IGC 2026 International Business Simulation

Marriott in Asia: Growth, Development, and Competition

Student Preparation Guide

Category	Details
Committee Type	International business simulation / ad hoc executive board meeting
Format	Student-focused strategy, negotiation, and business decision-making exercise
Simulation Frame	Marriott CEO Anthony Capuano is touring Asia and has called a regional board meeting with Marriott executives responsible for countries and business functions.
Topic	The future of Marriott growth and development across Asia
Student Role	Each student represents a Marriott executive with a country portfolio or business-function portfolio.
Intended Use	Student background guide, research starter, and role-preparation sheet

Note to Students

This simulation is not a classic crisis committee, though it will follow the IGC Crisis Committee Expectations and Rules as posted here.

Marriott is not assumed to be collapsing, under attack, or facing a single emergency. Instead, the committee begins from a realistic business question: how should the world's largest hotel company approach future growth across Asia, where market sizes, political risks, infrastructure quality, consumer behavior, ownership structures, and competitive landscapes vary dramatically from country to country?

During the simulation, the chair may introduce new information such as a proposed acquisition, sudden regulatory change, airline disruption, tourism surge, reputational issue, ownership dispute, cyber incident, environmental challenge, or competitor move. Students should treat these updates as new business conditions requiring a practical response, not as a reason to abandon the long-term strategy discussion.

1. Company and Regional Context

1.1 Marriott's business model

Marriott International is a global hotel company headquartered in the United States. The company's scale is built around a broad portfolio of brands, Marriott Bonvoy loyalty relationships, and an asset-light operating model in which most hotels are owned by third parties and operated under management or franchise agreements. For students, this means that Marriott's growth decisions are rarely just about building hotels. They are also about choosing the right owners, brands, operating models, legal structures, loyalty partnerships, and local teams.

Chief Executive Officer Anthony Capuano has emphasized Marriott's global expansion, broad brand architecture, and asset-light model. In a 2025 interview, he noted that Marriott had roughly 9,600 hotels globally while directly owning only about 20, with the rest generally managed or franchised by third-party owners. He also identified China as a key growth market, with about 600 hotels and roughly 400 more in the pipeline at that time.

1.2 Why Asia matters

Asia is not one hotel market. It is a collection of mature, emerging, luxury, budget, resort, business-travel, pilgrimage, and infrastructure-driven markets. Japan and Singapore may demand disciplined high-cost urban operations; India and Indonesia may reward scale, secondary-city development, and owner partnerships; the Maldives and Thailand may emphasize luxury leisure; China may offer huge long-term upside while also creating geopolitical, regulatory, and demand-cycle challenges.

Marriott's Asia Pacific excluding China region reported a third consecutive year of record development signings in 2025, with 187 deals representing more than 28,000 rooms and India contributing 99 signed deals and about 12,000 rooms. Those figures make India a central case study for students thinking about speed, scale, brand tier, and local partnership strategy.

1.3 The boardroom challenge

The CEO has asked the regional team to recommend a practical Asia growth plan. The plan must balance ambition with feasibility: Marriott wants new rooms, stronger owner relationships, greater Bonvoy engagement, brand differentiation, profitable operations, and reputational resilience. Students must negotiate because every executive will believe their market or function deserves investment, attention, and staffing.

2. Committee Mandate and Agenda

The ad hoc board meeting must advise the CEO on Marriott's Asia strategy for the next several years. The goal is not to issue a political communique. The goal is to produce a business strategy that could plausibly guide regional development, brand deployment, capital-light growth, owner negotiations, loyalty expansion, and risk management.

- Decide which Asian markets should receive priority for hotel signings, openings, conversions, or brand launches.
- Determine the right balance among luxury, premium, select-service, extended-stay, lifestyle, branded residences, and resort brands.
- Identify which country teams need more resources, owner support, staff training, technology investment, or brand repositioning.
- Prepare for the possibility that new in-session information may change the attractiveness of a market or business line.
- Protect Marriott's reputation, operational quality, guest experience, and owner returns while pursuing growth.
- Recommend a realistic final action plan to CEO Anthony Capuano.

