



Mercatura Lumina Journal of Management, Entrepreneurship, and Tourism

Vol 1 No 4 November 2026, Hal 14-26
ISSN: 3125-1250 (Print) ISSN: 3125-0939 (Electronic)
Open Access: <https://researchfrontiers.id/mercaturalumina>

Climate Disclosure Quality Across Global Hotel Groups: A Comparative Analysis

Neemish Pulimoottil Sanosh^{1*}, Hasan Ahmad², Layyinatus Shifah³

¹ Universiti Sains Malaysia Malaysia

² London Academy For Applied Technology United Kingdom

³ Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

email: neemishps@gmail.com¹

Article Info :

Received:
25-09-2026
Revised:
13-10-2026
Accepted:
22-10-2026

Abstract

Climate disclosure has become a central management issue for global hotel groups because asset-light expansion, franchising, and diverse ownership structures complicate the measurement and interpretation of greenhouse-gas emissions. This study compared Marriott International, Hilton, Hyatt Hotels Corporation, InterContinental Hotels Group, and Accor using a ten-criterion quantitative content-analysis framework covering Scope 1–2 reporting, material Scope 3 disclosure, baseline years, 2030 targets, long-term transition objectives, decarbonization pathways, governance, assurance, intensity metrics, and value-chain engagement. The findings show substantial convergence in disclosure architecture, with four groups meeting all ten criteria and Hyatt meeting eight. However, important differences remain in target design, organizational boundaries, and performance metrics. Hilton reports separate managed and franchised intensity pathways, Hyatt combines absolute and intensity measures, IHG reconciles declining emissions intensity with rising absolute emissions, while Marriott and Accor emphasize absolute reduction targets. The results indicate that disclosure quality depends on transparent boundaries, progress reconciliation, governance mechanisms, and assurance rather than target presence alone. Stronger hospitality reporting should integrate portfolio growth, owner engagement, property-level data, and standardized transition indicators to improve comparability and managerial usefulness across global hotel networks.

Keywords: climate disclosure, ESG reporting, hospitality management, hotel groups, sustainability.



©2026 Authors.. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License.
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

INTRODUCTION

Climate change has become an increasingly important strategic concern for the global hospitality industry because hotel operations require substantial energy, water, transportation, and material resources across geographically dispersed properties. The complexity of environmental management is particularly evident in multinational hotel groups that operate through combinations of owned, leased, managed, and franchised properties, resulting in different levels of operational control over greenhouse-gas emissions. International reporting frameworks have consequently encouraged companies to integrate climate-related risks, governance mechanisms, metrics, and transition strategies into corporate disclosure practices rather than treating environmental information as a supplementary sustainability narrative (Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures [TCFD], 2017). The introduction of IFRS S2 further strengthens this orientation by requiring financially material climate-related information to be connected with corporate prospects, risk management, and strategic decision-making (IFRS Foundation, 2023b).

Carbon accounting within the hospitality sector is complicated by differences in ownership structures and operational boundaries that determine how emissions are classified and reported. The Greenhouse Gas Protocol distinguishes Scope 1 emissions from direct organizational activities, Scope 2 emissions associated with purchased energy, and Scope 3 emissions arising from broader value-chain activities (World Resources Institute & World Business Council for Sustainable Development [WRI & WBCSD], 2004). For asset-light hotel groups, a substantial proportion of environmental impacts may arise from franchised properties that are economically important to the brand but fall outside direct

operational control. Consequently, credible climate reporting requires clear explanations of organizational boundaries, baseline years, emission categories, and reduction pathways to ensure that corporate targets remain analytically meaningful (Science Based Targets initiative [SBTi], 2021).

The increasing relevance of environmental, social, and governance information has also encouraged greater scholarly attention to the quality and comparability of corporate sustainability disclosures. Sustainability reporting can support organizational accountability when environmental indicators are connected with strategy, stakeholder interests, and long-term value creation rather than presented only as descriptive corporate responsibility information (Adams, 2017). Nevertheless, substantial differences in measurement methods, weighting systems, and disclosure practices can produce divergent evaluations of the same companies, particularly within ESG assessment systems (Berg et al., 2022). Such divergence indicates that the usefulness of climate disclosure depends not only on the quantity of reported information but also on the transparency of methodological assumptions, materiality judgments, and measurement boundaries (Christensen et al., 2021).

Climate-related disclosure has important implications for financial stakeholders because environmental exposure can influence investment decisions, corporate valuation, and perceptions of long-term risk. Institutional investors increasingly regard climate-related risks as financially relevant, particularly when emissions exposure may generate regulatory, technological, or transition-related costs (Krueger et al., 2020). Empirical evidence also suggests that carbon emissions can be reflected in market valuation and expected returns, demonstrating the growing connection between environmental performance and corporate finance (Bolton & Kacperczyk, 2021). However, ESG information should be interpreted cautiously because differences in rating methodologies, materiality definitions, and corporate boundaries can create uncertainty even when firms disclose substantial sustainability information (Gillan et al., 2021; Gibson Brandon et al., 2022).

Within the hospitality industry, previous studies have identified continuing differences between sustainability commitments, reporting practices, and implementation at the operational level. Hotel companies may selectively communicate environmental initiatives, creating the possibility that sustainability narratives do not fully represent the scale or effectiveness of organizational action (Font et al., 2017). Research on international hotel groups has similarly shown that sustainability reporting quality depends on stakeholder inclusiveness, materiality assessment, organizational procedures, and responsiveness to environmental concerns (Guix et al., 2018). These findings demonstrate the importance of examining specific and verifiable disclosure components, including emission boundaries, targets, assurance mechanisms, and quantitative indicators, rather than assessing corporate sustainability solely from general environmental statements (Rhou & Singal, 2020).

