

Hotel companies in the Gulf: 20 questions on human rights

Introduction to the survey

International standards on responsible business – including the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights – call on companies to have policies and systems in place to avoid, mitigate and remediate harmful impacts on people and the environment.

Spurred by the concerns of owners, investors, customers and civil society, the hotel industry has made great strides in integrating sustainability and due diligence into their operations. However in some jurisdictions key challenges remain.

The legislative environment and workforce composition in the Gulf States pose significant challenges for companies to protect their workforce from exploitation. The appalling working and living conditions faced by migrant workers have been well documented by the press and in NGO reports.

Companies can find themselves being inadvertently complicit in this abuse, which may have serious operational, legal, financial and reputational consequences. As international scrutiny of businesses increases in the lead up to the 2022 Qatar World Cup and World Expo 2020 in Dubai, responsible action from companies will help them to avoid these risks as well as contribute to rising standards of worker welfare.

The survey below asks a set of questions designed to understand what policies and processes hotel companies have in place to protect migrant workers in their operations in Dubai, UAE. We invite your participation in the spirit of transparency, shared learning and dissemination of good practice.

Human rights

1. Does your company have a publicly available commitment to respect human rights? If so, please provide the link. Yes Accorhotels have –Yes - 1- Accorhotels Ethics & CSR Charter” (copy enclosed) in compliance with Business Ethics, Human Rights, Personal data protection.
2- Recruitment Charter
(https://www.accorhotels.jobs/Pages/Header/GuideLines/Recruitment_Process.aspx)
2. Does your company identify its salient human rights issues and does it have a due diligence process to manage them? (Key steps include: assessing actual and potential human rights risks, integrating and acting upon findings, tracking responses, and communicating how impacts are addressed). Yes

Numerous tools are created to ensure that the company policies & procedures regarding Human rights are set in place:

- 1- Starting from the recruitment phase where the company prohibits any reference to Gender, nationality or age in recruitment plans a recruitment charter forbidding any kind of discrimination is communicated to all the teams.
- 2- Ethics & CSR Charter published on Intranet and communicated to all teams , regulating all kind of business ethics and ensuring compliance with the following fundamental documents:
 - The principles of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
 - The International Labour Organization’s fundamental conventions;
 - The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises issued by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development;
 - The ten principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

- 3- Reporting tool implemented globally to monitor the diversity in all the hotels worldwide and set regional objectives & action plans accordingly.
- 4- Opinion survey conducted in all Accorhotels worldwide at the same period, to monitor all the feedback of the employees and set regional objectives & action plans accordingly.
- 5- The implementation of all the above is included in the remuneration plans of the Managers (corporate/operations)
 - Are these assessments conducted at headquarter, regional, country and/or operational level? The set of assessment tools are created at Headquarter level and implemented globally in coordination with the country relays.
 - Please list the issues identified and share a link to any accompanying public reporting by your company. The identified issues are mainly with regards to diversity specially to promote the recruitment of women and people with disability.

Communicating human rights along the supply chain

How does the company use its leverage to influence business partners with regards to human rights policy and practices? (E.g. business partners: franchisees, building and hotel owners, hotel management companies etc.) - Communication / awareness session / Signature of our Ethical Chart (enclosed)

- what challenges does your company face in doing so?

Difficulty to have a full control on our third party behavior

3. Does the company require third-party contractors to comply with the company's policies and standards? (E.g. third party-contractors: recruitment firms, labour suppliers and service providers).

If so:

- how are these policies communicated to third-party contractors and how is their compliance monitored and enforced? Signature of our Ethical Chart (enclosed)

what challenges does your company face in ensuring third-party compliance? Difficulty to have a full control on our third party behavior

4. What steps has the company taken to mitigate the human rights risks associated with the construction phase of hotel buildings?
 - what challenges does your company face in doing so?
5. How does the company ensure that workers (including agency staff) are made aware of their labour rights and company labour policies in a language they understand? We do include in their contract a clause referring to the application of our ethic chart.

Business operations

6. Describe the scope and structure of your company's operations in Dubai.

Please include information on:

- the number of hotels and rooms
- the names of the hotels
- the type and explanation of the business models they operate under (owned and operated; leased; managed properties; franchised properties; joint ventures; other).

- the level of the company's responsibility for human rights under these various arrangements.

(Example table)

No.	Name of hotel	No. of rooms	Business model	Explanation of business model including level of responsibility for HR practice
1	Sofitel Dubai Downtown			
2	Ibis One Central			
3	Novotel WTC			
4	Fairmont Dubai			
5	Etc.			

The remaining questions apply specifically to migrant workers in the company's operations in Dubai.

Recruitment

7. What categories of workers are directly employed by the company?
8. Please describe the company's recruitment process for workers that it hires directly.
 - do you use recruitment firms to supply these workers?
 - does the company pay the charges and costs associated with recruitment (agency fees, travel costs, visas, medical checks) or are these costs paid by the worker?
9. What categories of worker in the hotel are agency staff employed by a third party? (E.g. subcontractors, service providers or labour suppliers)
 - what due diligence checks does the company undertake to ensure that these third-party agencies are operating legally and ethically?

Conditions of employment

What policies and processes does the company have in place to:

10. Prevent contract substitution?
(i.e. the process whereby the terms of reference in the contract the worker signs in their home country is different to that which they sign on arrival in the host country)
11. Ensure workers are issued with and have access to all necessary documentation including their passports, IDs and medical cards, and that these documents are renewed on time?
12. Ensure timely and full payment of a wages?
Please include information on the company's policy and processes re:
 - a. payment of minimum country-of-origin regulated salaries
 - b. overtime pay
 - c. equal pay for equal work regardless of nationality
 - d. prevention of illegal deductions
 - e. other pay related issues
13. Ensure the health and safety of its workers?
Please include information on the company's policies & processes re:
 - a. health & safety training
 - b. injury prevention
 - c. maximum working hours and overtime

- d. non-discrimination
- e. prevention of physical, sexual and verbal abuse
- f. any other health and safety related issues covered by the company's policies & processes

14. Issue transfer permits and exit visas?

15. Please list any other labour-rights issues your company has identified in Dubai and the policies and processes in place to manage them.

Worker accommodation

16. Does the company provide accommodation for its employees?

- if using agency staff who provides their accommodation?
- if employee or agency-staff accommodation is off site what checks are undertaken to ensure that all accommodation is of a decent standard?

Grievance & remediation

17. What mechanisms does your company have in place to facilitate freedom of association and alternative forms of organizing in a context where local law restricts the ability of migrant workers to form or join trade unions?

18. Does your company have a grievance mechanism? If so, please describe the procedures in place to submit, process and remedy grievances.

19. What steps does the company have in place to remedy cases where:

- a. workers have been charged recruitment fees?
- b. workers have not been paid on time or in full?
- c. workers have been victims of discrimination, physical, verbal and/or sexual abuse?
- d. workers have been threatened or faced retaliation for expressing grievances?