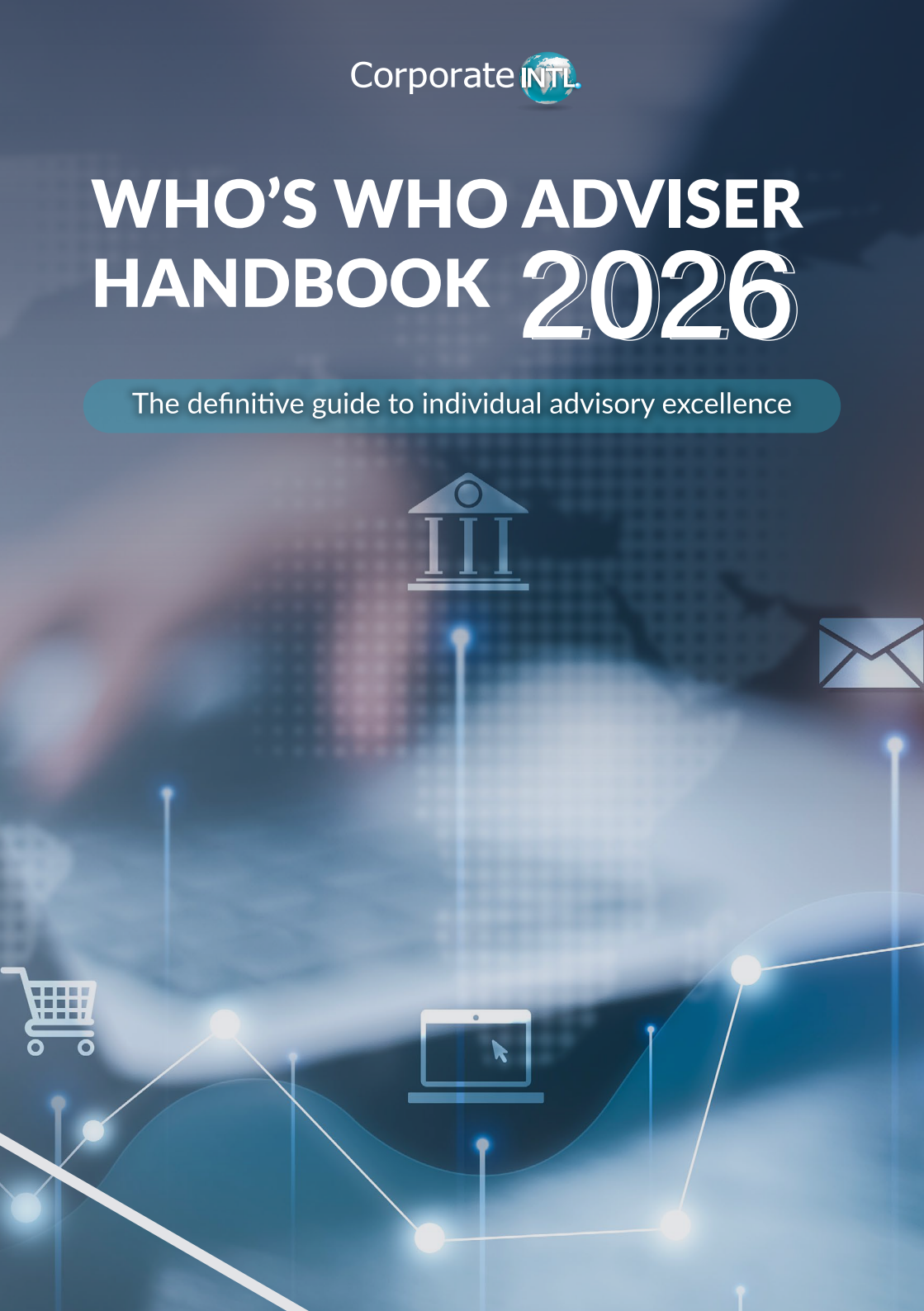
Corporate INTL

WHO'S WHO ADVISER HANDBOOK 2026

The definitive guide to individual advisory excellence



Corporate INTL Who's Who Adviser Handbook 2026

Welcome to the Corporate INTL Who's Who Adviser Handbook 2026.

The handbook is the definitive guide to individual advisory excellence, detailing the services on offer from professional advisers all around the world.

For ease of reference, we have separated the profiles into four regional sections: Europe, the Americas, Asia & Oceania and Africa & the Middle East.

At the back of the publication, you will find an alphabetical Index of the individuals involved.

We hope that the Who's Who Adviser Handbook 2026 proves useful and helps our readers gain access to global legal advisers in a number of specialist practice areas.

3	*Choosing the Right Legal Advisers for Your Business*
6	*Europe*
47	*The Americas*
73	*Asia & Oceania*
114	*Africa & The Middle East*
138	*A–Z Index*

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Choosing the Right Legal Advisers for Your Business

For UK businesses, legal advice is increasingly part of effective commercial planning rather than something to be sought only when a problem arises. The right advisers can help a business manage risk, meet regulatory obligations, protect valuable information and intellectual property, and structure transactions effectively. They can also provide an external perspective when businesses are entering new markets, adopting emerging technologies or responding to changes in legislation. This introductory article considers some of the key issues UK businesses should examine when selecting legal advisers, including tax, contracts, corporate governance, confidential information, data protection and IP law.

Understanding the Legal Landscape

The UK legal and regulatory environment continues to develop rapidly. Businesses must keep pace with reforms affecting company administration, corporate transparency, taxation, data protection and the use of technology.

One significant development is the continuing implementation of the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023. Mandatory identity verification for company directors and persons with significant control (PSCs) began on 18 November 2025 and is being phased in over a 12-month transition period. Directors must provide their Companies House personal code as part of relevant filings, while PSCs have their own verification requirements. Companies House has also been given enhanced powers intended to improve the accuracy and reliability of information on the register.

Tax planning also remains an important consideration. For the 2026 financial year, the main Corporation Tax rate remains 25% for companies with profits above £250,000, while the small profits rate remains 19% for companies with profits of £50,000 or less. Companies with profits between these thresholds may benefit from marginal relief, meaning that the effective rate increases gradually. Businesses with associated companies or shorter accounting periods may need to consider adjusted thresholds.

Data protection is another area in which businesses need current advice. The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 has introduced changes to the UK's data protection and privacy framework, with the majority of its main data-protection changes coming into force on 5 February 2026 and further provisions taking effect subsequently. Businesses should therefore ensure that their policies, procedures and contractual arrangements reflect the law currently applicable to them.

Key Considerations in Selecting Legal Advisers

When appointing legal advisers, businesses should consider a range of practical and strategic factors:

- **Expertise & Specialisation:** Advisers should have relevant experience in the areas that matter to the business, whether that involves corporate transactions, tax, employment, commercial contracts, IP, dispute resolution, data protection or regulatory matters.
- **Corporate & Regulatory Compliance:** Advisers should be able to help businesses keep pace with filing obligations and corporate transparency requirements. In 2026, this includes understanding the practical implications of Companies House identity verification and the wider reforms introduced under the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act.
- **Contracts & Confidential Information:** Strong commercial agreements can help prevent disputes before they arise. Advisers should be able to draft, negotiate and review contracts, including confidentiality provisions and NDAs, while identifying provisions that could create unnecessary commercial or legal exposure.
- **Data Protection & Privacy:** Businesses should seek advice that reflects the current UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the changes introduced by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. This may cover data breaches, data subject rights, international transfers, privacy notices and internal data-handling procedures.
- **Technology, AI & Intellectual Property:** The increasing use of AI and other digital technologies creates questions around copyright, confidential information, ownership, licensing and data use. Advisers should be able to identify these issues and help businesses establish appropriate contractual and governance arrangements.

Building a Collaborative Relationship

The most effective relationship with legal advisers is generally one based on communication, commercial understanding and early involvement. Rather than approaching advisers only after a problem has emerged, businesses can benefit from regular discussions about forthcoming transactions, regulatory developments and potential areas of risk.

A good adviser should take time to understand how the business operates, where it intends to grow and what its commercial priorities are. This allows legal advice to be proportionate and practical, rather than simply identifying every theoretical risk.

In an increasingly regulated and technology-driven business environment, choosing legal advisers is therefore an important commercial decision. Expertise remains essential, but businesses should also consider responsiveness, sector knowledge, communication, commercial awareness and the ability to anticipate emerging issues.

International Agreement Strengthens Cross-Border Enforcement of UK Judgments

The Hague Convention of 2019 on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments in Civil or Commercial Matters represents an important development for businesses involved in international disputes. The Convention entered into force for the UK on 1 July 2025 and provides a common framework under which qualifying civil and commercial judgments can be recognised and enforced between participating jurisdictions.

For a UK business that obtains a judgment against an overseas party, enforcement in another participating jurisdiction can be more straightforward where the Convention applies. Equally, UK courts can recognise and enforce qualifying judgments from other participating jurisdictions, subject to the Convention's requirements and any applicable declarations or limitations.

The Convention is particularly relevant to businesses that operate across borders or enter into international commercial agreements. Its framework can reduce uncertainty around the treatment of judgments and may help parties assess litigation and enforcement considerations at an earlier stage.

The international position has also developed since the Convention first entered into force. Albania and Montenegro became bound by the Convention from 1 March 2026, while Andorra joined on 1 June 2026. The HCCH currently records 33 Members as bound by the 2019 Judgments Convention.

Businesses considering international contracts should nevertheless obtain jurisdiction-specific advice. The Convention does not remove every issue associated with cross-border litigation, and its application depends on factors including the nature of the judgment, the proceedings involved and the jurisdictions concerned.

For UK companies, this is another example of why experienced legal advisers can add value beyond simply responding to disputes. Understanding how international rules interact with contracts, jurisdiction clauses and enforcement strategy can help businesses make more informed decisions before entering into cross-border arrangements.

The Role of the Corporate INTL Who's Who Adviser Handbook 2026

The Corporate INTL Who's Who Adviser Handbook 2026 is intended to provide a useful reference source for management, in-house counsel and investors when identifying potential advisers and collaborative partners in today's business environment.

The Handbook covers Europe, The Americas, Asia & Oceania and Africa & the Middle East, with profiles covering a broad range of practice areas, including:

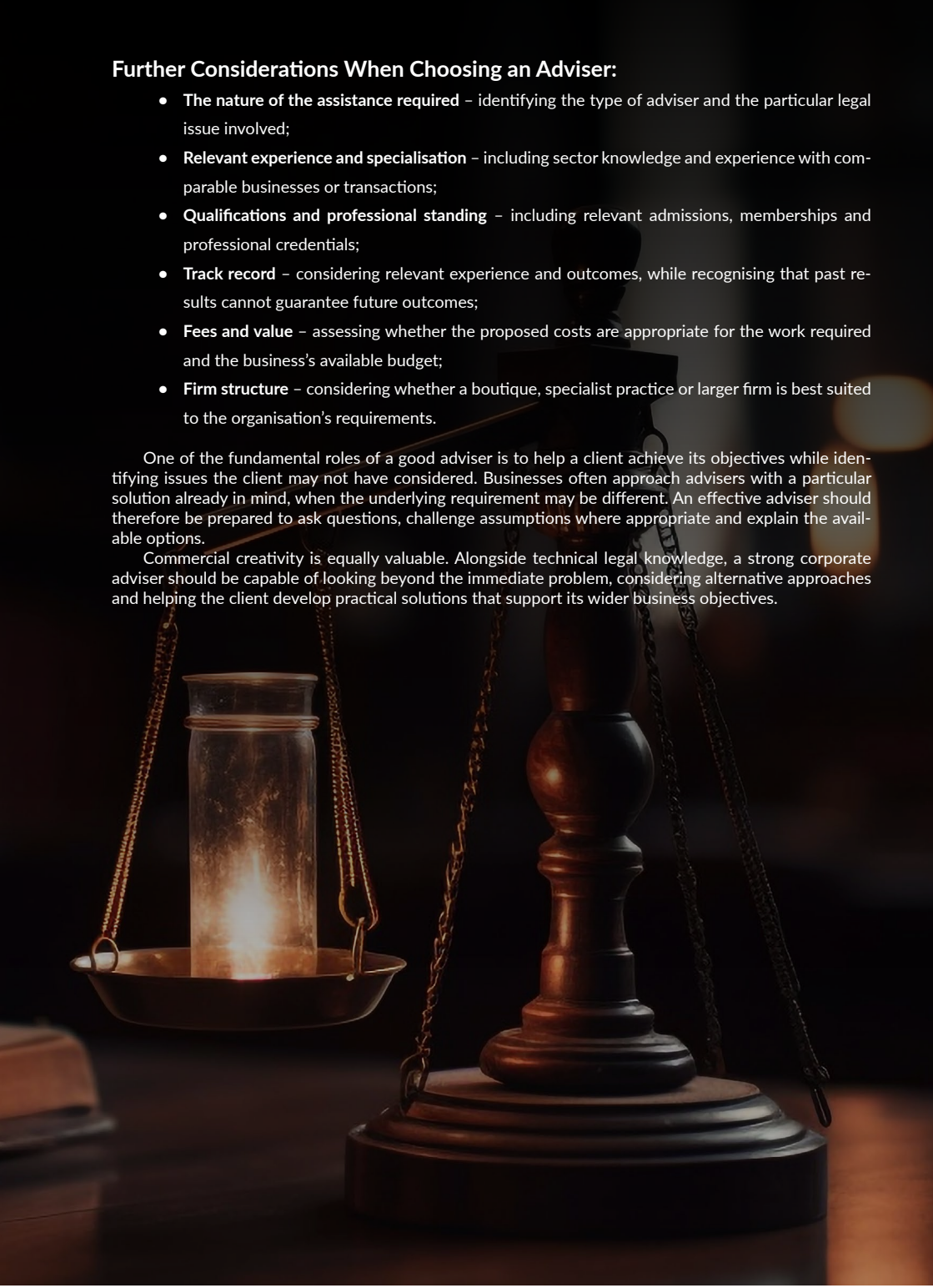
- Dispute Resolution
- Financial Issues
- IP Law
- Tax Law
- Trade Law

Further Considerations When Choosing an Adviser:

- **The nature of the assistance required** – identifying the type of adviser and the particular legal issue involved;
- **Relevant experience and specialisation** – including sector knowledge and experience with comparable businesses or transactions;
- **Qualifications and professional standing** – including relevant admissions, memberships and professional credentials;
- **Track record** – considering relevant experience and outcomes, while recognising that past results cannot guarantee future outcomes;
- **Fees and value** – assessing whether the proposed costs are appropriate for the work required and the business's available budget;
- **Firm structure** – considering whether a boutique, specialist practice or larger firm is best suited to the organisation's requirements.

One of the fundamental roles of a good adviser is to help a client achieve its objectives while identifying issues the client may not have considered. Businesses often approach advisers with a particular solution already in mind, when the underlying requirement may be different. An effective adviser should therefore be prepared to ask questions, challenge assumptions where appropriate and explain the available options.

Commercial creativity is equally valuable. Alongside technical legal knowledge, a strong corporate adviser should be capable of looking beyond the immediate problem, considering alternative approaches and helping the client develop practical solutions that support its wider business objectives.