Recent climate-reporting packages from major international hotel groups provide an important empirical context for evaluating these disclosure practices. Marriott International reports a target to reduce absolute Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 46.2% by 2030 and selected Scope 3 emissions by 27.5%, together with a long-term net-zero value-chain objective (Marriott International, 2024). Hilton reported that carbon-emissions intensity had declined by 50.9% for managed hotels and 36.0% for franchised hotels by 2025 relative to its baseline, while Hyatt reported a 2024 market-based Scope 1 and Scope 2 intensity of 105 kg CO₂e per square meter (Hilton, 2026; Hyatt Hotels Corporation, 2025). These variations demonstrate that hotel companies increasingly provide quantitative climate information, although differences in denominators, portfolio structures, ownership models, and reporting boundaries continue to limit straightforward comparisons.

The relationship between operational efficiency, portfolio expansion, and absolute emissions further complicates the evaluation of climate performance in international hotel networks. InterContinental Hotels Group reported that carbon emissions per available room were 11.0% lower in 2025 than in 2019, while its absolute emissions remained 7.7% above the baseline, illustrating how efficiency improvements can coexist with increasing total emissions during business growth (InterContinental Hotels Group, 2026). Accor similarly reports absolute 2030 reduction targets of 46% for Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions and 28% for Scope 3 emissions while simultaneously expanding sustainability measures across its hotel portfolio (Accor, 2026). These conditions reinforce the argument that meaningful climate assessment requires simultaneous consideration of baseline selection, target design, operational boundaries, growth dynamics, and normalized performance indicators rather than reliance on isolated emission figures (Fatemi et al., 2018).

Although sustainability and climate disclosure have been widely examined, direct comparative research focusing on the architecture of climate reporting among major global hotel groups remains relatively limited. Existing studies frequently emphasize corporate responsibility, ESG performance, or sustainability communication, while less attention has been given to whether hotel companies disclose comparable combinations of emission scopes, baselines, transition objectives, assurance mechanisms, intensity measures, and value-chain engagement (de Grosbois, 2016; Rhou & Singal, 2020). Accordingly, this study comparatively examines Marriott International, Hilton, Hyatt Hotels Corporation, InterContinental Hotels Group, and Accor using a ten-criterion climate-disclosure framework designed to identify the presence and structure of decision-useful reporting elements. The study aims to determine the core climate-disclosure components reported across the five hotel groups, analyze differences in targets and performance metrics across asset-light operating structures, and identify reporting characteristics that strengthen comparability, transparency, and managerial usefulness.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a comparative quantitative content analysis to examine the climate-disclosure practices of five major global hotel groups: Marriott International, Hilton Worldwide Holdings, Hyatt Hotels Corporation, InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), and Accor. The analysis used the latest publicly available climate-related reporting packages accessible up to September 2026, including sustainability reports, responsible-business reports, environmental data summaries, annual-report climate sections, CDP-related disclosures, and independent assurance statements where available. The unit of analysis was the group-level climate-reporting architecture rather than individual hotel properties, because the study focused on how corporate-level reporting frameworks represent environmental responsibilities across different ownership and operational structures. The five hotel groups were selected purposively based on their international market presence, extensive managed and franchised networks, and availability of quantified environmental information that allowed systematic comparison across companies. Data collection was conducted through document review, and corporate claims were recorded only when the information could be traced to explicit targets, quantitative indicators, methodological explanations, governance statements, or assurance evidence contained in the relevant reporting materials (Christensen et al., 2021; IFRS Foundation, 2023b).

The analytical framework consisted of ten binary disclosure criteria covering quantified Scope 1 and Scope 2 reporting, material Scope 3 reporting, disclosure of a baseline year, an explicit 2030 climate target, a long-term net-zero or transition objective, an operational decarbonization pathway, climate governance or transition responsibility, external assurance or verification, normalized intensity metrics, and engagement with owners, franchisees, or suppliers. Each criterion was coded as 1 when the relevant disclosure element was clearly identifiable and 0 when sufficient evidence was not found, with the resulting coverage score interpreted solely as an indicator of disclosure completeness rather than environmental superiority (Berg et al., 2022; Christensen et al., 2021). Quantitative indicators were retained in the units and organizational boundaries originally reported by each company because differences in portfolio composition, property ownership, floor area, revenue, and available-room denominators prevented valid direct normalization across firms. The analysis subsequently connected each identified climate target with its baseline, reported progress, implementation pathway, governance arrangement, and assurance evidence where available, while absolute-emission movements and intensity changes were interpreted separately to account for the influence of portfolio growth. The analytical interpretation was guided by the GHG Protocol, TCFD recommendations, GRI Universal Standards, IFRS S1 and IFRS S2, and the SBTi Corporate Net-Zero Standard, and the study remained descriptive-comparative without inferring causal relationships between disclosure quality, financial performance, or actual environmental outcomes (GRI, 2021; IFRS Foundation, 2023a, 2023b; SBTi, 2021; TCFD, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Disclosure Architecture and Measurement Boundaries

The comparative analysis indicates that climate reporting among the five global hotel groups has developed into a structured disclosure architecture rather than remaining limited to broad environmental commitments. Marriott International, Hilton, Hyatt Hotels Corporation, InterContinental Hotels Group

(IHG), and Accor all report quantified Scope 1 and Scope 2 information, identify baseline periods, and disclose measurable climate targets within their respective reporting packages. This pattern reflects the increasing institutionalization of climate disclosure through frameworks that emphasize governance, strategy, risk management, metrics, and targets as integrated components of corporate accountability (TCFD, 2017; IFRS Foundation, 2023b). The convergence is particularly important in hospitality because differences in ownership, operational control, and energy consumption require companies to explain clearly which activities are included within their organizational and emissions boundaries (WRI & WBCSD, 2004).

