

2024

The Hotel Yearbook  
**Hospitality  
ESG Edition  
2024**

**Unlocking the  
ESG Innovation Stack  
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# **Beyond Competition, Foster Coalition to Create Systemic Changes**

Shaping ESG Practices

**Brune Poirson**

*Chief Sustainability Officer at Accor*

### Synopsis

Accor's Chief Sustainability Officer, Brune Poirson emphasizes a systemic approach to sustainability, going beyond cosmetic changes and driving green transition in the hotel industry. The company champions a "multi-local" philosophy, integrating its properties into local communities and offering authentic local experiences, resonating with the growing trend of travelers seeking to benefit local communities. Accor's commitment to sustainability extends across continents, leveraging its European roots and regulatory leadership in environmental matters to influence global practices.

### A SYSTEMIC APPROACH IS INSTRUMENTAL TO HAVE A LOCAL AND CONCRETE IMPACT

Companies must go beyond merely cosmetic changes. They must instead drive change and accelerate the green transition. One of the most effective ways to embrace this shift is to adapt our governance model, evolving from a silo-based approach to a systemic approach, thereby integrating the challenges facing the tourism industry in close collaboration with all stakeholders and going beyond the competitive environment. Working with our peers to tackle the main challenges facing our industry will enable us to move forward more quickly and bring to life a responsible and sustainable hospitality model. Continuing our work at local level is also vital.

Accor must become truly embedded in the local communities in which our properties operate. Our quest to be a "multi-local" company makes sense, with 58% of travelers considering it important that their trip benefits the local communities of their destination. With brands that offer authentic local experiences and strive to act responsibly in their day-to-day activities, we are focusing on hotels' local ecosystems and addressing customers' growing expectations. In this article, we intend to explain and illustrate how our governance model is central to establishing strong local presence, and fostering greater collaboration beyond competition which are two pivotal strategies in accelerating the global hospitality industry's sustainability transition.

### ACCOR: A GLOBAL LEADER

Accor is present on all six continents and across all market segments, from the Economy segment to the Luxury segment. Outside the United States and China, Accor is the global leader in hospitality. The Group benefits from its longstanding presence and business roots in Europe, a continent that is at the forefront of environmental issues – particularly from a regulatory perspective – and which is also the Group's birthplace. This support allows us to be fully committed to change, to shape the future and to promote sustainability. We must share and promote the best practices already implemented in Europe to positively influence change throughout the world. We are the leaders on our own continent and our strength and positioning means that we must employ our influence and introduce virtuous circles, so that best practices can be replicated elsewhere to catalyze change on a global scale. Companies need to redefine their societal role: offering their guests a new way of seeing and acting with sustainability in mind, even before they ask for it. We must wholeheartedly embrace this strategy, which represents a genuine opportunity.

### EXTENDING PARTNERSHIPS BEYOND THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

As is often the case, we cannot achieve this alone. Our sphere of operation is too limited, constrained and lacks scale. Through alliances and coalitions, along with collaboration at local level, we can adopt new and innovative paradigms which can only further strengthen our own model. We need to establish strong dialogue with all stakeholders in every region where the company operates. To forge ahead, we must embrace the idea that innovation is a remedy for a region's vulnerability. However, this innovation cannot be just purely technological. It is true that technological tools are paramount to key sustainability activities. From measuring and factualising impact and providing proof, to process innovations such as smart heating and cooling, reducing water waste, and supply chain optimization, technology is a deeply powerful lever. However, innovation is also about culture, process, building relationships, and about society. To develop new business models, the status quo must be challenged. That is why Accor is building a strong network of alliances, such as the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, an international organization that brings together hotel groups committed to sustainability, and which promotes collaboration between members focusing on key projects leading to the development of new industry standards. Under the leadership of Caroline Tissot, her procurement teams and Ecovadis, we have also just jointly launched the HARP alliance (Hospitality Alliance for Responsible Procurement), which brings together the leading procurement players from the hospitality industry to transform this business function and align our actions to support our shared vision. One of the leading current trends in terms of sustainability involves buying locally rather than internationally, with the supply chain at the forefront of the hospitality sector's move towards sustainability. A study by the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) shows that, during the past year, 40% of British companies have replaced at least one international supplier with a local supplier, thereby illustrating how businesses are switching to local providers.