EUROPE



Europe enters the final part of 2026 facing a more complicated economic environment than at the beginning of the year. Growth remains positive but subdued, while higher energy costs, shifting global trade relationships, increased defence spending and weak productivity continue to influence the outlook. At the same time, investment in infrastructure, clean technology and digitalisation is creating new opportunities. Drawing on the latest assessments from the IMF, European Commission, ECB and World Bank, this update considers the principal forces shaping Europe's economy and its prospects beyond 2026.

A Slow Recovery with New Pressures

Europe's recovery remains gradual rather than broad-based. The European Commission's Spring 2026 forecast puts EU GDP growth at 1.1% this year, following growth of 1.5% in 2025, with expansion expected to strengthen to 1.4% in 2027. The euro area is forecast to grow by 0.9% in 2026 and 1.2% in 2027.

The ECB's September projections are broadly consistent with this picture, forecasting euro-area growth of 0.9% in 2026, followed by 1.4% in 2027 and 1.5% in 2028. The IMF also expects growth of around 0.9% this year. These figures point to an economy that is expanding, but without the momentum needed for a rapid acceleration in living standards or productivity.

Trade, Energy & Geopolitical Risk

The external environment has become increasingly important to Europe's economic performance. Changes in US trade policy, continuing geopolitical tensions and disruption to international supply chains have increased uncertainty for European businesses.

Energy has become an additional concern during 2026. The conflict in the Middle East has contributed to renewed increases in energy prices, feeding through into inflation and reducing household purchasing power. Europe's continued efforts to diversify energy supplies and reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels therefore remain both an economic and strategic priority.

For European exporters, the combination of weaker global demand and a more fragmented trading environment presents a particular challenge. The EU's large internal market provides some protection, but improving competitiveness and reducing barriers within the Single Market remain important priorities.

Inflation Returns to the Spotlight

The rapid disinflation seen during the previous two years has been interrupted. The European Commission expects EU inflation to average 3.1% in 2026 before falling to 2.4% in 2027. Euro-area inflation is forecast at 3.0% this year and 2.3% next year.

The ECB's September projections similarly anticipate inflation of 3.0% in 2026, easing to 2.5% in 2027 and 2.1% in 2028. Energy costs are a major reason for the renewed pressure.

The ECB therefore faces a delicate balance: monetary policy must prevent temporary energy-related inflation from becoming persistent, while avoiding unnecessary pressure on already modest economic growth.

Employment Holds Up

One of the more encouraging features of the European economy remains its labour market. Employment has proved considerably more resilient than economic output in recent years, helping to support household incomes and consumption.

EU unemployment is expected to remain close to 6.0% in 2026 and 2027, while euro-area unemployment is projected at approximately 6.4%. However, a tight labour market does not remove Europe's longer-term challenges. An ageing population, skills shortages and relatively weak productivity growth could increasingly constrain expansion unless investment and structural reforms improve the economy's capacity to generate output.

Public Finances Under Greater Strain

Governments are also having to reconcile competing demands on public finances. Defence spending has moved higher on the political and economic agenda, while governments continue to fund infrastructure, energy security and the transition towards lower-carbon economies.

The European Commission expects the EU's general government deficit to increase to 3.5% of GDP in 2026 and 3.6% in 2027. The EU debt ratio is projected to rise from 82.8% of GDP in 2025 to around 85.3% by 2027.

This creates a difficult policy equation: Europe needs greater investment to raise its future growth potential, but governments must simultaneously manage borrowing costs and keep debt on a sustainable path.

Germany: Searching for a New Growth Model

Germany remains central to Europe's economic outlook, but its traditional industrial model is undergoing a significant adjustment. Following two consecutive years of contraction, the European Commission expects German GDP to expand by only 0.6% in 2026 and 0.9% in 2027.

Manufacturing weakness, elevated energy costs, subdued external demand and demographic pressures continue to weigh on the economy. However, substantial increases in public investment in infrastructure and defence could provide stronger support for growth.

Germany's longer-term challenge is therefore not simply to stimulate demand, but to improve competitiveness, productivity and investment while adapting its industrial base to a rapidly changing global economy.

Europe's Investment Agenda

Rather than relying solely on short-term stimulus, European policymakers are increasingly focusing on investment and economic resilience:

- Clean Industrial Deal: Supports European manufacturing and the development of clean technologies, with the objective of combining decarbonisation with greater industrial competitiveness.
- REPowerEU: Continues Europe's drive to reduce fossil-fuel dependence through energy efficiency, renewable generation and more diversified energy supplies.
- Readiness 2030: Provides a framework for substantially increasing European defence investment and strengthening the continent's defence-industrial capacity, with the wider plan designed to mobilise up to €800 billion.
- Global Gateway: Supports investment in sustainable infrastructure, connectivity and digital development outside the EU, with more than €300 billion mobilised through the wider Team Europe approach since 2021.

What Comes Next?

The IMF's assessment is that Europe needs to address structural weaknesses while preserving the capacity to invest. Completing the Single Market, reducing regulatory barriers, strengthening energy security and increasing productivity will be important if the region is to raise its medium-term growth rate.

Investment in infrastructure, defence, digital technologies and the green transition could provide a significant economic boost, particularly if it is accompanied by reforms that make it easier for businesses to expand and innovate. The challenge will be financing these priorities without placing excessive pressure on public finances or inflation.

Pushing Productivity

Europe's economic story in 2026 is less about a single dramatic turning point and more about managing several transitions simultaneously. Growth is continuing, but at a restrained pace; inflation has become more difficult again; and governments are facing higher demands for defence, infrastructure and energy investment.

The region nevertheless retains substantial economic strengths, including a large integrated market, a resilient workforce and considerable capacity for technological and industrial investment. How effectively Europe converts these advantages into higher productivity, stronger competitiveness and greater energy security will shape its economic performance over the remainder of the decade.

M&A Tax Advisory

International Tax; Corporate Tax; Transfer Pricing



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Raphael Holzinger is a Partner and Head of Tax at Grant Thornton Austria. He specialises in national and international tax structuring, with a strong focus on corporate taxation, international tax law and transfer pricing. Raphael further advises clients on rulings / advance pricing agreements (APAs), and supports them throughout tax audits, appeal proceedings, mutual agreement procedures and arbitration cases. Beyond client advisory work, he is a prolific author of academic and professional publications in the areas of corporate taxation, international tax and transfer pricing, as well as a regular speaker and lecturer at professional and academic programmes, conferences and symposia in Austria and internationally.

Raphael stands out through his strategic approach and expertise, helping clients navigate complex regulations confidently via integrated solutions that go beyond conventional routes to support clients in achieving their financial and strategic objectives. Due to this, his team is known for offering comprehensive and forward-looking tax structuring advice. Raphael noted: "Each and every client is unique. However, if there is such a thing as a typical client, they are corporations seeking national and international tax structuring, combined with transaction advisory. These range from multinational groups to small and medium-sized enterprises across various industries, including a broad spectrum of national and international corporations ranging from listed multinationals to family-owned businesses."

In 2025, Raphael's team successfully completed approximately 50 tax due diligences (TDDs) and enclosed structuring engagements, demonstrating their commitment to delivering timely, in-depth analyses. Each engagement is marked by thorough evaluation and strategic recommendations, which help clients navigate each complex transaction with confidence. Besides that, this period was subject to plenty of projects in the area of general restructuring of groups.

In a recent project, Raphael was responsible for the tax structuring of a complex vendor due diligence (tax and financial) for a large-scale transaction in the nine-figure range. The engagement involved a variety of subsidiaries and required careful planning, as well as cross-functional coordination. By applying his broad experience and strategic perspective, Raphael ensured that tailored and effective solutions were delivered throughout the process. Following the vendor due diligence process, the team also supported the client regarding implementation of the structure across various jurisdictions.

Meanwhile, Raphael has received several prestigious awards in recognition of his expertise in international and transaction-related tax matters. Most notably, he and his team were named Austria Tax Disputes Advisory Firm of the Year 2024 by ITR EMEA. Aside from his professional accomplishments, he actively contributes to advancing tax advisory standards and is a member of several leading professional bodies – including the Chamber of Certified Tax Advisors & Certified Auditors (KSW), the International Fiscal Association (IFA), the Institute of Austrian Certified Tax Advisors (IÖS), as well as the Institute of Austrian Certified Auditors (IWP).

Immigration

Labour; Real Estate; Tax



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Law Chambers Nicos Papacleovoulou LLC is a leading full-service law firm based in Paphos, with offices in Nicosia. With nearly 50 years of experience, we provide expert legal support to local and international clients, specialising in immigration, relocation, taxation, company re-domiciliation and property investments. Our dedicated immigration team offers comprehensive services, including visa applications, residency and citizenship permits, as well as work permits. We also provide expert advice on relocating to Cyprus, tax planning, property acquisitions and corporate re-domiciliation.

Cyprus presents attractive opportunities for investors and global professionals, and we ensure a seamless and stress-free process tailored to your needs. In navigating the complexities of Cyprus's immigration regulations, we offer comprehensive assistance in key areas:

- **Visa Applications:** Guidance through the application process for various visa types, ensuring full compliance with legal requirements.
- **Residency Permits:** Expert support in obtaining temporary or permanent residency in Cyprus, including options for investors, retirees and family reunification.
- **Citizenship Applications:** Assistance with obtaining Cypriot citizenship, whether through naturalisation processes or investment programmes.
- **Work Permits:** Streamlined facilitation of work permit applications for foreign workers, ensuring smooth alignment with labour laws.

Beyond immigration, the firm offers valuable advisory services for those seeking to relocate to Cyprus or engage in business and property investments. Our expertise extends to the areas of tax planning, corporate re-domiciliation, legal processes surrounding property acquisition and development, as well as providing strategic support for business operations within Cyprus.

Evi Papacleovoulou

Partner Evi Papacleovoulou brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the firm's immigration practice. Evi is recognised as one of Cyprus's leading real estate and immigration lawyers, known for providing expert advice to clients on complex legal structures worldwide. She holds an LLB with honours from King's College London and an LLM specialising in EU Law and Taxation. Her academic pursuits further include postgraduate studies in International Tax Law in Zurich and certifications in International Trade and Finance. Evi is also an active member of prominent professional organisations, including the Association of International Arbitrators (UK) and the Society of Trusts & Estate Practitioners – STEP (UK). Her multidisciplinary expertise enables her to offer comprehensive, tailored legal solutions, particularly in cases involving immigration, taxation and real estate matters.

Real Estate

Company/Commercial; Trusts & Estate; Immigration



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Established more than four decades ago, Law Chambers Nicos Papacleovoulou LLC is a boutique law firm based in Paphos. Renowned for its commitment to professionalism, integrity and client-centric services, the firm renders a wide range of legal solutions, with a particular emphasis on real estate law. Serving both local and international clients, it has built a reputation for delivering tailored legal advice and representation across various sectors.

Over the years, Law Chambers Nicos Papacleovoulou LLC has developed a robust real estate practice, assisting clients in navigating the complexities of property transactions in Cyprus. The firm's services encompass the entire spectrum of real estate legal matters, including:

- **Property Sales & Purchases:** Providing guidance through the buying and selling processes, ensuring compliance with Cypriot property laws.
- **Conveyancing:** Managing the legal transfer of property ownership, including due diligence and contract preparation.
- **Title Deed Transfers:** Facilitating the registration and transfer of property titles with the Land Registry.
- **Property Disputes:** Representing clients in resolving disputes related to property ownership, boundaries and contractual issues.
- **Investment Consultation:** Advising investors on the legal aspects of property investment, including compliance with local regulations and tax considerations.

The firm's high-level expertise ensures clients receive comprehensive support throughout their real estate endeavours, safeguarding their interests and facilitating smooth transactions.

In addition, Law Chambers Nicos Papacleovoulou LLC is a current member of the Alliott Global Alliance, a worldwide network of independent law, accounting and consulting firms – an affiliation that enhances the firm's ability to serve clients with cross-border legal needs, particularly in real estate investments involving multiple jurisdictions.

Evi Papacleovoulou

Evi Papacleovoulou, Partner, is an accomplished legal professional with extensive experience in property law. Ms Papacleovoulou's academic credentials include an LLB with honours and an LLM in EU Law & Taxation from King's College London – as well as postgraduate studies in International Tax Law in Zurich. A fully licensed advocate in Cyprus, she further holds several professional designations, including: TEP (Trust & Estate Practitioner); Chartered Arbitrator & Mediator; as well as Certified Documentary Credit Specialist. Her involvement in various professional organisations – such as the Society of Trust & Estate Practitioners (STEP) and the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators – underscores her commitment to legal excellence.

Ms Papacleovoulou's client-focused approach, combined with her deep understanding of Cypriot property law, positions her as a leading adviser for individuals and businesses engaging in real estate transactions.

Commercial

M&A; Corporate; Banking & Finance



Victoria Holland

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Victoria Holland is a Partner and Head of the Corporate & Commercial team at RIAA Barker Gillette (UK), bringing more than 20 years' experience advising businesses on a comprehensive range of corporate and commercial matters. She joined the firm in 2020, following senior roles at B P Collins LLP and earlier training and practice at Pinsent Masons LLP.

Victoria works with a diverse portfolio of clients – from multinational corporations and established SMEs to startups and investors – across such sectors as automotive, biotech, property investment, finance and technology. She is known for providing practical, commercially focused advice, tailored to each client's objectives.

A key focus of Victoria's practice is M&A. She regularly advises on complex domestic and cross-border transactions, representing both buyers and sellers. Her M&A work includes corporate due diligence, deal structuring, negotiations, regulatory compliance and post-completion integration. Whether managing the sale of a family-owned business or facilitating strategic acquisitions for growth-stage companies, Victoria brings clarity, efficiency and a deep understanding of the commercial drivers behind each deal.

Beyond M&A, her expertise spans corporate restructurings, shareholder arrangements, joint ventures and business startups. She further advises on commercial contracts and corporate finance matters – including refinancing, loan agreements and security arrangements. She often works alongside the firm's employment and real estate teams to provide clients with a seamless service on multi-faceted transactions.

Victoria holds an LLB with honours from the University of Liverpool, and completed the LPC at the College of Law, London. She was admitted as a solicitor of England and Wales in 1999.

Her work has been recognised by Chambers UK, and clients consistently commend her for being responsive, pragmatic and solutions orientated.

In addition to her client work, Victoria contributes to thought leadership on legal topics affecting businesses – including non-disclosure agreements, commercial terms for SMEs and legal considerations for charity ventures.

Corporate Immigration



Joanne Taylor

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Joanne Taylor is a Partner in the UK Immigration team at Magrath Sheldrick LLP, possessing many years' experience in her respective fields.

Magrath Sheldrick is a top-ranked law firm providing immigration and employment law advice and assistance to clients all around the globe. Headquartered in central London, the firm has one of the UK's most successful business immigration practices, providing UK, US and international immigration solutions to some of the world's leading businesses and private individuals. Its mission is to ensure innovative, high-touch advice and assistance to a diverse range of businesses and private clients.

With a keen focus on corporate immigration, Ms Taylor has – accordingly – established herself as a trusted adviser to multinational corporations, SMEs and high-net-worth individuals seeking comprehensive solutions. She seamlessly advises and assists many individuals to determine their immigration requirements, developing tailored strategies that align with business objectives to ensure smooth employee mobility across borders.

Navigating a complex system of rules and regulations, Ms Taylor will always consider strategic solutions to guarantee compliance with stringent Home Office requirements – while ensuring that bespoke needs can be met. In the process, she will often explore alternative immigration categories in order to best serve the client. To this end, she has successfully managed large-scale corporate immigration projects for Fortune 500 companies, ensuring seamless transitions for their international workforce.