Marriott demonstrates a disclosure structure that integrates absolute emission targets, value-chain responsibilities, and long-term transition commitments within a single climate-reporting framework. The group reports a 46.2% absolute reduction target for Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 2030 and a 27.5% reduction target for selected Scope 3 emissions, while also maintaining a long-term net-zero value-chain objective for 2050 (Marriott International, 2024). Its subsequent assurance documentation specifies the use of the GHG Protocol and an operational-control approach for managed properties, providing additional methodological clarity regarding which hotel activities are incorporated into reported emissions (Marriott International, 2025). Such disclosure is particularly relevant for asset-light hospitality companies because managerial influence can extend beyond formal ownership boundaries through brand standards, operating systems, procurement requirements, and contractual relationships.

Hilton adopts a different reporting architecture by explicitly separating managed and franchised properties within its climate targets and reported performance indicators. The company reports a 75% reduction objective for Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions intensity in managed hotels and a 56% reduction objective for Scope 3 emissions intensity in franchised hotels by 2030, reflecting differences in organizational control across its portfolio (Hilton, 2026). This distinction improves interpretability because franchised properties represent a substantial component of hotel-network activity while their energy consumption may be classified within the value chain rather than within direct operational emissions. The approach is consistent with the concept of materiality proposed by Khan et al. (2016), which emphasizes that sustainability reporting becomes more decision-useful when firms concentrate on environmental issues that are economically and operationally significant to their business models.

Hyatt's reporting package places particular emphasis on quantitative environmental data and the reconciliation of historical indicators following changes in the property portfolio. In 2024, Hyatt reported location-based Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions of 2,395,252 tCO₂e, a market-based greenhouse-gas intensity of 105 kg CO₂e per square meter, and a Scope 3 franchise intensity of 87 kg CO₂e per square meter (Hyatt Hotels Corporation, 2025). The company also restates historical information when acquisitions, disposals, or property conversions materially affect previous reporting boundaries, thereby strengthening longitudinal comparability. This approach supports the process-oriented perspective of sustainability reporting identified by Guix et al. (2018), in which credible disclosure depends not only on the publication of numerical indicators but also on organizational procedures that maintain consistency, materiality, and responsiveness over time.

IHG and Accor provide further evidence that disclosure architecture increasingly combines climate targets with operational indicators and broader sustainability-management systems. IHG reports several intensity denominators, including emissions per available room night, and states a 2025 global greenhouse-gas intensity of 0.0186 tCO₂e per available room night, while Accor reports 2030 absolute reduction targets of 46% for Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions and 28% for Scope 3 emissions relative to 2019 (InterContinental Hotels Group, 2026; Accor, 2026). The existence of multiple indicators is analytically valuable because hotel groups differ substantially in portfolio size, room inventory, ownership structures, and service categories, making direct comparison of absolute emissions potentially misleading. Adams (2017) argues that sustainability information becomes more meaningful when performance measures are connected with organizational processes and value creation, and the disclosures of IHG and Accor illustrate how climate indicators can be linked with hotel operations, portfolio development, and management systems.

Table 1. Climate-Disclosure Coverage Across Five Global Hotel Groups

Disclosure Criterion	Marriott	Hilton	Hyatt	IHG	Accor
Quantified Scope 1–2 reporting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Material Scope 3 reporting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline year disclosed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Explicit 2030 climate target	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Long-term net-zero/transition endpoint	Yes	Yes	No*	Yes	Yes
Operational decarbonization pathway	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Explicit climate governance/transition structure	Yes	Yes	No*	Yes	Yes
External assurance/verification	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Normalized intensity metrics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Owner/franchise/supplier engagement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Disclosure coverage	10/10	10/10	8/10	10/10	10/10

The coding results in Table 1 show a high degree of convergence in the fundamental architecture of climate reporting among the sampled hotel groups. Marriott, Hilton, IHG, and Accor provide identifiable evidence for all ten disclosure criteria, whereas Hyatt provides evidence for eight criteria because the selected public materials contain less explicit information regarding a long-term net-zero endpoint and a separate transition-governance structure. These findings should not be interpreted as an environmental ranking because the binary coding system measures disclosure coverage rather than actual emissions reduction, transition effectiveness, or ecological performance. This distinction is important because ESG evaluations can generate different assessments of the same companies when measurement definitions, aggregation techniques, and weighting procedures vary across rating systems (Berg et al., 2022; Christensen et al., 2021).