3. Simulation Format and Procedure

Students represent Marriott executives, not countries in a diplomatic assembly. They should speak as business leaders responsible for Marriott's performance, not as government officials. A student assigned to India, for example, should advocate for Marriott's India growth strategy, local owner relationships, guest demand, and operational needs. A student assigned to loyalty or sustainability should evaluate all country proposals through that functional lens.

Role Type	Purpose
Country executives	Argue for the market opportunity, risks, needed support, likely brands, and competitive positioning in a specific country or subregion.
Functional executives	Evaluate market proposals through a cross-regional business lens such as loyalty, development, sustainability, revenue, talent, finance, or brand strategy.
CEO / chair	Sets the agenda, introduces new information, questions assumptions, and pushes the board toward an actionable final strategy.
Final product	A board recommendation memo, regional growth map, investment-priority list, brand deployment plan, or negotiated Asia strategy package.

4. Strategic Background: Asia Growth Questions

4.1 Growth versus quality control

Rapid signing growth can increase Marriott's footprint, but poor owner selection or rushed openings can damage brand standards. Students must decide where speed is acceptable and where disciplined brand protection matters more.

4.2 Luxury, lifestyle, and select-service

Asia contains some of the world's most important luxury travel markets, but select-service and midscale growth may be crucial for domestic travelers, secondary cities, and younger customers. Marriott's acquisition of citizenM and expansion into midscale and lifestyle segments show why brand tier strategy matters.

4.3 China and geopolitical risk

China remains a huge long-term opportunity, but demand recovery, regulation, U.S.-China tensions, data rules, owner confidence, and domestic competition complicate the market. China-focused executives must show why Marriott should keep investing and how to avoid concentration risk.

4.4 India and scale

India is one of Marriott's most important growth stories in Asia. The market combines rising domestic travel, business hubs, wedding and events demand, infrastructure development, and expanding middle-class consumption. It also requires local partnerships, staffing pipelines, disciplined construction timelines, and brand segmentation.

4.5 Resorts and experience travel

Thailand, Indonesia, the Maldives, Japan, Vietnam, and the Pacific offer resort and leisure opportunities, but tourism-dependent markets can be vulnerable to climate risk, airlift constraints, overtourism, labor shortages, and environmental scrutiny.

4.6 Ownership and asset-light development

Marriott usually grows through third-party owners and franchise or management agreements. That makes owner economics, financing, construction costs, conversion potential, and local legal systems central to strategy.

4.7 Talent and service culture

Growth is limited by people. Hotels need trained associates, managers, chefs, engineers, housekeepers, sales teams, and general managers. Talent shortages can turn a strong pipeline into poor openings.

4.8 Technology, data, and loyalty

Marriott Bonvoy, direct booking, mobile check-in, revenue management, corporate accounts, cybersecurity, and guest data rules are central to competition. Digital strategy may decide whether new hotels become profitable distribution assets or expensive brand signs.

5. Starting Situation for IGC 2026

At the beginning of committee, students should assume the following boardroom conditions:

- Marriott leadership believes Asia remains central to long-term global growth.
- India, Japan, Indonesia, and selected Southeast Asian markets are competing for development attention and owner-support resources.
- Greater China remains strategically important but requires a careful view of demand recovery, owner confidence, geopolitics, and domestic competition.
- Luxury and resort demand is strong in several Asian markets, but select-service, conversion, and midscale strategies may deliver faster scale.
- The company wants to deepen Marriott Bonvoy engagement across Asian travelers, not just rely on North American or European outbound guests.
- Executives must evaluate new information introduced during committee and decide whether it changes the Asia strategy.

6. Core Issues Before the Board

Issue	Questions for Students
Market prioritization	Which countries or subregions should receive priority for development resources, owner outreach, and brand launches?
Brand deployment	Which brands fit which markets: Ritz-Carlton, St. Regis, JW Marriott, W, Westin, Sheraton, Marriott Hotels, Courtyard, Fairfield, Moxy, citizenM, Apartments by Marriott Bonvoy, or others?
Owner and partner strategy	Should Marriott prioritize large multi-unit development partners, local family-owned developers, institutional investors, conversions, or strategic joint ventures?
Loyalty and distribution	How can Marriott Bonvoy win more Asian travelers and increase direct bookings while competing with online travel agencies and local platforms?
Talent and training	Where are labor shortages most severe, and how should Marriott build hospitality career pathways?
Regulatory and geopolitical	How should the company respond to data rules, foreign ownership limits,

risk	political tensions, visa policy, tax issues, and sanctions risk?
Sustainability and local impact	How should growth address water use, energy, labor standards, food sourcing, cultural preservation, and overtourism?
Capital discipline	Because Marriott is asset-light, where should limited corporate capital, executive time, technical support, and brand resources be allocated?