She has assisted numerous companies with both comprehensive mock audits and Home Office audits to ensure total compliance. Leveraging her extensive expertise, she prepares her clients by conducting such mock audits – identifying potential areas of non-compliance, as well as implementing corrective measures. Her proactive approach not only helps businesses maintain their sponsor licences, but also mitigates the risk of potential penalties or operational disruptions. Meanwhile, her thorough understanding of Home Office regulations, combined with her strategic guidance, provide her clients with confidence and assurance that they are meeting all necessary standards.

In addition, Ms Taylor is actively involved in policy discussions and regularly contributes to consultations with the Home Office – influencing immigration policy reforms to benefit the corporate sector – as well as being an active member of the Immigration Law Practitioners Association and British American Business.

She was nominated for a Women in Law Award in 2020, and has authored numerous articles and papers on the topic of immigration policy.

Divorce

Pre-Nuptial Agreements; Financial Remedies; Private Children Matters



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At Patron Law, we don't just counsel, we partner with you. Whether you are an individual seeking a partner to handle your private affairs, or a business looking to deliver against your business goals, we align with you to bring fresh thinking, experience and innovation. We shelter you from the complexities of the issue so that you can focus on your priorities and trust that you are receiving the very best legal advice and support.

Combining robust business, private client, property and dispute resolution skills, our team is technically skilled and experienced, but most of all, passionate. Together, we have established a strong reputation for the work we do, and our partners enjoy access to an extensive international network of highly qualified talent to act on behalf of our clients from all over the world, wherever the case takes us.

Michelle Bird

Michelle is our Family & Childcare Partner. She has specialised in family and childcare since early 2000, and has a considerable amount of experience in dealing with issues that arise following the breakdown of a relationship, including the financial consequences of a divorce and/or separation. This includes resolving arrangements for children, as well as cases involving their relocation both in the UK and abroad.

She has a keen interest in complex international cases, which often involve cross-border disputes with medium to high-net-worth assets, and has supported many families returning to the UK to reside permanently – as well as assisting parties with their plans to move abroad. With her extensive experience of taking cases to court where required, she is known for her practical approach to dealing with matters on a conciliatory basis.

Meanwhile, Michelle has many years' expertise advising parties, prior to marriage, on the drafting of pre-nuptial or post-nuptial agreements or cohabitation agreements. She often compares the process to taking out an insurance policy with the hope of avoiding the potential risks of an unnecessarily messy and costly separation or divorce.

She was a keen supporter of the non-fault divorce campaign, and has supported resolutions outside the Houses of Parliament to promote campaigns seeking much-required reforms to the divorce process.

In addition to being a member of Resolution and the Association of European Lawyers (AEL), she continues to campaign for improvements to the family justice system.

Michelle also runs a small Will department, offering clients advice on ensuring their last wishes regarding possessions and property are carried out in the event of their death.

KP | Law

ENGLAND

Product Liability

Competition; Data Breach; Cybercrime



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KP Law is a prominent UK law firm specialising in collective redress and claimant group litigation.

With offices in London, Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool, the firm is one of the UK's leading claimant volume group action firms, representing hundreds of thousands of private individuals in large-scale legal actions. KP Law's expertise spans various claim types, including product liability, competition law, data breach and cybercrime claims, as well as equal pay, investment fraud and financial misselling.

The firm's commitment to justice is underscored by its no-win, no-fee approach, ensuring that clients only pay for services upon successful outcomes.

One of its leading practice areas is its product liability department, led by Tom Longstaff, Partner and Head of Product Liability.

The product liability team is dedicated to helping individuals seek justice and claim compensation for injuries and illnesses resulting from dangerous or defective products and current claims, including the first UK action against Johnson & Johnson for selling its talcum powder products, containing Asbestos, despite knowing of the risks since the 1970s – a claim that has more than 4000 claimants.

Its solicitors possess the legal expertise and experience required to take on corporate giants and large organisations, and aim on becoming a champion for its clients in holding businesses accountable for their negligence.

The 2024 merger between Keller Postman UK and Lanier, Longstaff, Hedar & Roberts to form KP Law has also expanded the resulting firm's capabilities and reach with the merger allowing KP Law to work on cases brought by The Lanier Law Firm in the US.

Tom Longstaff

Tom Longstaff brings a wealth of experience to KP Law's product liability practice.

As a qualified solicitor and barrister, Mr Longstaff has appeared in the High Court in numerous complex and high-value claims. His extensive background includes acting in appeals before the English appellate courts, as well as handling insolvency litigation.

His career trajectory includes training as a solicitor at DLA Piper in Leeds, followed by a tenure at Magic Circle firm Linklaters.

Mr Longstaff's significant experience in group litigation is evident in his involvement in several major cases, having been instrumental in a high-profile Renault diesel emissions claim, among others. His expertise further extends to emissions group actions involving Volkswagen, Mercedes and other manufacturers – and he has also been involved in international litigation, including representing businesses affected by the collapse of the Fundão Dam in Brazil.

Trademark

Copyright; Design; Intellectual Property



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MW Trade Marks Ltd is a boutique IP law firm based in the UK and Gibraltar, specialising in trademark, design and copyright law. Established in 2009 by Jon Wyness, the firm has garnered a reputation for delivering expert, practical and affordable advice to a diverse clientele, ranging from startups to multinational corporations. With more than 60 years' combined experience, the team at MW Trade Marks is highly proficient at navigating the complexities of IP law, ensuring clients' assets are robustly protected and strategically managed.

MW Trade Marks offers a comprehensive suite of services tailored to meet the unique needs of each client. These include:

- **Trademark Services:** Advising on the availability and registrability of trademarks, conducting searches and managing registrations in the UK, EU and globally.
- **Design Protection:** Assisting with the registration of designs, ensuring protection for the appearance of products, including shape, colour and ornamentation.
- **Copyright:** Providing guidance on the protection of literary, artistic and musical works.
- **International Protection:** Facilitating the securing of trademark and design registrations worldwide.
- **Domain Names:** Handling domain name disputes and advising on related online issues.
- **Portfolio Management:** Offering maintenance and renewal services for trademarks and designs, as well as managing IP portfolios.
- **Enforcement & Litigation:** Managing oppositions and infringement actions, as well as cease-and-desist letters, combined with other enforcement activities.
- **Licensing & Assignments:** Advising on the assignment and licensing of IP rights.

MW Trade Marks prides itself on delivering personalised services that align with clients' commercial objectives. The firm's transparent fee structures and commitment to clear, practical advice have earned it a loyal client base. It is also a member of The Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys (CITMA), and is regulated by the Intellectual Property Regulation Board (IPReg). Moreover, the firm's attorneys are Fellows of CITMA – ensuring adherence to the highest professional standards.

Jon Wyness

Jon Wyness, the Senior Partner and founder of MW Trade Marks, brings more than 35 years' experience in the IP sector. His career includes senior roles at prominent organisations, such as British American Tobacco, Rothmans and Richemont, where he honed his expertise in brand creation, protection strategies, global enforcement and licensing programmes. In addition, Mr Wyness served as a Senior Trade Mark Attorney at Baker & McKenzie, one of the world's leading international law firms. His contributions to the field have been recognised with such accolades as "Leading Trade Mark Lawyer of the Year, UK" at the Legal Adviser Awards 2019, as well as "Trade Mark Lawyer of the Year" at the ACQ5 Global Awards 2019.

Wealth Management Advisory

Financial Planning & Mortgages; Retirement Planning; Commercial Finance



Claude Carletide

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Established in 1993, Chantler Kent Investments (CKI) is an independent financial advisory firm based in England, renowned for its bespoke financial planning services. With more than three decades of experience, CKI has cultivated a reputation for delivering tailored financial solutions that align with clients' personal and corporate objectives. The firm's mission is to treat clients fairly, fostering long-term relationships built on trust and mutual respect.

CKI's strength lies in its team of seasoned professionals, including financial advisers, chartered advisers, paraplanners and experienced administrative staff. Among the founding partners is Claude Carletide, who brings more than 35 years' experience in financial advising. Claude specialises in wealth management, retirement planning, commercial finance and mortgages – offering clients comprehensive strategies to achieve their financial goals.

CKI's dedication to client-focused financial planning has earned it accolades in the industry. In 2022, the firm was recognised as the "Leading Corporate Finance Management Firm of the Year – Kent" by Acquisition International. This award highlights CKI's unique approach to financial advice, emphasising clients' life goals over mere financial metrics.

Services Offered

Lifestyle Financial Planning: CKI adopts a holistic approach to financial planning, focusing on clients' long-term aspirations. This service involves understanding what clients wish to achieve in their lifetime, and structuring their finances to support these objectives. Cash flow modelling is utilised to illustrate how clients can attain their desired lifestyle, ensuring that financial plans are aligned with personal values and goals.

Wealth Management: CKI's wealth management service is designed to optimise the use of clients' resources, maximising income and savings. The firm assesses clients' attitudes to risk, tax opportunities, as well as income and growth requirements. Services include annual review meetings, unlimited access to advisers, valuation reports, strategic updates to other professional advisers, inheritance tax and estate planning, as well as portfolio construction.

Corporate Financial Services: For corporate clients, CKI offers a range of services, including financial planning, commercial mortgages and business protection. Moreover, the firm advises on director pensions, shareholder and partnership protection, key person insurance and employee benefits – such as critical illness, medical insurance, pensions, income protection, life assurance and relevant life insurance.

Personal Finance: Last, but not least, CKI provides tailored advice on pensions and retirement planning, investment portfolios, life assurance, mortgages and later life advice. To this end, the firm assists in selecting appropriate pension vehicles, managing investment portfolios with tax efficiency – as well as planning for later life through such services as equity release and inheritance tax advice.

Civil

Family; Divorce; Estate & Succession Planning



Jérôme Casey

Founding Partner
CASEY Avocats

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Established in 2014, CASEY Avocats is a French law firm specialising in civil law, with a particular emphasis on family law and estate matters. Operating from offices in Paris and Bordeaux, the firm is known for its in-depth legal expertise, academic contributions and a client-centric approach that bridges both domestic and international legal landscapes.

The firm was founded by Maître Jérôme Casey, a dual-qualified lawyer and academic with a Doctorate in Law from the University of Bordeaux. His career encompasses roles as a tenured lecturer and extensive experience with the French Supreme Courts. Admitted to the Paris Bar in 2007, Maître Casey is recognised for his scholarly contributions, including authoring key legal texts on matrimonial regimes and divorce law.

CASEY Avocats offers comprehensive services in family law, addressing such matters as marriage, civil unions, divorce, child custody and financial settlements. The firm is adept at handling complex cases involving international elements, ensuring clients receive informed guidance across jurisdictions.

- **Divorce & Matrimonial Regimes:** The firm possesses significant experience in divorce proceedings, including the division of assets and financial settlements. Maître Casey's annotated "Code du divorce" serves as a testament to the firm's authority in this domain.
- **Estate & Succession Planning:** With a strong foundation in inheritance law, CASEY Avocats assists clients in estate planning, testament drafting and succession disputes. The firm's approach integrates both civil and fiscal considerations, providing clients with holistic solutions.
- **Family-Owned Businesses:** The firm advises on the governance and succession of family-owned businesses, particularly during events like divorce or inheritance. CASEY Avocats collaborates with partners to ensure seamless transitions and compliance with legal frameworks.
- **International Private Law:** Given Maître Casey's bilingual proficiency and dual nationality, the firm is well equipped to handle cases involving international private law. Services include cross-border estate planning, international divorce proceedings, as well as legal opinions for foreign courts.

Beyond legal practice, Maître Casey contributes to the legal community through teaching and publications. He serves as a Director of Training Sessions at the French National School for the Judiciary, focusing on divorce and asset liquidation. His scholarly works are widely recognised and utilised by legal professionals.

Export Finance

HFW I www.hfw.com



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HFW (Holman Fenwick Willan) is a global, sector-focused law firm renowned for its expertise in such industries as shipping, aviation, commodities, energy and infrastructure. Established in 1883, HFW has expanded its presence to 20 offices worldwide, including a significant base in Paris since 1977. The Paris office, comprising more than 50 lawyers, offers comprehensive legal services in areas like maritime and air transportation, insurance and reinsurance, industrial risks, infrastructure and construction, energy, international trade, commodities, commercial disputes, corporate, finance and private equity.

HFW's Paris office has developed a robust export finance practice, leveraging its deep industry knowledge and international reach. The firm's lawyers advise on complex domestic and cross-border finance transactions, including asset finance (shipping, aviation and rail), export credit agency (ECA) and project finance, infrastructure finance, structured finance (securitisation and derivatives), lease transactions and restructuring. Their clientele includes banks, financial institutions, ECAs and corporate borrowers.

Today, HFW's Paris office stands out for its comprehensive export finance services, backed by a team of seasoned professionals with extensive experience in complex financial transactions. The firm's strategic hires and deep industry knowledge position it as a leader in the export finance sector in France and beyond.

Jean-Marc Zampa

As the Head of HFW's Paris office, Jean-Marc Zampa brings more than two decades' specialised expertise in large, complex financial transactions. He routinely advises both shipowners and banks on various transactional matters, enhancing the team's comprehensive service, which encompasses international syndicated loans, acquisition finance, asset finance and export and tax-advantaged financings.

Paolo Pinna

Paolo joined HFW in 2024, bringing with him extensive expertise in export credit agency (ECA) finance and shipping finance. He advises on transactions governed by English, French and Italian law, with a strong focus on the international dimensions of banking and finance. His broad experience covers: asset finance; plain vanilla ECA; infrastructure and project finance; as well as financial restructuring. Paolo has acted for a wide range of clients, including banks, financial institutions, ECAs and corporate borrowers, guiding them through complex and high-value finance transactions. His background includes nearly two years as Senior Legal Counsel at SACE S.p.A., Italy's export credit agency, and a secondment at BNP Paribas in Paris, further enriching his cross-border legal and commercial insight.

Constance Ollat

Also joining HFW in 2024 from Norton Rose Fulbright, Constance Ollat brings significant experience and expertise in ship finance, export finance, aviation finance, yacht finance, sustainable finance, infrastructure finance and commodity finance. Her addition strengthens HFW's transactional capabilities in Paris and aligns with the firm's finance work across Europe.

François de Geofroy

François de Geofroy's practice focuses on business law – primarily corporate finance and shipping finance. He advises the various entities involved (particularly financial institutions, investors and borrowers) on a wide range of financings, as well as on asset financing and acquisition transactions. He is a French native and speaks fluent English.

Inheritance



Martine Blanck-Dap

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Martine Blanck-Dap is a Partner at LPA Law in France, specialising in estate, inheritance and inheritance tax law. She heads the Private Clients practice and provides strategic legal counsel to executives, high-net-worth individuals, family-owned businesses and family groups, private banks and institutions on a wide range of tax-related matters.

Her expertise spans tax law, estate planning for the transmission of private and professional wealth, as well as asset protection – particularly in the management and transmission of artistic heritage via charities. She has a strong command of both tax and civil law, including international aspects in connection with the 13 international offices of LPA Law.

She is a founding member of the scientific committee for the French foundation for inheritance law (University "Paris Dauphine"), as well as a member of the "Art et Droit" (Art & Law) association.