The similarity in disclosure coverage nevertheless masks considerable differences in organizational and emissions boundaries across the five hotel groups. The GHG Protocol permits emissions classification according to operational or financial control, while franchised hotel activity may appear primarily within Scope 3 even when brand companies retain considerable influence over standards, procurement, technology, and operating procedures (WRI & WBCSD, 2004). Consequently, two hotel groups reporting identical categories of emissions may still represent substantially different underlying portfolios and levels of managerial control. Materiality therefore becomes essential when interpreting disclosure architecture because environmentally significant franchise, supplier, construction, and purchased-energy impacts should remain visible even when they occur outside a company's direct operational boundary (Khan et al., 2016).

The results also confirm that disclosure completeness should not be assessed only through the amount of environmental information published by each company. A lengthy sustainability report may provide limited analytical value when baseline years, target boundaries, measurement methodologies, or intensity denominators are unclear, whereas a more concise reporting package may remain highly decision-useful when these components are transparent. Amel-Zadeh and Serafeim (2018) demonstrate that investors use ESG information for different purposes and that comparability and materiality strongly influence its usefulness in decision-making. This observation is reinforced by the corporate-finance literature, which shows that sustainability indicators require careful interpretation because measurement architecture affects how environmental information is incorporated into financial analysis (Gillan et al., 2021).

The findings are also consistent with earlier hospitality research documenting substantial variation in how hotel companies transform sustainability commitments into reporting practices. Guix et al. (2018) emphasize the importance of stakeholder inclusiveness, materiality, and organizational responsiveness in hotel sustainability reporting, while Rhou and Singal (2020) identify reputation, stakeholder pressure, and financial consequences as important drivers of corporate responsibility within hospitality. Earlier work by de Grosbois (2016) similarly demonstrates that tourism-related corporations can differ considerably in the extent to which stated sustainability commitments are accompanied by measurable performance evidence. Font et al. (2017) further show that sustainability communication can involve selective disclosure or under-communication, reinforcing the need to analyze identifiable metrics and methodological evidence rather than relying solely on narrative commitments.

Overall, the first stage of analysis demonstrates that the principal differences among the five hotel groups no longer concern whether climate information is disclosed, but rather how measurement boundaries, organizational responsibilities, and reporting methodologies are constructed. Common disclosure elements such as Scope 1–3 information, baseline years, 2030 targets, intensity indicators, assurance, and value-chain engagement are now widely observable, yet differences in denominators and portfolio structures continue to constrain direct comparison. The GRI Universal Standards encourage organizations to communicate material impacts transparently, while IFRS S1 and IFRS S2 increasingly connect sustainability and climate disclosure with information relevant to enterprise prospects and decision-making (GRI, 2021; IFRS Foundation, 2023a, 2023b). These results establish the analytical basis for the next subsection, which examines whether the reported climate targets are supported by measurable progress and how hotel-network growth affects the relationship between intensity improvements and absolute emissions.

Targets, Progress, and the Tension Between Growth and Decarbonization

The second stage of analysis reveals that the existence of climate targets does not by itself provide sufficient evidence of effective decarbonization because reported progress must be interpreted together with business growth, emissions boundaries, and portfolio composition. Across the five hotel groups, climate performance is communicated through combinations of absolute emissions, normalized intensity indicators, and future reduction targets, each of which represents a different dimension of environmental performance. This distinction is particularly important for international hotel groups whose networks can expand rapidly through franchise agreements, acquisitions, and management contracts even when operational efficiency improves at individual properties. The Science Based Targets initiative therefore emphasizes the importance of connecting near-term targets with measurable baseline trajectories and long-term decarbonization pathways rather than relying on isolated environmental initiatives (SBTi, 2021).

Hilton provides a clear example of measurable progress based on differentiated operational structures. By 2025, the group reported a 50.9% reduction in carbon-emissions intensity for managed hotels and a 36.0% reduction for franchised hotels relative to its baseline, while water intensity declined by 37.1% and landfill-waste intensity by 64.7% (Hilton, 2026). Reporting managed and franchised properties separately allows stakeholders to observe how environmental performance differs according to the degree of operational control exercised by the company. This segmentation is consistent with the importance that Krueger et al. (2020) attribute to decision-useful climate information, because investors require indicators that identify both the scale of climate exposure and the organizational mechanisms through which risks can be managed.

IHG demonstrates more explicitly why improvements in emissions intensity should not automatically be interpreted as reductions in total climate impact. In 2025, the company reported that carbon emissions per available room were 11.0% lower than the 2019 baseline, while absolute carbon emissions were simultaneously 7.7% higher than in 2019 as the hotel network expanded (InterContinental Hotels Group, 2026). The two indicators are not contradictory because efficiency gains at the unit level can occur while total emissions rise when the number of rooms, properties, or operating activities grows more rapidly than per-unit emissions decline. This finding reinforces the argument of Bolton and Kacperczyk (2021) that carbon exposure should be evaluated through measures that reflect the underlying scale and economic structure of corporate activities rather than through a single environmental ratio.

Hyatt presents a comparable pattern in which absolute and normalized indicators move in different directions. The company reported location-based Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions of 2,395,252 tCO₂e in 2024 compared with a restated 2019 baseline of 2,240,421 tCO₂e, while location-based emissions intensity declined from 126 to 109 kg CO₂e per square meter (Hyatt Hotels Corporation, 2025). These figures illustrate how portfolio expansion, acquisition activity, hotel conversions, occupancy levels, climatic conditions, and energy sources can influence absolute emissions even when buildings become relatively more efficient. Gillan et al. (2021) emphasize that ESG indicators should be interpreted within their measurement context because apparently conflicting environmental results may reflect different denominators and corporate boundaries rather than inconsistent corporate behavior.