It is just as essential to promote partnerships outside our industry. We are an active member of the International Food Waste Coalition, a not-for-profit organization, created to promote collaboration and coordinate initiatives aimed at reducing food loss and waste in the hospitality and catering sectors in Europe. Accor, alongside Kering, is also the joint leader of Génération Egalité's Coalition Against Gender-Based Violence which brings together stakeholders to take practical steps to protect women.

### THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF TRAINING AND EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Lastly, all this work would be meaningless without the valuable work and feedback from the teams in our hotels. For this, training is essential, for example, the School for Change training course has provided Group employees with access to a content platform and a training path focused on the fundamentals of climate change. Accor has also been a trailblazer with its Indigenous Careers program in Australia and the Accor Kenya Youth Empowerment Program (AKYEP), a six-month mentoring scheme with trainees and young adults from local communities.

At Accor, we are developing dedicated programs, by recruiting and training, by teaching new skills and by offering mentoring to people from a wide range of backgrounds. The reality is that many of our new hires come from disadvantaged backgrounds and often have no qualifications. We want to give them genuine opportunities to succeed in our industry by facilitating social mobility. Group employees have been involved in large scale training so that every individual can understand all there is to know in their own area of work regarding sustainability and thus make the right decisions and action the required changes at all levels of the company, as this transformation is everyone's responsibility. By joining forces and working towards achieving a shared objective, we learn from each other. We strengthen one another as a result of our collective wisdom, which is particularly true in the case of industry-wide coalitions. The extent and complexity of the task requires coordination between all the individuals involved, and alliances enable us to work together to understand, assess and find solutions to a critical environmental challenge. As an industry, we are increasingly learning to work together towards implementing, even if we could do more systemic changes. But this reflects our shared commitment to ensuring the current and future hotel industry is based on sustainability. We aren't perfect, but we are committed to doing better to ensure we achieve our ambition. It's a matter of survival for the industry.

## FORGING AHEAD: THE PURSUIT OF SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

Being a leader, we strive to influence the rules of the game and translate imagination into positive action on the ground. Already this ambitious vision has engendered significant positive change at the local level for some of our hotels. To name but a few, Raffles Seychelles collaborates with the Marine Conservation Society, inspiring and encouraging guests to contribute to the rehabilitation of coral reefs at the resort. In France, Novotel Marseille East has also initiated a partnership with LPO (Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux) to protect local biodiversity by creating a refuge for local birdlife. In addition, Sofitel Marseille works extensively with local partners to help anchor its offering within the local area, engaging with individuals from farmers to artists to remain an active contributor to its community.

Let's continue to work together with all the key stakeholders, from our peers, employees, owners to policy makers to bring about sustainable systemic changes right down to the hotels.



### Brune Poirson — Chief Sustainability Officer at Accor

Brune Poirson is a graduate of both the Aix-en-Provence Institut d'Etudes Politiques (France) and the London School of Economics (UK). She also holds a Master's Degree from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government (US). Having always been committed to sustainable development, Brune has dual experience working in the private and public sectors. She held various roles in New Delhi (India), in the Office of the Indian Prime Minister and at the French Development Agency, before becoming Director of Social Responsibility – South Asia for Véolia in 2011. In 2015, in parallel with her work within a green start-up incubator in Boston, Brune was involved in the French presidential and parliamentary election campaign. Within the French government, she was elected to the French National Assembly for the Vaucluse département in 2017 and was subsequently appointed Secretary of State for the Environmental Transition, where she championed the anti-waste law, which among other things addressed plastic pollution. The first French person to be elected Vice President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, she is also a member of the Board of Trustees of Fondation de la Mer. Brune joined Accor in May 2021 as Chief Sustainability Officer and is a member of the Executive Committee. With the tasks of defining, driving and monitoring the commitments, strategy and roll-out of the Group's action plans in relation to sustainable development, Brune is also responsible for Accor Solidarity and ALL Heartists endowment funds.

### Accor — [group.accor.com/en](http://group.accor.com/en)

Accor is a world leading hospitality group offering experiences across more than 110 countries in 5 400 properties, 10 000 food & beverage venues, wellness facilities or flexible workspaces. The Group has one of the industry's most diverse hospitality ecosystems, encompassing more than 40 hotel brands from luxury to economy, as well as Lifestyle with Ennismore. Accor is committed to taking positive action in terms of business ethics & integrity, responsible tourism, sustainable development, community outreach, and diversity & inclusion. Founded in 1967, Accor SA is headquartered in France and publicly listed on Euronext Paris (ISIN code: FR000120404) and on the OTC Market (Ticker: ACCYY) in the United States.