In addition, Ms Blanck-Dap regularly contributes articles on these topics to professional journals (such as Option Finance or Le Figaro Partners), and is an active member of IACF (Institute of Tax Advice Lawyers).

Awards & Nominations

- **Best Lawyers in France:** Individually ranked in Tax Law
- **Chambers Europe (France):** Litigation (Band 4)
- **The Legal 500 EMEA:**
  - Tax (Tier 4)
  - Dispute Resolution: Commercial Litigation (Tier 4)
- **ITR World Tax (France):**
  - Individually ranked (Highly Regarded) in Private Client
  - Private Client
- **Décideurs:**
  - Wealth Tax (Excellent)
  - Taxation of Associations and Non-Profit Organizations (Excellent)
  - Commercial Litigation (Excellent)
  - Wealth Tax: Regulation and Litigation
  - Wealth Management
- **Option Droit & Affaires:** Acquisition Litigation (2023)

About LPA Law

With more than 270 lawyers across 14 offices, including 13 internationally, LPA Law is one of the top ten independent French law firms. The firm is notable for offering a comprehensive range of services across all key areas of business law.

International Business

AI; IT; Neurorights



Liliana Bakayoko

Founder
Liliana Bakayoko INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS LAW FIRM

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Liliana Bakayoko, a distinguished French international business lawyer, was honoured as International Business Lawyer of the Year in France in the Corporate INTL Global Awards 2025. This prestigious recognition adds to a series of outstanding accolades, including her selection as Leading International Business Law Firm – 2025 by the Global 100 Awards and Business Lawyer of the Year – Global for both 2024 and 2025 by International Elite 100 Global. Her remarkable career has also earned her such titles as Top International Business Lawyer of the Year 2024 and Empowered Woman of the Year 2025 by the International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP) in New York. The Corporate Vision Global Business Awards recognised her firm as the Best International Business Law Firm 2024 – EMEA, while USA Today named her among the Top Outstanding Lawyers to Know About for 2025. In addition, Microsoft MSN listed her among the Top 10 Leading Lawyers in both 2024 and 2025, and included her in the Top 10 Self-Made Entrepreneurs, further underscoring her influence beyond the legal sphere.

With 20 years' legal expertise and a Doctorate in Law, Ms Bakayoko has built an impressive career. Her journey spans academia – where she served as a Professor of Law – and private practice, where she established her Paris-based law firm in 2004.

What sets Ms Bakayoko apart is her unique approach to legal practice. She is a strong advocate for what she calls the "positive perception of the law" – a principle that views the law not as a restrictive framework, but as a tool for business innovation and strategic growth. This forward-thinking philosophy has inspired businesses to proactively use legal frameworks, transforming compliance challenges into opportunities for creativity and progress. Her expertise extends to such emerging fields as digital law, AI and neurorights. She has pioneered the innovative concept of "Neurocognitive Trade Secrets", advocating for enhanced protections for trade secrets in response to technologies capable of interpreting human thoughts. She has been at the forefront of advocating for legal personhood for AI systems and implementing neurorights to safeguard individuals in the face of advancing neurotechnologies. These groundbreaking ideas reflect her commitment to aligning legal systems with the rapid pace of technological innovation.

Ms Bakayoko's practice has been instrumental in groundbreaking projects, including her advisory work with Linden Energy, LLC, an American energy corporation that played a key role in the realisation of the IGB (Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria) pipeline – a vital infrastructure project that has significantly enhanced energy security in Eastern Europe.

Ms Bakayoko's future aspirations focus on empowering businesses to unlock their innovative potential by using the law as a strategic tool for growth and success. Her mission is to enable companies to forge their own rules within a framework of complete legality, turning compliance into a pathway for greater achievement. She continues to champion legislative advancements in IT law and AI to address the evolving challenges of international business. Her thought leadership and dedication to shaping forward-thinking legal frameworks reinforce her reputation as a transformative figure in the global legal community.

Shipping Finance

HFW I www.hfw.com



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Holman Fenwick Willan (HFW) stands as a global, sector-focused law firm with a robust presence in France. Established in Paris in 1977, HFW's French office has evolved into a pivotal hub for maritime finance, offering comprehensive legal services that cater to the intricate needs of the shipping industry.

The Paris office is integral to the firm's global operations, comprising more than 50 lawyers who specialise in various sectors. In the realm of shipping finance, HFW France offers unparalleled expertise, advising major financial institutions, shipowners and maritime enterprises on a wide array of high-value, cross-border transactions. The team's proficiency encompasses international syndicated loans, acquisition finance, asset finance, export and tax-advantaged financings and, particularly, financing through tax lease structures.

The shipping finance team has also garnered accolades from clients and peers alike. Clients have praised Jean-Marc Zampa for his professionalism and solid experience, noting that his expertise instils confidence in navigating complex transactions. Moreover, prestigious legal directories – such as The Legal 500 and Chambers – have recognised HFW's shipping finance practice in France, underscoring the firm's strong market presence and the team's expertise in handling high-value, cross-border matters.

Jean-Marc Zampa

As the Head of the Paris office, Jean-Marc Zampa brings more than two decades' specialised experience in large, complex financial transactions. He routinely advises both shipowners and banks, enhancing the team's comprehensive service offerings. Jean-Marc's leadership has been instrumental in positioning HFW France as a leader in shipping finance, particularly noted for his expertise in French tax lease structures.

Paolo Pinna

Paolo joined HFW in 2024, bringing deep expertise in ECA finance and shipping finance. His practice spans English, French and Italian law, with a strong focus on cross-border transactions. He advises clients on: asset finance across shipping, aviation and rail; ECA and project finance; lease transactions; financial restructuring; as well as ESG, green loans and sustainability-linked loans. Paolo's work reflects a commitment to innovative and sustainable financing solutions, helping clients navigate the evolving landscape of responsible finance.

Constance Ollat

Also joining from Norton Rose Fulbright in 2024, Associate Constance Ollat's experience in ship finance complements the team's capabilities, contributing to the firm's strength in handling complex domestic and cross-border finance transactions.

François de Geofroy

François de Geofroy's practice focuses on business law – primarily corporate finance and shipping finance. He advises the various entities involved (particularly financial institutions, investors and borrowers) on a wide range of financings, as well as on asset financing and acquisition transactions. He is a French native and speaks fluent English.

Trademark

Intellectual Property; Industrial Property; Domain Name Regulation



Nathalie Dreyfus

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Nathalie Dreyfus, Founding and Managing Partner of Dreyfus & Associés (Dreyfus Law Firm), is a French and European Trademark Attorney with more than 30 years of experience in the field of IP. Appointed as a judicial expert by both the French Supreme Court and the Paris Court of Appeal, she also serves as a panelist in domain name disputes before WIPO, the Forum and AFNIC. Ms Dreyfus's areas of specialisation include trademark law, domain name recovery and legal issues at the crossroads of IP and technology. In parallel with her practice, she has authored several books and regularly contributes to leading legal publications, as well as lecturing at the French National School for the Judiciary.

Ms Dreyfus noted: "We provide end-to-end legal support in all areas of intangible asset management. Our practice spans the protection of trademarks, designs, patents and domain names, and extends to copyright and digital content. We assist clients with strategic filing, portfolio structuring, oppositions, litigation, UDRP actions and the negotiation of IP-related contracts. Renowned for our leadership in online brand enforcement, we offer robust monitoring and takedown programmes across digital ecosystems, including social media, e-commerce platforms and DNS infrastructures – delivered through our proprietary IPweb platform. We further guide clients through emerging legal frameworks involving blockchain, NFTs and AI-generated content."

What sets Dreyfus Law Firm apart is its ability to combine legal insight with technological acumen. The firm's forward-thinking approach addresses not only conventional IP challenges, but also the demands of the digital economy and Web 3.0 environments. Its multidisciplinary team – combining legal, technical and linguistic expertise – ensures a tailored and agile response to complex cross-border issues. Supported by a trusted global network, the firm's advisers deliver seamless protection and enforcement strategies across multiple jurisdictions. Today, clients include multinational groups, innovative SMEs, public bodies and independent creators.

Ms Dreyfus added: "This diversity allows us to anticipate sector-specific developments and craft responsive legal solutions in such industries as automotive and mobility, aerospace and defence, cosmetics and personal care, biotechnology, as well as global finance and investment. Our recent work includes the coordinated defence of international trademark portfolios through oppositions and cancellation actions, combined with the implementation of comprehensive global trademark enforcement strategies. These initiatives have tackled domain name abuse, fraudulent websites and the unauthorised use of IP rights across digital channels, reinforcing the value and integrity of clients' assets worldwide."

Ms Dreyfus has received numerous distinctions, including the Trophée d'Or for Industrial Property, and is consistently ranked in WTR 1000, The Legal 500, IP Stars and Who's Who Legal.

VOGELER
RECHTSANWÄLTE

GERMANY

Aviation

Transport; Medical



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Vogeler Rechtsanwälte is a German law firm with a dual specialisation in medical law and international aviation and transport law. Founded more than three decades ago by Dr Michael Vogeler, the firm has evolved into a second-generation family practice under the leadership of his sons, Dr Marcus Vogeler and Dr Andreas Vogeler. While Dr Marcus Vogeler focuses on medical law, Dr Andreas Vogeler has expanded the firm's expertise into the realm of international aviation and transport law, establishing a leading practice that serves clients across the globe.

Since 2015, Vogeler Rechtsanwälte has provided comprehensive legal services to international airline and transport companies. The firm's aviation and transport law practice encompasses a wide array of services, including:

- **Liability Issues:** Handling all liability matters related to transport operations, with a particular focus on accidents.
- **Contract Drafting:** Assisting in the creation of partner contracts and terms and conditions (T&Cs).
- **Administrative Offence Proceedings:** Representing clients in proceedings before supervisory authorities, such as the Federal Aviation Authority.
- **Industrial Property Protection:** Addressing issues related to industrial property, including responding to warning letters.
- **Private International Law:** Advising on matters concerning the applicable national law in international cases.

Meanwhile, Vogeler Rechtsanwälte has developed a specialised approach to managing mass claims, particularly those arising under Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 (Air Passenger Rights Regulation) and the Montreal Convention. The firm acts on behalf of airline companies both domestically and internationally, handling mass proceedings for ticket reimbursements due to non-performance of trips. In addition, it represents international companies in other sectors facing mass claims, such as data breach incidents. Their integrated approach combines legal, financial and administrative services, supported by customisable software solutions that provide clients with transparency and efficiency throughout the process.

Dr Andreas Vogeler

Admitted to the German bar in 2014, Dr Andreas Vogeler brings a wealth of experience and a multilingual proficiency in German, English and French to his practice. His professional experience encompasses placements with the Kammergericht Berlin, the law firm lindenpartners in Berlin and the Federal Government Commissioner for Patients' Affairs.

Dr Vogeler's contributions to legal scholarship are notable, with publications focusing on international medical liability law and private international law. His active participation in professional associations – including the European Air Law Association (EALA) and the European Regions Airline Association (ERAA), as well as his role as a non-executive director at One Sky Solutions – underscore his commitment to the advancement of aviation law.

Commercial

Business; Corporate; Capital Markets



Michael Rainer

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MTR Legal Rechtsanwälte is a full-service law firm in Cologne, with additional offices in Berlin, Bonn, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Munich and Stuttgart. Established in 2019, the firm has rapidly expanded its presence and influence, offering comprehensive legal services to a diverse clientele that includes multinational corporations, institutional investors, SMEs, associations and private individuals across various industries.

MTR Legal Rechtsanwälte specialises in business law, providing expert legal counsel in such areas as commercial, corporate, tax, capital markets, real estate, IT, IP and distribution. The firm's attorneys are adept at handling complex legal matters, including M&A, international trade and commercial criminal law.

With a team of multilingual lawyers fluent in German, English, French, Russian, Spanish and Turkish, MTR Legal Rechtsanwälte is well equipped to serve clients on a global scale. The firm's membership in international legal associations – such as the American Bar Association, International Bar Association and Union Internationale des Avocats – underscores its commitment to providing cross-border solutions.

Today, MTR Legal Rechtsanwälte prides itself on delivering bespoke services tailored to the unique needs of each client. Its attorneys work closely with clients to develop interdisciplinary and holistic solutions within a framework of trust and personalised consultation. The firm's culture is characterised by a hands-on mentality, dynamism and a digital working environment – fostering a professional yet approachable atmosphere while encouraging continuous learning, flexibility and team spirit.

Embracing digital transformation, MTR Legal Rechtsanwälte operates as a fully digital law firm, utilising modern tools and software to enhance efficiency and client communication. Clients benefit from streamlined processes, fast response times and the convenience of digital interactions – ensuring that legal support is accessible anytime and anywhere.

Meanwhile, MTR Legal Rechtsanwälte's commitment to excellence has been recognised by leading industry publications. As such, the firm has been awarded such titles as "Best Lawyers" and "Germany's Best Attorneys" by Handelsblatt for several consecutive years.

Michael Rainer

Michael Rainer, Managing Partner, brings more than two decades' legal and entrepreneurial experience to the firm. A graduate of the University of Bonn, Mr Rainer has a diverse background that includes roles in law, real estate, digital media and startups. His expertise lies in commercial and contract law, with a key focus on national and international commercial law, as well as corporate and economic law. He is known for his strategic thinking, business development acumen and commitment to innovation.

Life Sciences

Healthcare; Pharmaceuticals; Medical Devices



Dr Christian Rybak

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Greenberg Traurig Germany, LLP is a distinguished pillar within the global framework of Greenberg Traurig, LLP – a multinational law firm founded in 1967, now encompassing approximately 2,850 attorneys across 49 offices worldwide. With strategic offices in Berlin and Munich, Greenberg Traurig Germany delivers comprehensive legal services, particularly excelling in the life sciences and healthcare sectors.

Last year, Greenberg Traurig inaugurated its Munich office, marking its second location in Germany and the firm's 49th globally. Dr Stephan Rau, formerly of McDermott Will & Emery, leads the Munich office as Managing Shareholder and chairs Greenberg Traurig's European Health Care Practice. His extensive experience in M&A transactions and regulatory matters in the healthcare and life sciences sectors enhances the firm's capabilities in these domains.

Today, Greenberg Traurig's Life Sciences & Medical Technology Group offers multidisciplinary legal support, guiding clients from R&D through commercialisation. The firm's integrated approach combines expertise in healthcare, IP, regulatory affairs, corporate law and litigation to address the complex needs of clients in the life sciences industry.

Meanwhile, Greenberg Traurig's excellence in the life sciences legal arena is reflected in its accolades, including being named "Patent Strategy Law Firm of the Year" by LMG Life Sciences EMEA in 2022. In addition, its attorneys actively participate in industry associations, including the German Pharmaceutical Industry Association (BPI) and the European Confederation of Pharmaceutical Entrepreneurs (EUCOPE), ensuring they remain at the forefront of legal developments in the life sciences sector.

Dr Christian Rybak

Joining concurrently with the Munich office's opening, Dr Christian Rybak brings more than two decades' expertise to his role as Chair of Health Care & Life Sciences Germany. Previously a Partner at Ehlers, Ehlers & Partner, Dr Rybak specialises in advising pharma companies, medical device manufacturers and governmental bodies on complex legal and regulatory issues.

His practice encompasses market access, reimbursement strategies, health policy, regulatory compliance, competition law and litigation. Dr Rybak's leadership fortifies Greenberg Traurig's position as a trusted adviser in the life sciences sector.