Marriott and Accor rely more strongly on absolute-emissions reduction targets, creating a different management challenge for expanding global hotel portfolios. Marriott targets a 46.2% reduction in absolute Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions and a 27.5% reduction in selected Scope 3 categories by 2030, together with a long-term value-chain pathway toward net-zero emissions by 2050 (Marriott International, 2024). Accor similarly reports 2030 reduction targets of 46% for Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions and 28% for Scope 3 emissions relative to 2019 (Accor, 2026). Absolute reduction targets are particularly demanding in growing hospitality networks because improvements in energy efficiency, renewable-energy procurement, building design, and supplier practices must collectively offset additional emissions generated through business expansion (Eccles et al., 2014).

Table 2. Selected Climate Targets and Reported Progress Across Global Hotel Groups

Hotel Group	Climate Indicator	Baseline/Reference	Reported Target or Progress
Marriott	Absolute Scope 1 + 2 emissions	Corporate pathway target	46.2% reduction by 2030
Marriott	Selected Scope 3 emissions	Corporate pathway target	27.5% reduction by 2030
Hilton	Managed-hotel carbon intensity	Company baseline	50.9% reduction by 2025
Hilton	Franchised-hotel carbon intensity	Company baseline	36.0% reduction by 2025
Hyatt	Scope 1 + 2 location-based emissions	2019: 2,240,421 tCO ₂ e	2024: 2,395,252 tCO ₂ e
Hyatt	Location-based emissions intensity	2019: 126 kg CO ₂ e/m ²	2024: 109 kg CO ₂ e/m ²
IHG	Carbon emissions per available room	2019 baseline	11.0% lower in 2025
IHG	Absolute carbon emissions	2019 baseline	7.7% higher in 2025
Accor	Absolute Scope 1 + 2 emissions	2019 baseline	46% reduction by 2030
Accor	Scope 3 emissions	2019 baseline	28% reduction by 2030

The comparative data in Table 2 demonstrate that different measurement approaches can produce substantially different interpretations of climate progress across hotel groups. Hilton and IHG emphasize normalized indicators that partly control for changes in hotel activity, whereas Marriott and Accor rely heavily on absolute reduction pathways that require emissions to fall despite potential network growth. Hyatt illustrates the analytical importance of presenting both types of measures because its declining emissions intensity accompanies an increase in reported absolute Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions over the comparison period. Matsumura et al. (2014) demonstrate that both carbon emissions and carbon disclosure can carry valuation implications, making the transparent presentation of absolute and normalized indicators particularly important for stakeholders evaluating corporate climate exposure.

The differences also show that climate targets must be evaluated in relation to the operational conditions under which hotel companies pursue decarbonization. Renewable-electricity availability, regional grid composition, building age, hotel category, local regulation, property ownership, and capital-investment capacity can affect whether corporate reduction targets can be translated into property-level improvements. IHG, for example, identifies limited availability of clean-energy infrastructure in some markets as a factor affecting its ability to maintain the desired absolute-emissions trajectory (InterContinental Hotels Group, 2026). Pedersen et al. (2021) argue that sustainability information enters investment decisions together with conventional risk and return considerations, suggesting that disclosure of these operational constraints can improve understanding of the financial and strategic implications of transition plans.

Capital allocation represents another important mechanism connecting climate commitments with actual emission reductions in hospitality. Hotel buildings are long-lived assets, and improvements

such as electrification, heating and cooling replacement, insulation, renewable-energy systems, and energy-management technology frequently require substantial upfront expenditure by property owners rather than by brand companies themselves. Consequently, asset-light hotel groups must influence decarbonization through contractual standards, technical guidance, financing incentives, procurement practices, and owner engagement even when they do not directly control capital expenditure. Fatemi et al. (2018) demonstrate that the relationship between ESG performance and firm value is influenced by disclosure, reinforcing the importance of reporting not only targets but also the operational mechanisms through which environmental improvements are expected to occur.

The financial relevance of the growth–decarbonization tension becomes more significant when climate exposure interacts with investor expectations and market resilience. Broadstock et al. (2021) find that ESG performance can be associated with resilience during periods of financial stress, while Albuquerque et al. (2020) similarly document greater resilience among firms with stronger environmental and social characteristics during the COVID-19 market shock. These findings do not establish that hotel climate disclosure directly causes superior financial outcomes, but they indicate why stakeholders increasingly examine whether environmental commitments are supported by measurable implementation and credible transition pathways. Gibson Brandon et al. (2022) further show that disagreement among ESG raters can influence market outcomes, highlighting the value of transparent reporting when absolute and normalized performance indicators provide different signals.

The analysis therefore suggests that meaningful assessment of hotel decarbonization requires reconciliation among targets, current progress, portfolio growth, and the boundaries used to calculate reported emissions. Apparent improvements can be overstated when only intensity measures are presented during periods of rapid expansion, whereas rising absolute emissions can obscure genuine efficiency gains when portfolio growth is not disclosed alongside them. The strongest reporting approach is consequently one that presents absolute and intensity indicators together, explains changes in baselines and portfolio boundaries, and identifies the operational factors that affect progress toward future targets (Christensen et al., 2021; SBTi, 2021). This interpretation provides the foundation for the final subsection, which examines how governance systems, external assurance, owner engagement, and internal environmental data infrastructure influence the credibility and implementation of climate commitments across distributed hotel networks.