7. Character Roster: 24 Marriott Executive Roles

The following roles are designed for student research and in-room negotiation. Country executives should research geography, tourism patterns, cities, infrastructure, domestic travel, competitors, ownership structures, and Marriott's existing footprint. Functional executives should research Marriott's actual strategy, brands, risks, and comparable hotel-industry practices.

1. President, Greater China

Responsible for mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan strategy. This executive must defend continued investment in a massive but complex market while addressing demand cycles, regulation, domestic hotel competitors, data concerns, owner confidence, and geopolitical tension.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

2. Area Vice President, India

Represents Marriott's most dynamic Asian growth story. This role should argue for scale, secondary-city expansion, wedding and events demand, domestic business travel, and multi-brand development while acknowledging construction, infrastructure, talent, and owner-execution challenges.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

3. Area Vice President, Japan

Focuses on high-quality urban, resort, and conversion opportunities in a mature but tourism-rich market. This executive must address labor shortages, high costs, inbound tourism, regional-city opportunities, ryokan and lifestyle competition, and brand localization.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

4. Area Vice President, Indonesia

Represents a huge archipelagic market with Jakarta business demand, Bali resort demand, and secondary-city growth potential. This executive should evaluate infrastructure, island geography, local ownership, Muslim-friendly travel, sustainability, and overconcentration in Bali.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

5. Area Vice President, Thailand and Mekong

Covers Thailand plus selected Mekong opportunities such as Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos if assigned by the chair. This executive must balance Bangkok business travel, resort demand, medical tourism, political risk, air connectivity, and emerging secondary destinations.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

6. Area Vice President, Vietnam

Represents one of Southeast Asia's fastest-rising manufacturing, tourism, and urban growth markets. This executive should assess Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, Phu Quoc, coastal resorts, ownership partners, regulatory process, and competition from regional hotel groups.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

7. Area Vice President, Singapore and Malaysia

Oversees two connected but different markets: Singapore as a high-value hub and Malaysia as a broader urban, resort, and secondary-city opportunity. This executive should focus on MICE, corporate accounts, aviation links, franchising, cost pressures, and cross-border travel.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

8. Area Vice President, South Korea

Responsible for a competitive, brand-conscious market driven by Seoul, Busan, leisure travel, K-culture, luxury retail, and domestic tourism. This executive must handle high guest expectations, local competitors, labor costs, and opportunities in lifestyle and premium brands.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

9. Area Vice President, Philippines

Represents a market with strong domestic travel, overseas Filipino networks, BPO and corporate demand, island resorts, and urban growth. The executive should address infrastructure gaps, typhoon risk, resort development, Manila congestion, and owner partnerships.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

10. Area Vice President, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Indian Ocean Resorts

Focuses on luxury leisure, honeymoon travel, private-island resorts, airlift, climate vulnerability, and high operating costs. This executive should argue for rate strength and brand prestige while managing sustainability and destination-concentration risks.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

11. Area Vice President, Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific

Represents mature, high-cost markets with convention demand, leisure travel, Pacific resort opportunities, and strong regulatory standards. This executive should evaluate conversions, lifestyle brands, labor costs, aviation links, and Pacific climate exposure.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

12. Area Vice President, Central Asia and Frontier Markets

Covers emerging opportunities such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, and selected frontier destinations. This executive should assess business travel, infrastructure corridors, political risk, brand awareness, tourism promotion, and first-mover advantage.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

13. Chief Development Officer, Asia Pacific

Responsible for turning market ambition into signed deals and opened rooms. This executive must evaluate owner quality, management versus franchise structures, conversions, construction timelines, mixed-use developments, residences, and whether Marriott is overpromising growth.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

14. Chief Brand and Portfolio Strategy Officer, Asia

Owns the question of which Marriott brands belong where. This executive should protect brand clarity across luxury, premium, select, longer-stay, lifestyle, and midscale segments while ensuring local guests understand the differences.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