His individual recognitions – such as the JUVE recommendation for Health Law and the Lexology Client Choice Awards – further attest to the firm's expertise and client-focused approach.

National & International Inheritance

Inheritance; Media & Press; International Business



Dr Michael Scheele

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Dr Michael Scheele is the CEO and Founder of Legal Alliance Rechtsanwalts GmbH, a boutique law firm headquartered in Munich with offices in Berlin and Dubai. Admitted to the bar in Munich since 1977, he has also been licensed in St Petersburg (1991) and Dubai (2013). Dr Scheele specialises in business law, inheritance law and media law, advising both national and international clients. His career includes serving as Honorary Consul of the Republic of Seychelles (1979–1989), and as a member of the Constitutional Commission of the Republic of Albania (1991–1993). He has represented high-profile clients, including Michael Jackson, and was involved in drafting the first democratic constitution of Albania. Dr Scheele is also a published author and columnist, contributing to various newspapers and magazines. Under his leadership, Legal Alliance has received multiple accolades, such as:

- Business Law Firm of the Year (The Lawyer Network)
- Best Leading Cross-Border M&A Lawyer of the Year (Corporate America Today, 2022)
- Recommended Expert 2023 (Leaders in Law)
- Business Excellence Award 2019 (Corporate Insider)
- Lawyer Monthly Legal Awards Germany 2018 Winner
- Franchise Law – Business Law Firm – Germany (CV Magazine, 2018)
- Most Outstanding Private Law Specialist Firm – Germany (AI Global Excellence Awards, 2018)

Legal Alliance Rechtsanwalts GmbH

Today, Legal Alliance provides comprehensive services in inheritance law, including drafting wills, inheritance contracts and advising on estate disputes. The firm also offers counsel in corporate law, media and press law, international business law, tax and insolvency law, family law, labour law, real estate law and mediation. Its international practice extends to company formations, M&A transactions, joint ventures and franchise agreements – particularly focusing on the MENA region and CIS countries.

Legal Alliance further distinguishes itself through personalised client service, assigning a dedicated attorney to each client to ensure consistent and tailored support. The firm's interdisciplinary approach allows for efficient handling of complex cases requiring expertise across multiple legal domains. Its international orientation, multilingual capabilities and strategic partnerships enhance its ability to manage cross-border matters effectively.

Clients seek Legal Alliance for its advisers' high-level expertise in sensitive inheritance matters, corporate structuring and international legal transactions. Its clientele currently includes high-net-worth individuals, family-owned businesses, multinational corporations, artists, athletes, NGOs and media entities – all of whom value the firm's discretion, strategic insight and comprehensive solutions.

Public Procurement

State Aid; Public Funding; Data Protection



Prof Dr Stefan Hertwig

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Professor Dr Stefan Hertwig specialises in public commercial law, with particular emphasis on public procurement and European state aid. He is further active as a specialist attorney for administrative, construction and architectural law, as well as fulfilling the role of honorary professor at the Heinrich Heine University in Düsseldorf. He is also Chairman of the Preliminary Examination Committee of the Cologne Bar Association, carrying the title of "Certified Lawyer for Public Procurement Law".

Prof Dr Hertwig has received high-level recognition from JUVE, Best Lawyers, Chambers and The Legal 500, and is the author of a widespread textbook on public procurement, currently in its seventh edition. He studied law in Munich, Geneva and Paris, and speaks German, English and French. After obtaining his doctorate and holding positions in the Federal Ministry of Finance – and as a Judge at the Regional Court of Cologne – he was initially admitted to the bar in Cologne. Today, he heads the Berlin office of CBH Rechtsanwälte.

Under his leadership, the practice group advises the public sector and public companies in the context of restructurings and privatisations, as well as in complex procurement procedures for awarding contracts or concessions. Example cases include one involving the federal task force in the tendering of contracts for the supply of vaccines. Meanwhile, he advises bidders on selecting appropriate bidding strategies while ensuring they adhere to the relevant public tender prerequisites, and is active in forensic matters – representing public clients and bidders in review proceedings.

Prof Dr Hertwig draws upon wide-ranging experience that includes insight into public administration, having undertaken the roles of both judge and lawyer. He has won a number of fundamental judgments before the European Court of Justice and before high German courts, and is often asked to render second opinions for ongoing cases.

His clients typically comprise private companies, with a strong focus on the public procurement market, especially in the fields of defence and security, pharma products, public transport and construction. This extends to public entities, including ministries, municipalities or public-owned companies facing complex procurement procedures. His high-profile clients include Max-Planck-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften eV, Goldbeck AG, Bauunternehmung Bunte SE, Auswärtiges Amt, Landeshauptstadt München, Task Force der Bundesregierung zur Impfstoffbeschaffung, as well as the ZEPAI Center for Pandemic Vaccines & Therapeutics.

Prof Dr Hertwig noted: "Our prominent proceedings also encompass the representation of Heckler & Koch in several review proceedings concerning the procurement of a new assault rifle by the German Federal Armed Forces from 2017–2023, or the representation of the bidding consortium A3 Nordbayern – Bauunternehmung Bunte & Effage in the context of a public-private partnership for the six-lane expansion of the A3 freeway over a distance of 66km, which was the largest PPP project ever awarded in Germany."

Real Estate

Contract; Commercial; Restructuring



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Sabine Usinger, Managing Partner at SammlerUsinger Rechtsanwälte Partnerschaft mbB, is a lawyer based in Berlin, specialising in real estate with a particular focus on property transactions. Ms Usinger advises institutional investors, housing companies, developers and public-sector entities. She further provides legal counsel on complex project developments, including all matters related to special-purpose properties in the logistics and infrastructure sectors. With many years' experience advising on complex, high-value real estate projects, she combines legal precision with a practical understanding of commercial realities.

Ms Usinger noted: "My services are primarily geared around real estate transactions and lease agreements – particularly for special-purpose properties – hotel lease and management contracts, agreements in facility and asset management, as well as centre management.

"What sets me apart is my combination of legal expertise in complex real estate and commercial matters with a practical, solutions-orientated approach. My in-depth knowledge of contracts allows me to support clients throughout the entire life cycle of a property – from acquisition and development to operation and restructuring."

Another key differentiator is that Ms Usinger serves as a notary in Berlin. This dual qualification enables her to offer integrated legal and notarial services, which adds efficiency, reduces transaction risks and provides clients with a one-stop solution, especially in complex real estate deals.

Clients value her comprehensive industry insight, attention to detail and the ability to bridge legal precision with commercial pragmatism. Moreover, she brings extensive experience in advising on cross-border transactions and internationally active clients, particularly in connection with investments in German commercial real estate.

She added: "I advise a broad spectrum of clients across the real estate and infrastructure sectors. These include institutional investors, housing companies, family-owned businesses, project developers, fund management companies and banks. My client portfolio also comprises public law entities, municipal companies, property developers, medium-sized enterprises and architects, as well as utility and waste management providers. This wide-ranging client base reflects the trust placed in my legal expertise – and my ability to provide targeted, practice-orientated solutions for complex legal challenges."

Antitrust

Commercial; Labour, Security, Privacy & IT Compliance; Arbitration



Silvia Piccinini

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LEGAL TWELVE Avvocati Associati is an Italian law firm renowned for its comprehensive services, with a particular specialism in competition and antitrust law. With its headquarters in Reggio Emilia, the firm provides counsel to a mixture of domestic and international clients who seek to navigate the complexities of Italian and European competition regulations.

LEGAL TWELVE's antitrust practice encompasses a broad spectrum of services designed to address the multifaceted challenges clients face in today's competitive landscape. Core services encompass:

- **Advisory Services:** Providing strategic counsel on compliance with Italian and EU competition laws, including the assessment of commercial agreements and business practices to mitigate antitrust risks.
- **Litigation & Dispute Resolution:** Representing clients in proceedings before the Italian Competition Authority (ICA), European Commission and national courts – particularly in cases involving allegations of anti-competitive conduct, abuse of dominant position and cartel investigations.
- **Merger Control:** Assisting clients in navigating the complexities of merger notifications and obtaining necessary approvals from competition authorities, ensuring transactions align with regulatory requirements.
- **Compliance Programmes:** Designing and implementing robust antitrust compliance initiatives tailored to clients' specific industries and operational structures, creating a culture of adherence to competition laws.

Silvia Piccinini

Silvia Piccinini, Partner, brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the firm's antitrust practice. A graduate of the University of Bologna with a focus on international economic studies, she further honed her expertise by obtaining a Postgraduate Diploma in Law, Economics & Politics of the European Community from the European College of Parma. Her early career included an internship at the European Commission's Internal Market Directorate, specifically within the unit dedicated to company law and procurement.

Since becoming a lawyer in 1999, Mr Piccinini has been a pivotal figure in LEGAL TWELVE's development, becoming a Partner in 2008. Her areas of specialisation extend beyond antitrust law to include national and international commercial law, labour and security law, criminal law of the economy, privacy and IT compliance, transport law, environmental law, as well as arbitration. Her multidisciplinary approach enables her to provide comprehensive legal solutions that address the interconnected nature of modern business challenges. At the same time, Ms Piccinini is actively involved in the legal community, frequently serving as a moderator and speaker at conferences, courses and seminars. Her engagements often focus on the intersection of competition law with other legal domains – reflecting her broad understanding of the legal landscape as a whole. Her contributions to professional training programmes underscore LEGAL TWELVE's commitment to thought leadership alongside continuous learning.

PAVIA e ANSALDO
STUDIO LEGALE

PeA

ITALY

US Desk Advisory

Corporate/Commercial; M&A / Private Equity; Banking & Finance



Mario J Abate

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Established in 1961 in Milan, Pavia e Ansaldo is an independent Italian law firm renowned for its multidisciplinary approach and international orientation. With more than 140 professionals, the firm operates from offices in Milan, Rome, Turin, Barcelona, Madrid, Moscow and Tokyo, offering comprehensive legal services across various sectors and jurisdictions.

The US Desk was established in 1961, when Studio Pavia e Ansaldo was founded, and offers assistance to US clients, clients from Common Law countries, as well as Italian clients operating in these regions. The desk includes professionals who are graduates and qualified to practise in the US, alongside those who are experts in the Italian legal system. It is managed by Bruno Pavia, an honorary member of the firm, and Mario J Abate. Today, the professionals of the desk primarily assist clients in the field of commercial and corporate law, as well as in the legalities of asset protection.

Mario J Abate

Mr Abate is a Partner of the firm and works primarily in the Milan office as part of the US Desk, which he has headed since 2016. He has gained extensive experience in M&A, private equity and venture capital, startups of companies in Italy and abroad – mainly in the fields of fashion and luxury, Serie A and B sports teams and other forms of commercial transactions – providing legal advice and assistance to Italian and foreign clients in international joint ventures and other transactional matters, including the establishment of foreign trusts. His area of professional practice consists of providing legal advice and assistance to US and foreign companies with incoming investments, as well as in the management of the operations of their Italian branches and subsidiaries.

He held the role of First Diplomatic Counsellor at the Embassy of the Sovereign Order of Malta in the Republic of Malta, and subsequently in the Principality of Monaco (2016–2024) – and has lectured for the Master's in Fashion Law, Faculty of Law of Luiss University, Rome, Italy (2021).

He is a member of the board of directors of prestigious entities and foundations (Fondazione Valentino Garavani e Giancarlo Giammetti, 2017–present), the American Chamber of Commerce in Italy (2025), medical research institutes (such as ABN – Associazione Bambino Nefropatico ETS) – and is consultant to academic institutions (Georgetown University, Board of Advisors, Undergraduate College Admissions AAP (2011–2017), later Emeritus Status. Moreover, he is an active member of the Committee on Negotiated Acquisitions and the Joint Venture Task Force (1995), the International Committees on Venture Capital & Private Equity, as well as on International Commercial Law of the ABA Commercial Law Section (from 1995–present).

Wealth Management Advisory



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Sarajane Kempster is Head of Fiduciary Clients for RBC Wealth Management's fiduciary business in the British Isles.

Based in Jersey, Sarajane leads a team of fiduciary specialists who have business development responsibility for the fiduciary business. She is also responsible for maintaining strong relationships with RBC's fiduciary clients and ensuring excellent client service delivery. In addition, Sarajane manages the interests of a portfolio of private clients. She specialises in establishing and managing offshore structures for high-net-worth individuals and their families, with a particular focus on those connected to the Middle East. She also has experience in addressing the wealth management and estate planning needs of clients from the UK and globally.

Born and educated in Jersey, Sarajane spent 10 years managing the offshore dealing and registration operation of a prominent fund management company. In 1997, she became a Director and member of the management team of Mourant Private Wealth, which was acquired by RBC in 2009.

Wealth Management Advisory



Gail McCourt

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Gail McCourt is Head of Private Client Fiduciary Services (PCFS) for RBC Wealth Management in the British Isles. Based in Jersey, she is responsible for the award-winning Fiduciary Management & Technical Trust team, providing solutions to help clients preserve their wealth and create a meaningful legacy. She is a member of the Wealth Management Europe Executive Committee, Chair of the PCFS Management Committee, and sits on a number of boards.

Gail joined RBC in 2003 and has held roles including Head of Marketing, Head of Client Experience and Head of Fiduciary Management. She was recognised as one of the 2023 eprivateclient 50 Most Influential. She is also an active advocate of diversity and inclusion, and in 2018, was recognised by mental health charity Mind, winning its Senior Leader Award in celebration of her commitment to driving a healthy, inclusive and respectful workplace culture.

Gail holds the Institute of Directors Diploma in Company Direction, the ICA International Diploma in Anti-Money Laundering and the Investment Management Certificate from the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment. She also holds a BA Hons and Master's in Applied Languages for Business.

Dispute Resolution

Commercial Transactions; Economic Crime; Environmental & ESG



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Established in 2022, RockBridge Legal ZAB SIA has swiftly emerged as a prominent business law firm in Latvia. Based in Riga, the firm is renowned for delivering client-centric legal services across various domains, with a particular emphasis on dispute resolution. The firm's ethos, "Client Focused – Results Driven", encapsulates its commitment to providing tailored legal solutions that align with clients' unique needs and objectives.

RockBridge Legal offers comprehensive dispute resolution services, handling complex civil litigation, white-collar and economic crime cases, shareholder disputes, as well as high-impact contractual disagreements. The firm's approach combines deep legal expertise with strategic acumen, ensuring effective representation in both national and international disputes.

Meanwhile, RockBridge Legal's philosophy centres on building long-term relationships with clients, grounded in trust, integrity and transparency. The firm emphasises understanding each client's specific goals and concerns – rendering proactive guidance and practical solutions to mitigate risks and capitalise on growth opportunities.

Dr Iur Viktorija Jarkina-Toča

Dr Iur Viktorija Jarkina-Toča, Partner, specialises in shareholder disputes, civil and commercial litigation, as well as criminal law – providing representation and defence in economic crime cases, including money laundering and environmental violations. She has further extensive experience working with franchises, where she provides full franchise-related legal assistance.

Dr Jarkina-Toča's expertise has been developed via defence and representation in the most complex criminal cases, including those related to economic crimes, money laundering and sanctions evasion. She is distinguished by her strategic approach, thorough preparation and unwavering determination to achieve the best possible results.