Governance, Assurance, and Managerial Implications for Hotel Networks

The third stage of analysis shows that the quality of climate disclosure is closely associated with the governance capacity required to coordinate environmental action across geographically dispersed hotel networks. Climate targets cannot operate effectively as stand-alone commitments because their implementation depends on the allocation of authority, performance monitoring, investment decisions, and integration with corporate strategy. TCFD (2017) and IFRS S2 position governance as a fundamental component of climate-related disclosure because boards and senior management must demonstrate how climate risks and opportunities are incorporated into decision-making processes. This requirement is particularly relevant for hotel groups in which owners, franchisees, operators, suppliers, and corporate functions control different components of energy consumption and emissions.

Owner and franchisee engagement therefore becomes a central mechanism for translating group-level climate commitments into property-level action. IHG reports owner-facing environmental tools and decarbonization measures, Hilton differentiates climate targets between managed and franchised hotels, and Marriott incorporates supplier and value-chain engagement within its climate strategy (InterContinental Hotels Group, 2026; Hilton, 2026; Marriott International, 2024). These arrangements allow environmental management to extend beyond the organizational boundary even when the hotel group does not own the underlying physical assets. Eccles et al. (2014) demonstrate that organizations with stronger sustainability orientations tend to embed environmental priorities within governance routines and stakeholder relationships, suggesting that institutionalized management processes are more important than isolated sustainability projects.

External assurance represents another mechanism through which climate governance can strengthen the credibility of reported environmental information. Marriott publishes an independent limited-assurance statement that identifies relevant reporting standards and greenhouse-gas calculation boundaries, while IHG provides assurance materials covering selected carbon and energy indicators (Marriott International, 2025; InterContinental Hotels Group, 2026). Assurance does not transform

sustainability reporting into the equivalent of a full financial audit, but it can evaluate data-collection procedures, methodological consistency, calculation processes, and selected evidence trails. Christensen et al. (2021) argue that verification and reporting requirements can improve information quality, while Fatemi et al. (2018) show that disclosure can affect how stakeholders interpret the relationship between ESG activities and corporate value.

Reliable internal environmental information systems are equally important because hotel groups must aggregate data from large numbers of properties with different operational characteristics. Hyatt reports environmental information that reflects portfolio changes and restates historical data when acquisitions or hotel conversions materially affect comparability, while IHG similarly adjusts historical indicators when property coverage or denominator definitions change (Hyatt Hotels Corporation, 2025; InterContinental Hotels Group, 2026). Such adjustments are necessary because utility-data gaps, inconsistent floor-area measures, outsourcing arrangements, occupancy changes, and ownership transitions can distort longitudinal climate comparisons. Guix et al. (2018) emphasize that sustainability reporting should be understood as an organizational process rather than merely a publication activity, making internal data governance an essential element of credible corporate reporting.

Climate governance must also incorporate both physical and transition risks because environmental management affects long-term hotel operations, capital expenditure, and destination resilience. Physical risks relevant to hospitality include extreme heat, flooding, storms, wildfire, water scarcity, and environmental degradation, while transition risks can arise from energy regulation, carbon pricing, disclosure standards, changing investor expectations, and procurement requirements. IFRS S2 requires firms to disclose climate-related risks and opportunities that could reasonably affect organizational prospects, while TCFD similarly integrates these matters into strategy and risk-management disclosure (IFRS Foundation, 2023b; TCFD, 2017). Evidence reported by Albuquerque et al. (2020) and Broadstock et al. (2021) further suggests that stronger environmental and social characteristics can be associated with organizational resilience during market disruptions, although such relationships should not be interpreted as direct causal evidence for the hotel groups analyzed here.

Table 3. Governance and Implementation Mechanisms Identified Across the Five Hotel Groups

Hotel Group	Governance or Implementation Mechanism	Property/Value-Chain Relevance	Supporting Source
Marriott	Climate targets, supplier engagement, value-chain commitments, and independent assurance	Extends climate management beyond managed hotels to suppliers and other Scope 3 actors	Marriott International (2024, 2025)
Hilton	Separate managed and franchised climate pathways	Aligns targets with differences in operational control	Hilton (2026)
Hyatt	Environmental data systems and historical restatement practices	Improves consistency when acquisitions and conversions alter the reporting boundary	Hyatt Hotels Corporation (2025)
IHG	Owner-facing decarbonization measures, environmental tools, and assurance	Supports implementation in managed, owned/leased, and franchised portfolios	InterContinental Hotels Group (2026)
Accor	Science-based targets combined with property-level sustainability and resource-efficiency programs	Links corporate targets with broader hotel operational practices	Accor (2026)

The governance mechanisms summarized in Table 3 indicate that materiality plays an important role in determining where management attention and environmental investment should be concentrated. For international hotel groups, significant climate impacts are more likely to arise from building energy use, purchased electricity, franchised properties, food systems, procurement, construction, and other large-scale value-chain activities than from relatively minor corporate-office initiatives. Khan et al. (2016) demonstrate that sustainability activities related to financially material issues are more strongly

associated with corporate performance than activities focused on less material issues. Consequently, the disclosure framework used in this study emphasizes boundaries, measurable targets, implementation pathways, governance responsibilities, and assurance because these elements provide stronger evidence of whether material environmental impacts are being managed.

