B Lab Statement on Hillier Hopkins LLP's B Corp Certification

B Lab's independent Standards Advisory Council has rendered the following decision and guidance regarding eligibility for B Corp Certification for companies providing tax advisory services:

"Companies in the tax advisory industry are eligible for B Corp Certification if they are able to confirm that their tax philosophy, used to provide services and recommendations to clients, aligns with the company specific principles listed in B Lab's framework, specifically, 1) the tax advice provided appropriately reflects the actual amount of income generated by the client over time; and, 2) the tax advice provided to a client for a jurisdiction appropriately reflects the actual operations of the client in that jurisdiction."

Hillier Hopkins LLP is required to disclose a summary of how it complies with the above requirements as a part of its B Corp Certification. For more information on the review process, please refer to B Lab's position statement on Companies that Provide Tax Advisory Services and B Corp Certification here.

Summary of Company

Hillier Hopkins LLP is a firm of chartered accountants and tax advisers located in the United Kingdom providing a broad range of high-quality, ethical and client focused accountancy, audit and tax advisory services. The firm's tax department, which contributes 24% to its annual revenue, provides a comprehensive range of tax compliance and advisory services to individuals, businesses, and organisations across various sectors.

Compliance services include the preparation and submission of personal and corporate tax returns, ensuring clients meet their statutory obligations accurately and on time. These services cover income tax, corporation tax, capital gains tax, and inheritance tax, among others. Hillier Hopkins also supports clients with HMRC correspondence, tax investigations, and disclosures.

Tax advisory includes, amongst others, advice relating to:

- Business restructuring, group structures, mergers & acquisitions, purchase shares and sale of a business.
- Cross border trading, VAT, customs duties and transfer pricing
- Employee benefits, share schemes and ownership trusts
- Innovation incentives Patent Box and R&D tax credits.
- Property ownership and transactions
- Tax-efficient investments such as Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) and Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) for start-ups
- Remuneration, succession and exit planning.
- Domicile and residence tax, double taxation treaties, emigration and immigration.

- Estate and retirement planning
- Philanthropy and charitable giving..

In terms of fees, Hillier Hopkins usually charges on a time basis, but for ad hoc projects it considers a success-based fee.

The firm's clients include, but are not limited to, family and micro businesses, individuals and HNWI, small-medium businesses and larger enterprises.

Hillier Hopkins Policies and Practices

In alignment with the requirements and principles stated in B Lab's position statement for companies that provide tax advisory services, Hillier Hopkins has a philosophy statement for the tax advice that they provide to their clients and their own engagement with governments and tax regulators, which has been shared with all their employees. The philosophy statement reads as follows:

"Hillier Hopkins LLP is proud of our status as a Certified B Corp. As part of that commitment and in recognition of the role that taxes play in contributing to a fair and sustainable society, we use our professional judgment to provide advice regarding tax positions with multiple potential interpretations that accurately reflects the genuine economic substance of our clients' activities. We do not advise clients to take a position unless we believe it has at least a reasonable basis for being sustained by applicable tax authorities. If a client takes a tax position despite our advice to the contrary, we reserve the right to disengage from the relationship. We believe our tax philosophy is consistent with the BCorp Tax Advisory Services Framework" and publish our Tax Policy on our website. We engage with government and tax authorities on a collaborative basis, such as providing feedback on consultations or expert panels. We limit our advocacy activities with such authorities to work for specific clients in need of regulatory compliance assistance. We maintain compliance with this policy through regular training of our employees and partners, internal policies on conduct, engagement documentation with our clients, and client retention reviews."

Hillier Hopkins is regulated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) and follows its Code of Ethics, in addition, to adhering to principles and standards of behaviors described in the Professional Conduct in Relation to Taxation (PCRT) guide, committing to the highest standards of ethical conduct. As an accountancy firm in the UK, the firm is required to be registered with a professional body or HM Revenue & Customs under the money laundering regulations procedures before engaging new clients and periodically through their times as clients.

The firm does not support or tolerate tax evasion. It is bound by the Criminal Finances Act 2017, which makes the facilitation of tax evasion a criminal offense. Ethical considerations and non-facilitation of tax evasion are outlined in the firm's internal Ethics Policy & Procedures available to all employees. Hillier Hopkins has a publicly available Tax Policy which covers its tax philosophy and its tax compliance and principles.

Hillier Hopkins prohibits any partner or employee from engaging in unlawful activities and, in accordance with the ICAEW's regulations, has a duty to withdraw from an engagement if it detects that its client is engaged in an unlawful or fraudulent activity. This duty is outlined in all client engagement letters. The firm has a policy to not promote or design any tax avoidance schemes. Where a client chooses to use such a scheme, depending on its nature and whether or not there is a valid non-taxation reason for using the scheme, the firm is committed to decline to act for the client.

All firm's staff are required at the start of their employment and annually thereafter to make declarations concerning any interests they may have in clients of the firm. The ICAEW's Ethics Code, that the firm follows, sets out strict criteria for conflicts of interest that may arise. The firm also offers annual compulsory Anti Money Laundering training to its staff and requires its employees to have at least one hour of training per annum in respect of ethics.

Hillier Hopkins does not have any policies related to low tax jurisdictions, since its work in respect of such jurisdictions is negligible, representing around 0.4% of annual revenue. The firm's position is, however, covered by its ethical policy, which states that any advice the firm gives will take into account the commercial (business or practical) purposes of any proposed activity.

The firm does not have any specific position or policy on lobbying; however, it responds to Government Consultations on proposed changes in tax legislation with regard to their impact on clients and the accountancy/tax profession. One of the firm's professionals has been part of a panel of experts to advise on structural changes such as the Northern Ireland Protocol and the Windsor Framework following Brexit.

Hillier Hopkins does not have a tax advocacy position to declare. Its work may involve advocating for clients in respect of clarification or interpretation of facts, and on interpretation of law to the extent only that it involves providing the tax authorities with the proper explanations, interpretations and logic of a client's tax position. The firm may (rarely) act as expert witness, where its expertise allows, and may represent non-audit clients in tax tribunals where the matter is within its expertise. The firm's ethics policy does not, however, permit it to do such work in respect of an audit client.

B Lab's Public Complaints Process

Any party may submit a complaint about a current B Corp through B Lab's Public Complaint Process. Grounds for complaint include:

1. Intentional misrepresentation of practices, policies, and/or claimed outcomes during the certification process, or
2. Breach of the core values articulated in our Declaration of Interdependence within the B Corp Community.