Dr Jarkina-Toča also represents clients in commercial disputes, including shareholder disputes, where her in-depth understanding of corporate nuances and litigation strategy helps achieve the desired outcome. Meanwhile, she represents clients in matters related to compliance issues. In this area, her detailed insight into regulatory nuances has often proved crucial.

Last, but not least, Dr Jarkina-Toča is one of the few sworn attorneys in Latvia specialising in environmental law, where she combines her legal understanding with a strong commitment to promote sustainability and ensure regulatory compliance. Her reputation as a strong litigation attorney is complemented by her ability to navigate complex situations, delivering results that exceed clients' expectations.

Full-Service Tax & Legal Representative Advisory

Restructuring; M&A; Labour



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Crowe Turcan Mikhailenko (CTM) is a full-service tax and legal advisory firm based in Moldova, operating under the Crowe Global network. Established in December 2023, CTM has rapidly positioned itself as a pivotal player in Moldova's professional services sector, offering comprehensive solutions in tax, legal, financial and business consulting. The firm is led by Managing Partner Ivan Țurcan, a legal expert and entrepreneur, in collaboration with Dmitriy Mikhailenko, Managing Partner of Crowe Mikhailenko in Ukraine. As a member of Crowe Global, the world's eighth-largest consulting network with a presence in more than 150 countries and an annual revenue exceeding $5.3 billion, CTM leverages international best practices while maintaining a deep understanding of the local Moldovan market.

CTM offers a wide array of services designed to meet the diverse needs of its clientele, including, but not limited to:

- **Legal Consulting:** Assistance with company registration, restructuring, liquidation, legal outsourcing, due diligence, IT park and free economic zone advisory, citizenship by investment, foreign citizen legalisation, M&A support, antimonopoly transaction verification, partnership agreements, financing sources, licensing, FEA consulting, data protection regulations, IP rights, FIDIC agreements, cryptocurrency regulations, sanctions, international payments, contract drafting, real estate transactions, dispute resolution, mediation, arbitration, labour law and environmental law.
- **Financial Consulting:** Services include financial and cost control, project support, management reporting development, management accounting, consolidation of reports from differing legal entities, as well as bookkeeping setup for market entrants.
- **Tax Consulting:** CTM provides tax planning, assessment of client tax policies, reimbursement and refund of tax payments, expert examination of tax documents, interaction with controlling bodies and representation in tax and other public bodies.

CTM's client base includes international and transnational companies familiar with the Crowe brand, as well as local businesses seeking high-quality consulting services. Embracing technological advancements, CTM is actively involved in Crowe Global's initiatives to develop AI-driven tools aimed at streamlining business processes. These tools are designed to save entrepreneurs time by simplifying such tasks as hiring freelancers, renting vehicles or premises, as well as accessing legal documents in multiple languages, including Romanian, Russian, English and Ukrainian.

Ivan Țurcan

Ivan Țurcan, Managing Partner, brings a wealth of experience from his previous role at TBS Consulting. His strategic vision led to the establishment of CTM in partnership with Dmitriy Mikhailenko, thereby integrating Moldovan operations with the extensive expertise of Crowe Mikhailenko in Ukraine. This collaboration has facilitated the transfer of knowledge and best practices – enhancing CTM's service offerings and market reach.

Banking & Financial Regulation

Corporate/Commercial, M&A; Regulatory Compliance, Licensing & Authorisation; Securities & Investment Law



Donald Manasse

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Established in 1989, Donald Manasse Law Offices has become a distinguished legal firm in Monaco, renowned for its expertise in banking and financial regulation. With more than three decades' experience, the firm offers comprehensive legal services to a diverse clientele, including multinational corporations, financial institutions and high-net-worth individuals. Its commitment to excellence and personalised service has solidified its reputation as a trusted adviser in the complex landscape of financial law.

Donald Manasse, Founding Partner, brings a wealth of experience and a unique international perspective to the practice. Qualified to practise in both France and the US, Mr Manasse has advised clients on a wide range of legal matters for more than 35 years. His expertise encompasses international litigation, asset recovery, banking and financial regulation and private wealth management. As the sole Monaco member of the International Chamber of Commerce's FraudNet, Mr Manasse is recognised globally for his proficiency in combating financial fraud and corruption.

Today, Donald Manasse Law Offices offers specialised legal services in banking and financial regulation – addressing the intricate needs of clients operating within Monaco's sophisticated financial sector. Such services include:

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Advising banks, asset managers and financial service providers on compliance with Monaco's financial regulations and international standards.
- **Licensing & Authorisation:** Assisting clients in obtaining necessary licences and authorisations to operate within Monaco's financial industry.
- **Securities & Investment Law:** Providing counsel on matters related to securities offerings, investment funds and related regulatory issues.
- **Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Counter-Terrorism Financing (CTF):** Guiding institutions in implementing effective AML and CTF measures in line with global best practices.

The firm's deep understanding of the regulatory environment enables clients to navigate the complexities of financial law with confidence and precision.

Beyond regulatory matters, Donald Manasse Law Offices is acclaimed for its prowess in international litigation and asset recovery. The firm has successfully executed high-profile, large-scale asset-tracing and recovery programmes for victims of civil fraud, as well as court-appointed bankruptcy and insolvency officers. Its membership in FraudNet underscores its dedication to combating financial crime on a global scale.

Donald Manasse Law Offices has further received accolades from leading legal directories for its exceptional service and expertise. The firm is ranked Band 1 by Chambers and Partners in the areas of Corporate/Commercial and Dispute Resolution. In addition, The Legal 500 EMEA recognises the firm as a Top Tier (Band 1) practice for Commercial, Corporate and M&A.

Litigation

Dispute Resolution; Bankruptcy & Fraud; Asset Recovery



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Established in 1989, Donald Manasse Law Offices has become a prominent legal institution in Monaco, renowned for its proficiency in litigation and dispute resolution. With more than three decades' experience, the firm has adeptly handled complex legal challenges for a diverse clientele, including multinational corporations, financial institutions and high-net-worth individuals. Its strategic location in Monaco, coupled with an associated office in Nice, France, enables the firm to offer comprehensive legal services across multiple jurisdictions.

The firm is led by its Founder and Principal, Donald Manasse, a distinguished attorney admitted to practise in France, Monaco and the US. His extensive legal acumen encompasses international litigation, asset recovery and private wealth management. Mr Manasse's commitment to delivering personalised legal solutions has been instrumental in establishing the firm's reputation for excellence in handling intricate legal matters.

Donald Manasse Law Offices boasts a robust litigation and dispute resolution practice, adept at managing multi-jurisdictional commercial and civil litigation. The firm's expertise spans various legal areas, including:

- **Matrimonial Law:** Handling complex cross-border matrimonial disputes with sensitivity and discretion.
- **IP:** Protecting clients' rights in trademark and copyright infringement cases.
- **Real Estate:** Resolving disputes related to construction and property transactions.
- **Employment Law:** Advising on employment disputes and regulatory compliance.
- **Taxation:** Navigating contentious tax matters and disputes.

The firm's litigation team is recognised for its strategic approach and ability to effectively represent clients in complex legal proceedings.

Meanwhile, a cornerstone of the firm's practice is its proficiency in international bankruptcy, corruption, fraud and asset recovery. To this end, Donald Manasse Law Offices is the sole Monaco member of TRACE and the International Chamber of Commerce's FraudNet, reflecting its dedication to combating financial misconduct. The firm has successfully executed high-profile, large-scale international asset-tracing and recovery programmes for civil fraud victims, as well as court-appointed bankruptcy and insolvency officers.

In addition, given that membership in the Monaco Bar is reserved for Monégasque nationals, Donald Manasse Law Offices collaborates with local "avocats défenseurs" to represent clients before the courts of Monaco. This collaborative approach ensures that clients receive comprehensive leading representation, combining the firm's international expertise with local legal insights.

The firm's growth is attributed to its highly personalised, long-term client relationships and dedication to fully meeting clients' needs. By understanding the unique challenges faced by each client, Donald Manasse Law Offices consistently delivers tailored solutions that align with clients' objectives.

Commercial Litigation

Dispute Resolution; Contract; Corporate Governance



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Attorney Consulting Group International (ACG International) is a distinguished full-service law firm headquartered in Amsterdam. Renowned for its expertise in international trade and innovation, ACG International offers comprehensive legal services to businesses operating across borders. The firm is particularly noted for its proficiency in commercial litigation, providing clients with strategic legal solutions tailored to the complexities of global commerce.

ACG International operates on the principle of delivering sharp, practical legal support, enabling clients to conduct business confidently and securely. The firm's philosophy emphasises quick, efficient and proactive legal advice, grounded in deep local knowledge and extensive international networks. This approach ensures that clients receive cost-aware solutions that effectively mitigate risks and navigate legal challenges in both domestic and international contexts.

ACG International's commercial litigation practice is a cornerstone of its legal services, addressing a wide array of disputes that arise in the business world. The firm's litigation team possesses extensive experience in handling complex legal proceedings, including general court procedures and specialised cases before the Enterprise Chamber. Their expertise encompasses various aspects of commercial disputes, such as breach of contract, shareholder disagreements and corporate governance issues.

A distinctive feature of ACG International's litigation practice is its commitment to pragmatic and effective strategies that prioritise the protection of clients' businesses and reputations. The firm advocates for ADR methods, including mediation and arbitration, to achieve amicable settlements and avoid protracted litigation. This client-centric approach underscores the firm's dedication to resolving conflicts efficiently and preserving business relationships.

ACG International's global perspective is complemented by its deep understanding of the Dutch legal landscape. The firm's attorneys are adept at navigating the intricacies of local laws while leveraging international insights to provide clients with well-rounded legal solutions. This dual focus enables ACG International to assist clients in entering and expanding within the European market – ensuring compliance with regional regulations and optimising business strategies.

Edith Nordmann

Leading ACG International's litigation practice is Managing Partner Edith Nordmann, a seasoned attorney with more than two decades' experience in the legal field. Her leadership has been instrumental in shaping the firm's reputation for excellence in commercial litigation. Edith's multifaceted role as a litigator, mediator and arbitrator provides her with a comprehensive perspective on dispute resolution, enabling her to devise strategies that align with clients' objectives and the nuances of each case.

Edith's contributions to the legal profession have been recognised internationally. In December 2022, she received the "Outstanding Leadership Award" at the Law 2.0 conference in Dubai. This accolade reflects her commitment to legal excellence and her ability to inspire and mentor the next generation of legal professionals.

Contract

Litigation; Real Estate



Aroon Gonesh

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Aroon Gonesh has practised as a lawyer in the Netherlands since 2004, and is the founder of Gonesh Advocatuur in The Hague. With more than 20 years' experience of Dutch law, he specialises in business law, litigation and contract law. He takes a pragmatic approach, focusing on results and avoiding unnecessary frills.

- Drafting, reviewing and negotiating various contracts, such as:
  - Construction agreements
  - Agency and distribution contracts
  - Employment contracts
  - IT and licensing agreements
  - Franchise and joint venture agreements
  - Share purchase agreements
  - Service-level agreements
  - Confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements
  - Loan and lease agreements
  - General terms and conditions
- Enforcing contractual obligations and handling disputes through litigation or ADR;
- Advising on contract termination, rescission or nullification, ensuring clients' interests are protected.

Clients work solely with Mr Gonesh; there are no referrals to trainees or assistants. This personal approach and direct lines of communication are hallmarks of his legal style. His clients, who are typically entrepreneurs, real estate stakeholders and individuals facing serious disputes, value his direct communication and determination.

He combines in-depth legal expertise with strategic thinking. He does not treat legal knowledge as an end in itself, but as a tool to serve his clients' best interests effectively. Clear agreements on fees are made in advance, with fixed fees available for common legal services. He only takes on cases he believes in.

One notable recent case involved a real estate dispute in which he successfully defended a client against the unjustified termination of a purchase agreement. His strategic litigation and use of evidentiary rules resulted in the opposing party's claim being fully rejected.

Mr Gonesh graduated from Leiden University and followed the specialist postgraduate course in Real Estate Law at the Grotius Academy. He is a member of the Netherlands Bar Association, and his legal publications focus on current issues in Dutch business and contract law, as well as real estate law.

His philosophy is that litigation is a means to solve problems, not a goal in itself. If necessary, he will push boundaries. This is why clients rely on Gonesh Advocatuur for robust and effective legal representation.

Employment

Corporate; Contract; M&A



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ACG International is a full-service law firm based in Amsterdam, renowned for its comprehensive legal services tailored to companies engaged in international trade and innovation. With a global reach and a commitment to personal client relationships, the firm offers expertise across various legal domains, including employment law, corporate law, business structuring and international private law. ACG International's employment law practice is distinguished by its integration of Dutch legal expertise with international experience. The firm provides a broad spectrum of services, including:

- **Contract Drafting:** Crafting employment contracts with tailored non-competition and non-solicitation clauses to protect business interests.
- **M&A:** Navigating the complexities of employment law during corporate restructurings and acquisitions.
- **Occupational Disability & Reintegration:** Supporting both employers and employees in cases of labour conflicts and reintegration processes.
- **Dismissal & Compensation:** Managing dismissal cases and negotiating transitional compensation.
- **International Labour Law:** Assisting with secondment arrangements and advising on cross-border employment issues.

The firm's approach is proactive, cost-conscious and grounded in deep-rooted local insights, ensuring clients receive practical and strategic advice.

Edith Nordmann

Edith Nordmann, Managing Partner, is an accomplished attorney with an expert qualification in employment law. Her extensive experience encompasses corporate and commercial litigation, cross-border business transactions, as well as ADR as an internationally certified mediator.

Edith's multilingual capabilities – fluent in German (native), English, Dutch, French and Italian – enable her to navigate the nuances of differing legal systems and cultures effectively. Her leadership extends beyond the firm, serving as Chairperson for the Netherlands India Chamber of Commerce & Trade (NICCT), as well as being appointed as a member of the Task Force Future of Work, Skilling & Mobility under the Business 20 (B20) of the G20.

Edith contributes to the legal community through various publications and speaking engagements. Notably, she has authored chapters on Dutch employment and labour law for the International Comparative Legal Guide and The Legal 500 Country Comparative Guide, providing valuable insights for both employers and employees. Her analysis of key developments in Dutch employment law for 2025, published in Chambers Expert Focus, highlights legislative changes affecting employment relationships and labour market dynamics.

Edith's expertise is recognised globally; she has spoken at international conferences, such as the World Economic Forum and the B20/G20 summits. Meanwhile, her commitment to social responsibility is evident through her involvement in charitable and social organisations, where she leverages her professional expertise to empower others.

Tax

Real Estate & Investment Vehicles; International Trade & Financing; Corporate & Governance



Dr Andre Batoca

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RSA LP (Raposo Subtil e Associados) is a multidisciplinary law firm headquartered in Lisbon, Portugal. Established in 1997, the firm has evolved into a global legal powerhouse, renowned for its in-depth legal services and strategic presence across Portuguese-speaking countries. With a commitment to excellence, RSA LP offers a wide array of legal solutions, including a leading tax practice.

RSA LP's tax practice is a cornerstone of its offering, providing clients with strategic tax planning, compliance and litigation services. The firm's tax experts assist clients in navigating the complexities of national and international tax regulations, ensuring optimal tax efficiency and compliance. Meanwhile, RSA LP's involvement in structuring real estate investment trusts and venture capital funds highlights its proficiency in creating tax-efficient investment vehicles.