Comparability across hotel groups must nevertheless be approached cautiously because differences in consolidation methods, geographic exposure, service categories, property ownership, and portfolio scale influence the interpretation of reported climate indicators. Matsumura et al. (2014) show that carbon emissions and carbon disclosure can have implications for firm valuation, while Amel-Zadeh and Serafeim (2018) demonstrate that investors employ ESG information differently depending on their analytical objectives. These findings suggest that direct comparison of absolute emissions without accounting for business structure can create misleading conclusions, especially when one hotel group reports franchised energy use primarily within Scope 3 while another has a larger proportion of directly managed assets. Berg et al. (2022) similarly demonstrate that differences in measurement choices can generate substantial divergence in ESG evaluations, reinforcing the need for transparent disclosure architecture rather than simplified composite judgments.

From a managerial perspective, effective climate governance can be conceptualized as a multi-level control system linking corporate oversight, owner and franchise engagement, property-level measurement, and external accountability. Corporate governance establishes targets and risk priorities, contractual and stakeholder mechanisms translate these expectations into hotel-level investment decisions, environmental systems monitor operational indicators, and external reporting or assurance evaluates the credibility of the resulting evidence. The GRI Universal Standards provide principles for communicating organizational impacts, while IFRS S1 and IFRS S2 connect sustainability and climate-related information with the assessment of enterprise prospects and decision-useful corporate information (GRI, 2021; IFRS Foundation, 2023a, 2023b). This integrated structure can help hotel groups reduce fragmentation between sustainability reporting, financial risk management, operational decision-making, and stakeholder communication.

The financial implications of stronger climate governance also extend to capital allocation, financing conditions, reputation, and investor perceptions of transition risk. Krueger et al. (2020) report that institutional investors consider climate risks financially relevant, while Bolton and Kacperczyk (2021) document evidence that carbon exposure is reflected in capital-market pricing. Pedersen et al. (2021) further conceptualize sustainable investment as a process in which ESG information interacts with conventional risk and return considerations, and Gibson Brandon et al. (2022) show that disagreement among ESG ratings can itself influence market outcomes. For hotel managers, these findings imply that transparent reporting of responsibilities, implementation constraints, assurance coverage, and progress trajectories can reduce avoidable information uncertainty even when differences in portfolio structure prevent direct cross-company performance comparisons.

Future climate disclosure in hospitality should therefore provide clearer reconciliation among network growth, acquisitions, hotel conversions, renewable-energy availability, baseline adjustments, and progress toward medium- and long-term climate targets. Earlier tourism research has shown that sustainability communication can become disconnected from implementation when firms emphasize broad commitments without sufficient operational evidence (Font et al., 2017; de Grosbois, 2016), while Rhou and Singal (2020) demonstrate that corporate responsibility in hospitality is shaped by multiple stakeholder and business considerations. Standardized hospitality-specific reporting could improve comparability by requiring explicit disclosure of organizational boundaries, ownership structures, emissions denominators, material Scope 3 categories, and changes in portfolio composition without eliminating legitimate differences among business models. Such improvements would also address the broader ESG measurement concerns identified by Gillan et al. (2021) and support more reliable interpretation of environmental performance over time.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that climate disclosure quality within global hotel networks depends not only on the presence of environmental targets but also on the governance, data systems, assurance mechanisms, and stakeholder relationships that support their implementation. Marriott, Hilton, Hyatt, IHG, and Accor each provide evidence of increasingly structured climate-management systems, although differences in organizational boundaries and disclosure design remain important when interpreting their reported results (Marriott International, 2024, 2025; Hilton, 2026; Hyatt Hotels Corporation, 2025; InterContinental Hotels Group, 2026; Accor, 2026). The combined findings across

the three analytical subsections support the view that transparent boundaries, materiality, measurable transition pathways, and credible verification are more informative than the mere existence of sustainability commitments, consistent with the principles of the GHG Protocol and SBTi (WRI & WBCSD, 2004; SBTi, 2021). These results indicate that future hospitality climate management should integrate environmental targets with owner investment, franchise coordination, property-level data, risk management, and external accountability to strengthen both managerial usefulness and the credibility of corporate climate disclosure.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that major global hotel groups have developed increasingly structured climate-disclosure systems incorporating quantified emissions, baseline years, medium-term reduction targets, intensity indicators, governance mechanisms, assurance, and value-chain engagement. Marriott International, Hilton, IHG, and Accor showed coverage of all ten disclosure criteria applied in this study, while Hyatt covered eight criteria within its selected public reporting package. Nevertheless, the most important differences do not lie in disclosure coverage alone but in how companies define organizational boundaries, design targets, distinguish managed and franchised operations, and reconcile changes in emissions intensity with absolute emissions. Hilton's differentiated managed and franchised pathways, Hyatt's simultaneous reporting of absolute and intensity indicators, IHG's disclosure of declining emissions intensity alongside increasing absolute emissions, and the absolute reduction strategies adopted by Marriott and Accor demonstrate that climate performance must be interpreted within each company's operating structure.

The findings further indicate that credible climate management in hospitality requires integration between corporate governance, owner and franchisee engagement, property-level environmental data, transition planning, and external assurance. Climate targets alone cannot demonstrate effective decarbonization unless reporting also explains baseline adjustments, portfolio expansion, ownership structures, methodological changes, and implementation constraints. Global hotel groups should therefore strengthen the reconciliation of absolute and normalized indicators and provide clearer evidence linking corporate commitments with operational actions throughout their hotel networks. Future research may extend this comparative framework longitudinally to examine whether stronger disclosure architecture is associated with measurable reductions in property-level emissions, improvements in energy productivity, changes in financing conditions, or greater resilience of hospitality assets.