15. Chief Luxury Officer, Asia

Advocates for Ritz-Carlton, St. Regis, JW Marriott, EDITION, W, Luxury Collection, Bulgari, and high-end resorts. This executive should defend luxury growth while answering concerns about overbuilding, service consistency, cultural authenticity, and owner expectations.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

16. Chief Select-Service and Midscale Growth Officer

Represents Courtyard, Fairfield, Four Points, Moxy, citizenM, and other scale-oriented brands. This executive argues that Marriott cannot rely only on luxury and must capture domestic middle-class travelers, younger guests, and secondary-city demand.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

17. Chief Marriott Bonvoy and Loyalty Officer, Asia

Responsible for loyalty membership, direct booking, co-branded credit cards, partnerships, elite benefits, and member engagement among Asian travelers. This executive must show how new hotels strengthen the loyalty ecosystem, not just room count.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

18. Chief Digital, Distribution, and Revenue Management Officer

Focuses on pricing, booking channels, OTAs, mobile experience, data, AI-enabled revenue management, cybersecurity, and local digital platforms. This executive should challenge market plans that rely too heavily on low-margin third-party distribution.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

19. Chief Finance and Capital Allocation Officer, Asia

Examines whether proposals create profitable fee streams, realistic opening timelines, and acceptable risk. This executive should ask hard questions about corporate support costs, owner incentives, key money, foreign exchange risk, and return on executive attention.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

20. Chief Owner and Franchise Relations Officer

Represents Marriott's relationships with hotel owners, developers, franchisees, and third-party operators. This executive should prioritize owner economics, trust, contract terms, dispute prevention, and the risk of poor owner selection.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

21. Chief Human Resources and Talent Officer, Asia

Responsible for staffing, training, leadership pipelines, workplace culture, service standards, and retention. This executive should remind the board that every growth plan depends on people who can actually run hotels.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

22. Chief Sustainability and Serve 360 Officer, Asia

Evaluates energy, water, waste, local sourcing, climate risk, community impact, labor ethics, and destination stewardship. This executive should push back against growth that creates reputational or environmental liabilities.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

23. Chief Food, Beverage, MICE, and Events Officer

Focuses on restaurants, bars, banquets, weddings, conferences, meetings, and local culinary identity. This executive should argue that in Asia, hotels often win through event spaces and food-and-beverage concepts, not just guest rooms.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

24. Chief Risk, Security, and Government Affairs Officer, Asia

Monitors geopolitical tension, regulation, sanctions, protests, natural disasters, cyber incidents, public health, and safety. This executive should test every growth proposal against downside scenarios and government-relations realities.

Research starter: existing Marriott footprint; competitors; major cities or destinations; ownership and regulatory environment; demand drivers; risks; what this role wants from the CEO.

8. Likely Negotiating Blocs

Bloc	Likely Argument
Scale-first growth bloc	India, Indonesia, Vietnam, select-service/midscale, development, owner relations. This bloc wants more signings, faster openings, secondary-city expansion, and brands that can reach domestic travelers.
Luxury and experience bloc	Luxury, Maldives/Indian Ocean, Japan, Thailand, F&B/events, brand strategy. This bloc wants to protect rate strength, prestige, resorts, restaurants, weddings, wellness, and experiential travel.
Discipline and risk bloc	Finance, risk/government affairs, sustainability, talent, Singapore/Malaysia, Japan, Australia/New Zealand. This bloc worries about overextension, service failures, labor, climate, and owner-quality problems.
Digital and loyalty bloc	Bonvoy, digital/revenue, China, South Korea, Singapore, India. This bloc focuses on customer data, direct booking, loyalty partnerships, mobile experience, and regional digital ecosystems.
Frontier and diversification bloc	Central Asia, Philippines, Vietnam, Australia/Pacific, risk, development. This bloc argues Marriott should not become overdependent on China, India, or a few resort markets.