Dr Andre Batoca

- IV Intensive course on crypto assets: taxation, accounting and market regulation by the Faculty of Law of the University of Lisbon – 2023
- "Crime & Taxes" Course by the Faculty of Law of the Catholic University – 2022
- Course "Legal Regime of Public Real Estate" by the Faculty of Law of the University of Coimbra – 2021
- Postgraduate in Tax Law from the Faculty of Law of the University of Lisbon (Institute of Economic, Financial & Tax Law) – 2019/2020
- Intensive IRC Course at the Faculty of Law of the University of Lisbon – 2018
- Master's Degree in Corporate Law from the Faculty of Law of the University of Coimbra – 2009
- Postgraduate in Public Employment Law from the Faculty of Law of the University of Coimbra (Center for Studies in Public Regulation & Competition – CEDIPRE) – 2008
- Bachelor of Laws from the Faculty of Law, University of Coimbra – 2006
- Lecturer in the Postgraduate Tax Law programme at the Autonomous University of Lisbon (Institute of Economic, Financial & Tax Law)
- Lecturer and trainer (areas of Tax Law, Litigation, Administrative Procedure & Public Procurement)
- Member of SEDES – Association for Economic & Social Development, part of the Leiria District branch – since 2020
- Intensive Corporate Income Tax Course at the Faculty of Law of the University of Lisbon (Institute of Economic, Financial & Tax Law) – 2018
- Specialization Course on the Municipal Business Sector by the Faculty of Law of the University of Coimbra (Center for Studies in Public Regulation & Competition – CEDIPRE) – 2009
- Professional trainer certified by the Institute of Employment & Professional Training

Antitrust

Compliance; Public Procurement; Contract



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Patrick L Krauskopf is the Chairman of AGON Partners Group and is admitted to practise before all Swiss and New York courts. He holds a PhD in Law from the University of Fribourg, and an LLM from Harvard Law School.

Today, Mr Krauskopf advises clients in Switzerland, the EU, the US and other jurisdictions in competition and antitrust law, as well as policy matters. He regularly advises both local and foreign governments, and is a professor at Switzerland's Eastern University OST, a member of the Swiss Federal Communication Commission and a former Vice Director of the Swiss Competition Commission. His academic experience extends to 100+ publications, including two books, and he has chaired 200+ conferences – as well as being a member of the drafting committee for the Swiss Cartel Act and a drafter of Swiss ordinance on sanctions and leniency. He has been dubbed the "Pope of Litigation PR" by Swiss media.

Mr Krauskopf noted: "AGON offers comprehensive competition law services – from preventative antitrust compliance and merger control to defence in cartel investigations and litigation – along with counsel in related areas, such as public procurement. We provide 360-degree support by integrating legal expertise with strategic communications and innovative technology, including our proprietary Digital Cartel Detection tool, to protect clients on all fronts. Our firm is further distinguished by uniting legal, compliance, procurement and technology experts to deliver interdisciplinary solutions across the DACH region. Our strengths include cutting-edge AI tools, developed in-house, for cartel detection and global risk tracking, coupled with a strong track record of guiding clients through complex competition matters."

AGON's typical clients comprise high-profile organisations across the private and public sectors. Specifically, the firm advises Fortune 500 multinationals, leading SMEs and government agencies or regulators, all of whom value discretion, deep expertise and innovative tools to navigate complex competition law challenges. Its extensive client roster spans household-name multinationals in such sectors as banking, pharma, consumer goods and watch manufacturers.

Mr Krauskopf added: "The surge of digital evidence and increasingly sophisticated cartel behaviour has been a recent challenge, which we addressed by developing our proprietary AI tool to sift through massive data sets and flag potential collusion signals those human reviewers might miss. By combining this technological edge with our legal expertise, we turned a daunting e-discovery exercise into a strategic advantage in a major case. We also led a landmark appeal to the Swiss Federal Supreme Court, challenging whether a short-lived, unimplemented cartel could be considered an offence under competition law."

Blockchain & Cryptocurrency

Financial Market; Corporate; Compliance



Sebastian Hepp

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Sebastian Hepp, Attorney-at-Law at Zürcher Rechtsanwälte AG, advises and supports startups and established companies in implementing their innovative business models in the blockchain, technology and financial sector. He guides his clients from the initial conceptualisation and structuring through to their operational business, with a focus on the realisation of their vision and regulatory compliance.

Legal Expertise for Blockchain Startups & Companies

Sebastian has gained several years' experience at leading Swiss business law firms, with a primary focus on blockchain/DLT and financial market regulation. He has advised numerous global blockchain projects on establishing their businesses and launching their crypto ventures in Switzerland. Clients value Sebastian for his ability to bridge legal, technical and strategic perspectives – a key strength when navigating the complexities of blockchain-based innovation. He is dedicated to enabling innovation through law, supporting clients in transforming disruptive ideas into compliant and scalable businesses for the Web3 era.

Legal Services for Blockchain Startups & Companies

Sebastian's legal practice focuses on the structuring and regulatory assessment of blockchain-based business models. His areas of expertise include:

- Legal classification of tokens;
- Structuring and documentation of token offerings (TGE, ICO, STO), including drafting of relevant agreements (SAFT, Early Contribution Agreements, Token Purchase Agreements, etc);
- Regulatory assessment and structuring of decentralised applications (dApps), DeFi platforms and other blockchain projects;
- Legal structuring of DAOs and incorporation of legal entities to protect token holders;
- Tokenisation of Real-World Assets (e.g. tokenised shares, real estate and other assets);
- Compliance with AML and KYC obligations in blockchain-related business models.

Sebastian is admitted as both an attorney and notary public in the Canton of Zug – Switzerland's renowned "Crypto Valley". His legal expertise is particularly valued in interdisciplinary settings, where legal innovation must keep pace with technological progress – from structuring tokenised issuances to developing regulatory-compliant DeFi infrastructures.

Switzerland as the World's Leading Blockchain Hub

Switzerland, with its clear and robust regulation in the DLT/FinTech sector, continues to be an attractive hub for innovative startups and companies worldwide. The Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority (FINMA) established a solid legal framework for token issuance through its ICO guidelines in 2018, positioning Switzerland as a leading jurisdiction for DLT/FinTech projects to this day. Sebastian is also highly experienced in PoW or PoS consensus mechanisms, which support Layer 1 blockchain projects – many of which came to Switzerland seeking structures similar to the Ethereum Foundation, which is also based in Zug.

Impact Valuation Advisory

ESG



James Spurgeon

Founder & Director
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Founded in 2011 by James Spurgeon, Sustain Value is a UK-based sustainability consultancy dedicated to helping businesses, investors and governments understand, value, manage and report on their environmental and social impacts and dependencies. Operating globally, the firm employs a network-based model, drawing on a pool of independent experts to deliver bespoke solutions tailored to each client's needs.

James has 30 years' experience as a consultant, quantifying and valuing environmental and social impacts globally. He advises businesses and investors to better understand and assess their impacts, dependencies, risks and opportunities on natural capital and multi-capitals to improve decision-making and reporting. He is a recognised global authority on natural capital assessments, impact valuation and the blue economy.

Core Areas of Expertise

Nature & Natural Capital (i.e. Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services): Including TNFD LEAP and EU-CSRD impact, dependency, risk and opportunity assessments, valuation, natural capital assessments and accounts, offsetting, nature and water positive, as well as nature strategies.

Impact Valuation & Net Positive: Covering multi-capital assessments (including natural, social, human and produced capitals), impact accounting, cost-benefit analysis and SROI, impact investing, decision-making tools and impact reporting.

The Blue Economy: Valuing marine, coastal and freshwater resources, developing marine natural capital accounts, coral reef, mangrove and seagrass valuation, nature-positive investment opportunities and appraisals, as well as sustainable financing.

At the core of Sustain Value's offering is the firm's Impact Valuation Advisory service, led by James. He has conducted hundreds of studies related to environmental and social impact valuation throughout the world. Clients have included such financial institutions as HSBC, ADB, World Bank, EIB and IFU; family offices; multinational companies, including Antofagasta, ArcelorMittal, Coca-Cola, Rio Tinto, Shell, Roche, International Paper and WPP; as well as various governments and law and insurance firms.

James currently sits on the Capitals Coalition Advisory Panel and the UK Business & Biodiversity Forum TNFD Working Group. He was the lead Technical Advisor for the Coalition's "Value Accounting Network" and was a member of the Prince of Wales' A4S "Integrated Value" working group.

Notably, James was the lead technical adviser for the Capitals Protocol and a lead author of the Natural Capital Protocol. He was also a contributing author to the Natural Capital Protocol's Finance Sector Supplement and the lead author of the Capital Coalition's Principles for Integrated Capitals Assessments. He has further authored numerous business guides on natural and social capital accounting, and was technical reviewer for ISO standards on Monetising Environmental Impacts.

In addition, Sustain Value is recognised for its thought leadership in the sustainability field, having co-organised the Net Impact Approaches conference from 2017–2022 to help organisations with impact valuation and target setting for net-zero, nature-positive and equitable outcomes.

PROFESSOR ROBERT JOHN D GEORGE

UK

Palliative Medicine Expert Witness

Mediation



Robert John D George MA MD FRCP FRCGP (Hon) FRCPathME (GMC 2388232)

Medico-Legal Expert
Consultant Physician in Palliative Care at Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust;
Professor of Palliative Care at King's College London
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Professor Robert John D George is a Consultant Physician in Palliative Care at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, as well as a Professor of Palliative Care at King's College London. He was President of the Association for Palliative Medicine of Great Britain & Ireland in the period spanning 2015–2017, and advises government on ethical and practical aspects of end-of-life care.

Today, Professor George acts as an independent medico-legal expert witness and mediator, which includes the preparation of medico-legal reports, as well as appearing in court for cases involving palliative medicine, end-of-life care and pain and symptom management. Such cases range from those involving medical practitioners over matters of competence, to governments in challenges to legislation.

His academic interest lies in understanding the nature of suffering across differing cultures – and the complexities that this introduces to care and service delivery. During the course of his career, he has contributed to more than 140 publications, covering such topics as medical ethics, law, care modelling and clinical medicine.

Following accreditation in Respiratory & General Medicine (and a doctorate on breathlessness), Professor George pioneered HIV and non-cancer palliative care from 1987, and has since worked widely across clinical palliative care settings, such as hospitals and voluntary hospices.

He is an elected Councillor for the Royal College of Physicians, London, and has sat on RCP working parties reporting on aspects of palliative care, prolonged disorders of consciousness, as well as their committee on ethical issues in medicine.

Moreover, he is a regular contributor to the British media on medical ethics, and was an independent clinical expert to the Liverpool Care Pathway Review led by Lady Neuberger in 2012.

He considers himself a clinical academic rather than an experimental researcher, and holds a particular interest in the philosophy and ethics surrounding care. Before gaining his personal chair at the Cicely Saunders Institute at King's College London, he was an Honorary Senior Lecturer in Bioethics at University College London.

Sports

Disputes; Finance; Contract & Regulatory

Liz Soutter

Partner, Specialist in Sports Finance & Contracts
ESL Sports Law

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Founded in 2015 by Nilo Effori, ESL Sports Law (formerly Effori Sports Law) has established itself as a leading boutique law firm specialising exclusively in the sports industry. With a global clientele that includes international sporting clubs, athletes, agents, intermediaries, governing bodies, investors and financiers, ESL Sports Law offers comprehensive legal services in disputes and finance, as well as contractual and regulatory matters.

The firm operates with a partner-led approach, ensuring that clients consistently receive personalised and expert legal counsel. Its commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes is evident in its track record of successful representations before major sports arbitration bodies, including the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) and the Basketball Arbitral Tribunal (BAT).

Headquartered in London, ESL Sports Law maintains a global presence through a network of trusted partners. This international reach enables the firm to effectively serve clients across various jurisdictions, providing tailored legal solutions that consider the unique regulatory landscapes of differing countries. Today, the firm's practice areas encompass:

- **Sports Disputes:** Representing clients in arbitration and litigation before such bodies as CAS and BAT.
- **Sports Finance:** Advising on funding strategies, including short-term liquidity solutions and long-term capital raising, with expertise in transactions involving broadcasting and sponsorship income, transfer fees and agent commissions.
- **Sports Contracts:** Drafting and negotiating various agreements, including player representation, employment, sponsorship and image rights contracts, while ensuring compliance with the relevant regulations.

Notable Cases & Achievements

ESL Sports Law has secured significant victories for its clients, including:

- Successfully defending Qadsia Sporting Club in a BAT arbitration case;
- Achieving a favourable outcome for Qatar Sports Club in a CAS dispute;
- Representing Gilberto Fortunato in a CAS case, resulting in the upholding of a FIFA DRC ruling.

Liz Soutter

Liz Soutter, a solicitor qualified in England and Wales, joined ESL Sports Law in 2018 after serving as a Partner at Dentons and Mayer Brown in London. With extensive experience in contract negotiation, Ms Soutter specialises in financing against intangible revenue streams. She advises international sporting clubs, professionals, investors and financiers on transactions involving broadcasting and sponsorship income, transfer fees and agent commissions. She is further proficient in English, Portuguese and Spanish – enabling her to effectively communicate with a diverse client roster.

Tax



Rebecca Murray

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Rebecca Murray has a tax litigation and advisory practice, specialising in private client, corporate tax, VAT, SDLT and judicial review, advising and representing all sizes of corporates and individuals, as well as acting for HMRC on the full range of direct and indirect tax issues.

Reported cases include: Moran v HMRC [2025] UKFTT 540; Beresford v HMRC [2024] UKFTT 952 (business property relief on office rental); Brindleyplace v HMRC [2024] UKFTT 808 (SDLT on acquisition of a property complex using a JPUT); AD Bly v HMRC [2024] UKUT 104 (whether a provision in the accounts was wholly and exclusively for the purposes of the trade); Benoit D'Angelin v HMRC [2024] UKFTT 462 (business investment relief for remittances); Bell & Ors v Revenue & Customs [2023] UKFTT 989 (for HMRC, tax relief claimed for shares gifted to charity); Mypay [2023] (umbrella company, temporary workplace travel expenses); NWM [2023] (travel and subsistence); Nourish [2023] EWHC (interim relief by way of restoration of VAT registration); AML Tax (UK) Limited (DOTAS) [2022]; A D BLY [2021] (expense in accounts not wholly and exclusively for the purposes of the trade); Ball Europe [2021] (discovery assessments); Smartpay (DOTAS) [2022] UKFTT; White-Collar Financial [2020] UKFTT (DOTAS); Wilson (UT, question whether a member of an LLP was an employee); Sippchoice [2020] UKUT (payment of shares in discharge of a debt obligation a "contribution paid" to a SIPP); Sippchoice [2017] UKUT 87 (whether pension provider acted reasonably); as well as Atholl House [2019] UKFTT (IR35, whether Kaye Adams was, hypothetically, employed by the BBC).

Ms Murray brings broad in-depth experience of all areas of tax to her advisory practice. She recently acted as sole tax counsel in several UHNW planning and divorce matters, including navigating the "new arrivers, and Long-Term Residents" regime, restructuring, acting as parties' joint expert to the family court, advising on maximising available reliefs and avoiding traps in the course of the separation of UK and overseas assets, main residences and investments, as well as interests in differing types of trusts (EBTs, disabled persons trusts and PFSI structures, including advice on transfers of assets abroad). She also recently advised on the sale and restructure of large businesses and corporate structures, including for private reasons (such as IHT and CGT relief maximisation) and restructuring for IPO purposes – particularly on transactions in securities and employment-related securities and Part 7A. She is well versed in private equity structures and has further experience in offshore discovery matters, as well as HMRC investigations.

