



B Lab Statement on Spadel'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 bottled water companies:

"Bottled water companies are eligible for B Corp Certification with additional review by the Standards Advisory Council and, at minimum, incremental disclosure on their public B Corp profile regarding material sensitive issues in the industry."

Spadel is required to disclose a summary of its practices in the areas of Sustainable Usage, Water Access, and Waste as a part of its B Corp Certification. For more information on the review process, please refer to B Lab's statement on the bottled water industry and B Corp Certification [here](#).

Summary of Company

Spadel is a European family-owned group whose mission it is to offer consumers, throughout their lives, natural solutions to their needs for hydration and refreshment. It markets brands of natural mineral water, spring water and drinks based on natural mineral water: SPA and Bru in Benelux, Devin in Bulgaria, and Wattwiller and Carola in France.

With a business model based on the preservation of quality natural mineral water, Spadel brands have always expressed a strong local commitment towards the environment and communities.

At the end of 2020, the Spadel group employed 1,283 people, with a turnover of 267 million euro.

Spadel's Industry Practices

Water Access

Spadel obtains its natural mineral waters, spring waters and table waters from multiple groundwater catchments. In Belgium and Bulgaria, the vast majority of lands in the immediate proximity of the water sources belong to public authorities whereas the catchment areas located in France belong to the company. Where the land is owned by public authorities, Spadel has been granted water rights through specific agreements.

Spadel is required by law to pay specific taxes based on the volumes sold, in order to access the water resources in the different markets. The proceeds of these taxes go to the regional and/or local municipalities. All Spadel sites fully comply with this requirement. Moreover, in accordance with the various agreements concluded with public authorities, Spadel pays a fee based on the volume sold to access and utilize water. The payment of this fee is applicable to the volumes extracted on public land.



The company has not experienced any stakeholder concerns regarding its water access that remain unresolved — Spadel's water stewardship strategy includes engagement with relevant stakeholders about water access to avoid any concerns and to guarantee sustainable water use and water access for all.

Spadel is a member of several industry federations and associations, and the company itself undertakes certain individual lobbying actions:

- In the Netherlands, its focus is on the need to introduce a deposit system on beverage packaging applicable to all types of packaging (PET, cans, Tetra, etc.)
- In Belgium, the company advocated on the need to bring all stakeholders (producers, retailers, recyclers, politicians, citizens, etc.) around the table in order to achieve a jump in performance in terms of waste collection in the Out-of-Home segment and to fight against litter. The company has also taken actions to ensure better protection of water sources against pollution risks.
- The company has made the public authorities aware of the impact on employment and public finances of the free provision of tap water in restaurants in Wallonia.
- In Bulgaria, the company has worked for a faithful transposition of the European Community acquis into national law.

The company is also engaged in collective action initiatives. For example, the company has public-private partnerships with several parties (NGO's, local municipalities, local fire departments, etc.) with an aim to further strengthen the flora and fauna in its protection areas as well as minimize the risk of contamination. These initiatives take place at the level of Spadel's water catchment zones (e.g.m installing beehives to monitor the biodiversity and effectiveness of protection measures), at the level of the factory, and in the wider regions where the company operates.

Sustainable Usage

Spadel operates five water extraction sites, all of which extract water via boreholes. Spadel never collects more than what is naturally replenished in its water catchment areas. The water is drawn without being depleted and each site has the necessary tools for monitoring. This is accomplished by:

- For each well: a pumping test is done to set the maximum flow rate regarding water resource local capacity.
- For the overall water resource: a hydrogeological assessment is done for all sites to identify the total water available for sustainable extraction. The goal is to only catch the renewable part of the water resource.
- On an ongoing basis: the company monitors the Water Exploitation Index (WEI) which indicates the ratio between the average annual abstraction and the average annual



water available in a given region. The WEI is calculated and compared to the internationally recognized threshold to guarantee a sustainable extraction (20% is the EU standard for “low-stressed” and a more secure standard of 10% is “non-stressed”). Spadel’s standard is to have a WEI < 10% at all sites, and in 2020 all Spadel sites had a WEI below 6%, with most sites having a WEI below 3%.

In addition, all of the above information is checked and approved by Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) auditors annually as well as the local authorities. Spadel uses the AWS framework for managing its water abstraction, with a goal to achieve the highest level of AWS certification (Platinum) at all five sites by 2025. Currently, two sites have achieved Platinum certification, and three sites have had their audits conducted in late 2021.

Reducing the company’s operational water footprint is also one of Spadel’s priorities. Spadel measures the results using the Water Use Ratio (WUR). Monitoring is continuous and is part of the Operations dashboard. In 2019, the average production of one litre of mineral water and lemonade required 1,55 litres, which gives a Water Use Ratio of 1,55 l/l. Between 2010 and 2019, Spadel managed to reduce the WUR by 56% per litre.

Waste

Spadel is fully aware of the impact of its packaging on the environment and wants to play a leading role in shaping a positive future. In 2019, the company launched its Source of Change sustainable packaging strategy. With 10 commitments centered around 4 key drivers (Reinvent, Reduce, Recycle, Restore) Source of Change aims to accelerate Spadel’s transition towards a circular economy.

The Reinvent pillar focuses on innovation in design and reusable formats. The company applies a Cradle to Cradle eco design philosophy to create pure packaging materials that increases the rate of recycling. The company has also innovated in reusable formats, aimed at shifting away from single use plastic. Over 10% of the group’s volume is sold in reusable packaging. The company is also working toward alternatives to plastic from renewable sources.

The Reduce pillar works on the reduction of its plastic and carbon footprint, for example, through changes in design to reduce the total volume of materials in its primary, secondary (films) and tertiary packaging (wraps around pallets). The carbon footprint of the different packaging materials has a big impact on the company’s packaging choices as part of its broader carbon commitments. The company achieved carbon neutrality in 2020 through a combination of emissions reductions and carbon offsetting, and moving forward the company’s carbon reduction plans are based on a target approved by the Science Based Target Initiative. Concretely, this means -42% reduction of CO2 emissions by 2030 (absolute target) and zero net emissions in 2050.



In the Recycle pillar Spadel aims to have all its packaging made of 100% recycled materials by 2025. The company achieved 17.3% for rPET uptake at the end of 2021, gradually increasing this rate as more food grade quality recycled material becomes available in the market. To guarantee the quality of rPET, the company supports the EU SUP Directive 90% target for separate collection of PET beverage bottles, as well as advocating for the adoption of deposit return systems (DRS) in certain markets.

The Restore pillar refers to Spadel's actions to fight litter. Via communication to the consumer and via partnerships with stakeholders at the global (collecting plastic waste in the ocean), country, and regional level (around company factories).

The company's commitments can be summarized as follows:

1. Reduce single use plastic footprint by 15% in 2025.
2. Switch to 100% recycled material across its full range by 2025 at the latest. All bottles are already 100% recyclable.
3. Increase the amount of reusable formats to 20% by 2025.
4. Reduce total CO2 emissions by 42% in 2030 (versus 2015) and reach zero net emissions by 2050.
5. Collect 100% of packaging brought on market by 2025, meaning a complete collection of Spadel's plastic footprint.