companies can play in promoting social change.

This research is not without limitations. The main limitation is that it is based on a single case study, which limits the generalizability of the results, even though the selected company represents a significant example of a B-Corp in the tourism sector. Therefore, future research could conduct multiple case studies, comparing businesses from different geographical areas. Additionally, the study relies on qualitative data collected exclusively through surveys and company reports. Thus, further research could consider other sources, such as interviews with employees and customers. Further studies could conduct quantitative analyses to examine how the adoption of prosocial practices impacts the economic/financial performance of tourism businesses and also evaluate the long-term impact of B-Corp certification on their sustainable competitive advantage. Another research suggestion could be to explore the role of collabora-

tions with external organizations in facilitating the adoption of prosocial practices among businesses.

6 – APPENDIX. Analyzing the questionnaire

	Questions	Answers
COMPANY PROFILE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tourist Sector 2. How long has the company been operating in the tourism sector? 3. What are the company's main services? 4. What is the firm' mission? 5. What is the firm' success factor? 6. What is the total number of employees? 7. What is the hierarchical structure of human resources in the company, and how are responsibilities allocated? 8. What percentage of workers hold degrees in tourism or related fields? 9. What skills does the company consider important for working in the tourism sector? 10. What strategies does the company employ with its competitors? 11. What technological innovations does the company view as crucial for enhancing its social and environmental impact? 12. How does the company utilize technology to enhance its offerings? 13. The company's target market 14. What are the most important customer segments for the company? 15. How does the company relate to customers? 16. How does the company collect and use customer feedback? 17. How does the company deal with seasonality in the tourism sector? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travel Agency & Tour Operator Services 2. More than 10 years 3. Small group trips led by experts 4. To propose ethical and responsible trips 5. Fair Business; Cultural diffusion; Responsibility; Transparency; Respect 6. Less than 250 employees 7. CEO, 4 managers, employees. Responsibilities are shared equally regarding the assigned objectives. 8. Between 20% and 40% 9. Oral communication skills; Relationship skill; Critical thinking; Adaptability in the workplace; Marketing and sales skills; Customer Service skill 10. Transparency, product quality and attention to detail 11. Utilizing the Content Management System (CMS) 12. Utilizing Apps, Website and Webtv streaming 13. National and International customers 14. Responsible and aware travellers; Families; Luxury travellers; Senior Travelers 15. Direct contact; offline and online communication 16. Post-trip questionnaire 17. Thanks to a target of customers that allows for deseasonalization
B-CORP CERTIFICATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What certifications does the company hold? 2. What were the primary motivations for pursuing B Corp certification? 3. What internal adjustments were necessary to meet B Corp standards? 4. What are the main challenges the company faces in balancing economic profit with social/environmental impact? 5. What advantages/disadvantages has certification brought to the company? 6. How does the company convey its added value from B Corp certification to stakeholders? 7. What direct and indirect costs has B Corp certification brought to the company? 8. Once the certification deadline has expired (3 years), does the company intend to renew it? 9. What programs or initiatives have been implemented to improve the company's environmental impact? 10. The Environment section received, on average, the lowest score from the results of the questionnaire conducted by B Lab. Are there plans to take actions that reduce environmental impact or, in any case, improve the score obtained? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. B Corp Certification and Travelife 2. The desire to adopt the B Corp philosophy in the operational framework business 3. Procedural 4. The sustainable development of the supply chain while maintaining the quality of services 5. Advantages: network, positioning Disadvantages: not perceived 6. Through: Non-Financial Reporting, Social Media, Company's Website; Workshop; Partnership 7. Consultancy, certification fees, cost of staff hours, cost of implementing activities such as training, company welfare 8. YES 9. Construction of products that contain activities related to environmental issues; Creating a plan of "sustainable indices" to analyze each product; Collaboration with Green Future Project in researching environmental, social, and community projects. 10. Yes, in 2025, various practices aimed at enhancing the environmental score will be implemented 11. Continuous training programs are also conducted with external consultants. In partnership with

	11. How does the company engage employees, partners, and suppliers in prosocial activities? 12. Are there policies in place to ensure sustainability across the supply chain?	suppliers, conferences and seminars are held on topics. Suppliers are requested to complete questionnaires on the issues. 12. Numerous policies have been put in place to promote sustainability across the supply chain through an internal figure, supplier code, and company policy related to internal suppliers and purchasing practices.
SDGs	1. How does the company contribute to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda? 2. What programs or initiatives has the company implemented to support local communities in the areas where it operates, such as job opportunities and poverty reduction? (SDG n. 1) 3. Has the company established particular policies aimed at fostering gender equality? If so, what are they? (SDG n. 5) 4. Does the company develop specific offers or services to promote inclusive and gender-sensitive tourism? 5. Has B Corp certification influenced the development of gender equality policies? 6. Does the company educate customers about sustainable practices during travel or stays? (SDG n. 12) If yes, how? 7. Does the company regularly measure progress towards achieving the SDGs? If so, what tools/metrics/indicators do you use? 8. How does the company communicate its commitment to the SDGs to its stakeholders?	1. The company actively contribute to SDGs n. 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, and 17 2. We developed different programs, such as Italian courses in Namibia, to train locals as tourist guides for Italian visitors. Moreover, we have created a foundation in the Himalayas through which we aim to install a water system, build a female monastery and a primary school. 3. Even in tourism, the female figure can be enhanced in various ways. We pay particular attention to gender equality, annually increasing job creation, and consequent income generation. 4. Not specifically 5. Fair 6. Thanks to the presence of our experts on the trip, who raise travelers' awareness about the practices to adopt and the proposed activities aimed at increasing awareness. 7. A tool provided by B Lab dedicated to analyzing the state of achievement of the SDGs and more precise metrics with respect to the type of activity. 8. In some cases, the achievement of objectives is communicated through newsletters divided by channels, and in others, it is published on the website.
Future	1. What are the company's future priorities in terms of sustainability and innovation as a B-Corp?	1. Creation of materiality matrix and updated governance plan

Source: Own Elaboration

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