9. Strategic Options

Strategy	Use in Committee
Option A: India-led scale strategy	Prioritize India, select-service growth, domestic travel, wedding demand, and secondary cities. Advantage: major scale. Risk: execution strain and owner-quality variability.
Option B: China recovery and retention strategy	Maintain confidence in Greater China while improving localization, owner support, and demand recovery plans. Advantage: enormous long-term upside. Risk: geopolitical and demand uncertainty.
Option C: Luxury-resort leadership strategy	Double down on high-rate resorts and luxury urban hotels in Japan, Thailand, Maldives, Indonesia, and selected gateway cities. Advantage: brand prestige and strong fees. Risk: climate exposure and limited scale.
Option D: Select-service and	Use conversions, midscale, lifestyle, and select-service brands to enter more

conversion strategy	cities quickly. Advantage: flexible growth. Risk: brand dilution if standards slip.
Option E: Balanced portfolio strategy	Allocate different growth types by market maturity: luxury in resorts, select-service in secondary cities, conversions in high-cost urban markets, and loyalty/digital investment across all. Advantage: resilience. Risk: may satisfy everyone without truly prioritizing.
Option F: Risk-managed regional diversification	Limit concentration in any single country by building across India, Japan, Indonesia, Vietnam, Australia/Pacific, and Central Asia. Advantage: geopolitical resilience. Risk: slower progress in the largest markets.

10. How to Handle New Information

Because this is not a classic crisis committee, new information should be treated as business intelligence or a boardroom development. Students should ask: does this change demand, costs, risk, reputation, ownership, or the relative attractiveness of a market?

- A proposed acquisition, brand partnership, or portfolio conversion opportunity.
- A competitor announces a major Asian expansion or loyalty partnership.
- A country changes foreign-investment, data, labor, visa, or tourism policy.
- A major owner requests concessions before signing a multi-hotel agreement.
- A climate, public-health, political, or security event affects a key market.
- A guest-data, cyber, brand-standard, sustainability, or labor issue emerges.
- A sudden event such as a major sports tournament, expo, airline expansion, or infrastructure opening changes demand projections.

11. Research Questions for Students

1. What does your country or function need from Marriott headquarters?
2. Which Marriott brands are most realistic for your market or function, and why?
3. Who are Marriott's main competitors in your space: Hilton, Hyatt, IHG, Accor, local chains, luxury independents, OTAs, or alternative lodging platforms?
4. What are the most important cities, resort destinations, airports, islands, industrial corridors, or pilgrimage destinations for your role?
5. Is your argument based on domestic travel, inbound tourism, corporate travel, events, luxury leisure, or long-stay demand?
6. What risks could make your proposal fail?
7. What tradeoff are you willing to make to win support from other executives?
8. What would the CEO need to hear to approve your recommendation?
9. How would a new in-session development change your position?
10. What should appear in the final board recommendation?

12. Suggested Final Board Recommendation Architecture

Section	What to Include
A. Executive Summary	A short statement of Marriott's recommended Asia growth direction.

B. Market Priority Tiers	Tier 1, Tier 2, and watch-list markets, with reasons.
C. Brand Deployment Map	Which brands should be emphasized in which markets and why.
D. Owner and Development Plan	Target owners, management/franchise approach, conversions, residences, and multi-unit deals.
E. Loyalty and Digital Plan	How Marriott Bonvoy, direct booking, data, and local partnerships support growth.
F. Talent and Service Plan	Staffing, training, leadership development, and service-quality protections.
G. Risk and Sustainability Plan	Regulatory, geopolitical, climate, labor, environmental, and reputational safeguards.
H. New Information Response	How the board adjusted its strategy after in-session developments.
I. CEO Decision Request	Clear asks for approval, resources, further study, or implementation.

13. Source Note and Suggested Student Research

This guide is a simulation document for educational use. Real-world background facts should be verified by students as part of their preparation. Recommended starting points include:

- Marriott International investor relations, annual reports, quarterly earnings materials, and brand portfolio pages.
- Marriott International press releases and development announcements for Asia Pacific excluding China, Greater China, India, Japan, Indonesia, and other major markets.
- Barron's interview with Anthony Capuano discussing Marriott's asset-light model, global growth, and China footprint, 2025.
- Economic Times / Marriott statement on 2025 Asia Pacific excluding China development signings, including India's 99 signed deals and approximately 12,000 rooms.
- Investopedia and Marriott reporting on the citizenM acquisition and the company's select-service and lifestyle expansion strategy.
- National tourism boards, aviation data, hotel-industry publications, and local news sources for country-specific research.

Students should remember that Marriott's public statements and filings describe corporate strategy at a high level. In committee, their task is to translate that strategy into realistic regional choices, negotiations, and tradeoffs.