REFERENCES

- Accor. (2026). 2025 Universal Registration Document and ESG reporting materials. Accor Group.
- Adams, C. A. (2017). Conceptualising the contemporary corporate value creation process. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 30(4), 906–931. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AAAJ-04-2016-2529>
- Albuquerque, R., Koskinen, Y., Yang, S., & Zhang, C. (2020). Resiliency of environmental and social stocks: An analysis of the exogenous COVID-19 market crash. *Review of Corporate Finance Studies*, 9(3), 593–621. <https://doi.org/10.1093/rcfs/cfaa011>
- Amel-Zadeh, A., & Serafeim, G. (2018). Why and how investors use ESG information: Evidence from a global survey. *Financial Analysts Journal*, 74(3), 87–103. <https://doi.org/10.2469/faj.v74.n3.2>
- Berg, F., Kölbel, J. F., & Rigobon, R. (2022). Aggregate confusion: The divergence of ESG ratings. *Review of Finance*, 26(6), 1315–1344. <https://doi.org/10.1093/rof/rfac033>
- Bolton, P., & Kacperczyk, M. (2021). Do investors care about carbon risk? *Journal of Financial Economics*, 142(2), 517–549. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfineco.2021.05.008>
- Broadstock, D. C., Chan, K., Cheng, L. T. W., & Wang, X. (2021). The role of ESG performance during times of financial crisis: Evidence from COVID-19 in China. *Finance Research Letters*, 38, 101716. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.frl.2020.101716>

- Christensen, H. B., Hail, L., & Leuz, C. (2021). Mandatory CSR and sustainability reporting: Economic analysis and literature review. *Review of Accounting Studies*, 26, 1176–1248. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11142-021-09609-5>
- de Grosbois, D. (2016). Corporate social responsibility reporting in the cruise tourism industry: A performance evaluation using a new institutional theory based model. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 24(2), 245–269.
- Eccles, R. G., Ioannou, I., & Serafeim, G. (2014). The impact of corporate sustainability on organizational processes and performance. *Management Science*, 60(11), 2835–2857. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2014.1984>
- Fatemi, A., Glaum, M., & Kaiser, S. (2018). ESG performance and firm value: The moderating role of disclosure. *Global Finance Journal*, 38, 45–64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfj.2017.03.001>
- Font, X., Elgammal, I., & Lamond, I. (2017). Greenhushing: The deliberate under communicating of sustainability practices by tourism businesses. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(7), 1007–1023. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2016.1158829>
- Gibson Brandon, R., Krueger, P., & Schmidt, P. S. (2022). ESG rating disagreement and stock returns. *Financial Analysts Journal*, 78(4), 104–127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0015198X.2022.2071736>
- Gillan, S. L., Koch, A., & Starks, L. T. (2021). Firms and social responsibility: A review of ESG and CSR research in corporate finance. *Journal of Corporate Finance*, 66, 101889. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcorpfin.2021.101889>
- Global Reporting Initiative. (2021). GRI Universal Standards 2021. GRI.
- Guix, M., Bonilla-Priego, M. J., & Font, X. (2018). The process of sustainability reporting in international hotel groups: An analysis of stakeholder inclusiveness, materiality and responsiveness. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 26(7), 1063–1084.
- Hilton. (2026). Travel with Purpose 2025 report and impact update. Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc.
- Hyatt Hotels Corporation. (2025). 2024 Environmental Data Summary. Hyatt Hotels Corporation.
- IFRS Foundation. (2023a). IFRS S1 General requirements for disclosure of sustainability-related financial information. IFRS Foundation.
- IFRS Foundation. (2023b). IFRS S2 Climate-related disclosures. IFRS Foundation.
- InterContinental Hotels Group. (2026). 2025 Responsible Business Report. IHG PLC.
- Khan, M., Serafeim, G., & Yoon, A. (2016). Corporate sustainability: First evidence on materiality. *The Accounting Review*, 91(6), 1697–1724. <https://doi.org/10.2308/accr-51383>
- Krueger, P., Sautner, Z., & Starks, L. T. (2020). The importance of climate risks for institutional investors. *Review of Financial Studies*, 33(3), 1067–1111. <https://doi.org/10.1093/rfs/hhz137>
- Marriott International. (2024). 2024 Serve 360 report: Environmental, social & governance progress. Marriott International.
- Marriott International. (2025). Independent limited assurance report and greenhouse-gas calculation basis. Marriott International.
- Matsumura, E. M., Prakash, R., & Vera-Muñoz, S. C. (2014). Firm-value effects of carbon emissions and carbon disclosures. *The Accounting Review*, 89(2), 695–724. <https://doi.org/10.2308/accr-50629>
- Pedersen, L. H., Fitzgibbons, S., & Pomorski, L. (2021). Responsible investing: The ESG-efficient frontier. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 142(2), 572–597. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfineco.2020.11.001>

- Rhou, Y., & Singal, M. (2020). A review of the business case for CSR in the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 84, 102330. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.102330>
- Science Based Targets initiative. (2021). SBTi Corporate Net-Zero Standard. SBTi.
- Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures. (2017). Recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures. Financial Stability Board.
- World Resources Institute & World Business Council for Sustainable Development. (2004). The Greenhouse Gas Protocol: A corporate accounting and reporting standard (Revised ed.). WRI/WBCSD.