Ms Murray also has a varied indirect tax practice, has advised on a range of VAT issues – and has appeared in a number of reported cases.

THE AMERICAS

As 2026 enters its final quarter, the economic picture across the Americas is being shaped by competing forces: resilient domestic demand, rapid investment in technology and AI, persistent trade uncertainty and a renewed energy shock. The United States remains one of the stronger-performing advanced economies, while Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) continue to expand at a more moderate pace, with substantial differences between countries. Recent projections from the IMF, World Bank and European Commission point to an uneven outlook, with external shocks and structural constraints remaining important determinants of the region's performance over the coming years.

US: Resilience Meets a New Set of Risks

The US economy continues to expand, although at a more measured pace than during the strongest phases of the recent cycle. The IMF's July 2026 World Economic Outlook projects US GDP growth of 2.3% in 2026 and 2.2% in 2027. The outlook is being supported by continued investment and strong activity in technology-related sectors, including the accelerating deployment of artificial intelligence. At the same time, inflationary pressures have become more complicated as higher energy prices and trade-related costs feed into the wider economy.

The policy environment remains an important source of uncertainty. Changes in tariffs and trade relationships are affecting business decisions and supply chains, while the renewed energy shock has complicated the disinflation process. The IMF expects global headline inflation to rise to 4.7% in 2026 before easing in 2027, underscoring the difficulty of balancing growth with price stability.

Latin America & the Caribbean: Moderate Growth, Uneven Prospects

LAC has entered 2026 on relatively solid foundations, but growth remains modest by emerging-market standards. The IMF projects regional growth of 2.4% in 2026, rising to 2.7% in 2027, while the World Bank forecasts 2.2% and 2.5%, respectively. The difference reflects the uncertainty surrounding commodity prices, external demand, financing conditions and the effects of the global energy shock.

Country-level performance is increasingly divergent:

- **Brazil:** The IMF expects growth of 2.4% in 2026, supported by a strong harvest, private consumption, fiscal support and favourable terms of trade associated with higher energy prices.
- **Mexico:** Growth is projected at 1.2% in 2026, with the IMF citing weaker-than-expected activity and uncertainty surrounding the USMCA review as important constraints.
- **Argentina:** Following a sharp rebound in 2025, the IMF projects growth of around 3.5% in 2026, supported by private investment, exports and continued economic reforms.

The broader structural challenges remain familiar. Productivity, infrastructure, education, access to finance and institutional capacity continue to determine how effectively economies can translate their natural-resource advantages and growing digital capabilities into sustained improvements in living standards. The region is also particularly exposed to external shocks: energy and food prices, global financial conditions, trade disruptions and climate-related events can affect countries in very different ways.

Opportunities: AI, Green Investment & Regional Supply Chains

The region nevertheless has significant avenues for expansion. The restructuring of global supply chains continues to create opportunities for countries able to attract manufacturing, logistics and technology investment. Mexico remains deeply integrated with the US market, while other economies are seeking to build positions in regional and global value chains.

The energy transition is another major opportunity. LAC's combination of renewable electricity, critical minerals, agricultural resources and expanding clean-energy investment gives the region an important role in the global shift towards lower-carbon production. At the same time, higher energy prices in 2026 have highlighted the value of domestic and diversified energy supplies. Brazil, in particular, is relatively cushioned by its position as a net oil exporter and its large share of renewable electricity generation.

Digital transformation is moving further up the agenda. AI adoption offers opportunities to raise productivity and extend access to expertise, but benefits will depend on digital infrastructure, skills, data capacity and appropriate regulatory frameworks. The World Bank has launched a regional LAC AI Accelerator to support practical AI applications across the region, while its 2026 World Development Report emphasises the importance of adapting AI to local languages, institutions and development needs.

Europe's Engagement with the Americas

Europe's economic engagement with the Americas is also becoming more focused on digital infrastructure, energy, investment and resilient supply chains. The EU-LAC Global Gateway Investment Agenda continues to prioritise green transition, digital transformation, human development and health resilience, creating opportunities for greater European investment across the region.

Digital connectivity is a particularly visible area of cooperation. The BELLA II programme is expanding the high-speed research and education network linking Europe with Latin America and the Caribbean, with planned connectivity extending to countries including Peru, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras and potentially further into the Caribbean. Such infrastructure can support research, education, business services and data-intensive innovation.

Europe is simultaneously dealing with a weaker domestic growth environment. The European Commission's Spring 2026 forecast puts euro-area GDP growth at just 0.9% for 2026, rising to 1.2% in 2027. The energy shock has pushed inflation higher and weakened the near-term outlook, while competitiveness and investment remain central concerns for the European economy.

Outlook: Building Resilience in a More Fragmented Economy

The Americas enter the remainder of 2026 with considerable economic potential but a more complicated external environment. The US continues to record solid growth, although trade policy, inflation and energy costs create important uncertainties. LAC is expanding at a steadier but slower pace, with significant variation between economies and continued pressure to address long-standing productivity and infrastructure gaps.

At the same time, AI investment, renewable energy, critical minerals, digital connectivity and the reorganisation of global supply chains are creating new opportunities. European engagement can reinforce these trends through investment, infrastructure and technology partnerships. The challenge for policymakers and businesses will be to convert these opportunities into durable productivity gains while strengthening resilience against energy, trade and geopolitical shocks.



Corporate Services Advisory

Tax & Legal; Entity Formation, Structuring & Restructuring; ESG



Ronaele Dathorne-Bayrd

East Caribbean ESG Leader
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PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) East Caribbean stands as a leading professional services firm in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, delivering a comprehensive suite of services, including Assurance, Tax, Advisory & Corporate. With a legacy spanning more than 150 years, PwC East Caribbean has solidified its position as the largest professional services firm in Barbados and St Lucia, with 13 partners and employing approximately 290 staff. As part of the expansive PwC global network – comprising more than 370,000 professionals across 149 countries – the firm leverages global insight to address local challenges, ensuring trust while delivering sustained outcomes for clients and stakeholders.

The Tax & Legal practice at PwC East Caribbean plays a pivotal role in guiding both local and international clients through the intricacies of corporate structuring and compliance. This extends to: advising on the establishment of various corporate entities, such as foreign currency permit holders and exempt insurance companies; acting as company secretary or registered agent, providing registered office services and maintaining statutory records; attending to amalgamations, share restructuring and re-domiciling of entities; as well as guiding boards on corporate governance best practice and procedure, supporting board and shareholder meetings to ensure management and control while ensuring adherence to anti-money laundering (AML) and other compliance regulations.

Demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainable development, PwC East Caribbean became the first Barbadian-based professional services firm to sign the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) in 2023. This move underscores the firm's dedication to aligning its operations with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Ten Principles of the UNGC, focusing on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

Ronaele Dathorne-Bayrd

Leading the Tax & Legal (TLS) practice is Ronaele Dathorne-Bayrd. Based in Barbados, Mrs Dathorne-Bayrd brings more than 25 years' experience and expertise. An Attorney-at-Law, she is also a Fellow of the Governance Institute of Canada, and holds a Master of Laws (LLM) in Corporate & Commercial Law, with a specialisation in Corporate Governance. Beyond her leadership in TLS locally, Mrs Dathorne-Bayrd serves as the Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) Leader for the East Caribbean firm and the TLS Leader for the Caribbean Region. Her experience includes advising numerous multinational clients on the creation, restructuring and operation of Barbados corporate entities, including classes of shares and the rights attached thereto, amalgamation or merger of entities, debt and equity inter-group financing and cross-border movement. She has acted for local, regional and international clients from inception, throughout the startup period and into the life of the entity. She has a wealth of experience in structuring, incorporation, external registration, re-domiciliation and dissolution proceedings, as well as in the sale, restructuring and amalgamation of local, regional and international entities. She often advises directors and shareholders on rights, duties, obligations and corporate legislation, practice and procedure – including those regarding dividend and capital adjustment matters, board and shareholder considerations and the creation and transfer of equity interests.

Business Crime

Sugar & Alcohol; Electrical Energy; Agriculture & Livestock



Dr Osvaldo Gianotti Antoneli

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Reale Advogados Associados has emerged as a reference point in the Brazilian legal market for companies seeking highly specialised and individualised legal representation. Operating as a boutique law firm, Reale Advogados is based in São Paulo and is known for its focus on complex and high-impact cases.

The firm's business crime practice is rooted in decades of academic rigour and real-world experience, advising corporations and executives across various industries – offering both defensive representation in criminal proceedings and preventative consulting to mitigate legal risks. Its strength lies in selectivity – by taking on fewer cases, its professionals can devote more time to each one, crafting strategies that are not only legally sound but commercially sensible.

Dr Osvaldo Gianotti Antoneli

Dr Antoneli's academic foundation is among the strongest in Brazilian criminal law. He holds a law degree and postgraduate specialisations in criminal law and criminal procedure law from Mackenzie Presbyterian University. He also holds a Master's in Criminal Law from the University of São Paulo's Largo de São Francisco Law School.

In addition to his formal education, he has authored various articles on crimes against the tax system and co-authored the book "Comentários à Lei das Contravenções Penais" ("Commentary on the Law of Petty Offences"). He is a member of the AASP (São Paulo Lawyers Association).

Dr Antoneli has been consistently recognised by Brazil's leading legal publications. He was named one of the most admired criminal law attorneys by Revista Análise Advocacia every year from 2018 through 2026. He has also been recognised by Best Lawyers in 2024, 2025 and 2026 for his work in corporate criminal law/business crimes.

Dr Antoneli's client portfolio includes Tereos Sugar & Energy, BP Bioenergy and Dow Chemical Company, among other corporate clients. The nature of the firm's work often involves intricate matters of tax evasion, environmental crimes, financial fraud and corporate compliance. Reale Advogados has frequently had to pivot its legal strategy in response to Brazil's shifting governmental policies, particularly in areas where criminal enforcement priorities swing between environmental protection and financial crimes. This proactive, agile approach to legal strategy has become a hallmark of Reale Advogados' business crime practice. To this end, the firm invests heavily in staying current with legislation and judicial interpretation – thereby equipping its lawyers with the foresight to provide preventative advice that shields clients from unforeseen liabilities.

In addition to its core focus on business crime, Reale Advogados, under Dr Antoneli's guidance, has cultivated industry-specific knowledge in the areas of sugar and alcohol, electrical energy, as well as agriculture and livestock. These sectors represent some of Brazil's most vital economic pillars, and each presents unique regulatory and legal challenges.

Business Crime

Prevention; Compliance; Economic Corporate Crime



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Founded in 1934, Reale Advogados Associados blends tradition with innovation in delivering top-tier legal services regarding corporate criminal law.

Over the decades, the firm has become a reference point for entities navigating complex criminal risk environments. Its philosophy emphasises preventative legal strategies, tailored compliance programmes and robust defence. Its excellence is reflected in its diverse roster of elite clients, both national and multinational, which includes: Grupo Casino, Grupo Pão de Açúcar, Grupo Tereos, Assaí, Grupo EDP, Basf S/A, Dow Química, Banco BR Partners, BRZ Investimentos, Corteva, Plascar, Asperbrás, Grupo Sada and IPA – Indústria de Produtos Automotivos.

Dr Eduardo Reale Ferrari

Dr Eduardo Reale Ferrari, Managing Partner, brings a combination of academic distinction, institutional influence and professional recognition. Holding both Doctorate and Master's degrees in Law from the University of Coimbra (Portugal), Dr Reale is a former Professor of Criminal Law at the University of São Paulo (USP) and PUC-SP, two of Brazil's leading law faculties.

Dr Reale combines technical precision with a client-centric strategy to blend academic knowledge with practical experience and real-time adaptability – paying attention to a thorough reading of each document, with the exchange of ideas with the client and recruitment in the legal field being the differential with competitors.

His contributions to the legal field extend beyond practice and academia. He twice served on Brazil's National Council for Criminal & Penitentiary Policy and participated in drafting the new Penal Execution Law, shaping criminal justice reform in Brazil. As an author, he has penned pivotal texts, including "Prescrição da Ação Penal" and "Medidas de Segurança e Direito Penal no Estado Democrático de Direito", and has updated José Frederico Marques' classical work "Elementos de Direito Processual Penal". His scholarly contributions to legal periodicals span such critical areas as cartel conduct, environmental crimes, financial system violations and tax criminal law.

Today, Dr Reale's primary legal offering centres on business crime, with strong secondary specialisations in: tailored compliance programmes designed to meet the specific needs of clients operating in such regulated sectors as finance, energy and agriculture; proactive legal counselling to anticipate and mitigate criminal liability, reducing litigation risk through audits and internal controls; as well as complex litigation and defence strategies in such matters as insider trading, money laundering, tax fraud and environmental offences.

He was named one of Brazil's Most Admired Criminal Lawyers by Análise Advocacia for 20 consecutive years (2007–2026), having also been highlighted as a Top Corporate Criminal Law Expert by Who's Who Legal Brazil from 2016–2022.

Business Crime

Cryptocurrency & Blockchain; Agriculture & Livestock



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Reale Advogados Associados is a boutique Brazilian law firm based in São Paulo, known for its dedication to delivering high-impact legal solutions in complex and sensitive areas of law. Specialising in business crime, the firm has built a reputation for personalised client service, discreet handling of sensitive matters and profound legal scholarship.

Founded with the mission of delivering bespoke legal strategies tailored to the needs of companies and their executives, Reale Advogados takes pride in selectively managing its caseload to ensure the highest standards of representation. The firm regularly advises and defends companies and corporate executives involved in: financial fraud and market manipulation, environmental and tax-related criminal allegations, anti-corruption and compliance investigations, cybercrime and digital fraud, as well as criminal liability arising from corporate operations.

Today, Reale Advogados' client roster features high-profile corporations from the technology, financial and agricultural sectors, including: Crypto.com – a cryptocurrency platform; Corteva Agriscience – a global agricultural chemical and seed company; as well as the Bank of China – an international banking institution.

Unlike high-volume litigation firms, Reale Advogados operates under a boutique model that emphasises quality over quantity. This strategic approach enables attorneys to immerse themselves in each case, work closely with clients and deliver highly customised legal strategies. The firm avoids a one-size-fits-all methodology, instead employing a bespoke legal framework that reflects each client's operational and regulatory context.

Brazil is one of the world's agricultural powerhouses, and Reale Advogados plays an important role in safeguarding this sector's legal interests. Accordingly, the firm advises clients in the agriculture and livestock industries on criminal liability related to environmental violations, pesticide usage, rural labour practices and regulatory infractions.

Dr Marcelo Vinicius Vieira

Dr Vieira is recognised as one of Brazil's most respected white-collar criminal lawyers. He holds a Law degree and a Master's degree in Criminal Procedure Law from the University of São Paulo (Largo de São Francisco Law School), Brazil's most prestigious legal institution. He further enhanced his international legal perspective with a postgraduate degree in Economic & European Criminal Law from the University of Coimbra, Portugal.

In addition to his legal practice, Dr Vieira is active in academic circles, contributing to scholarly advancement in criminal law. He is a contributing author of the book "Altos estudos sobre a prova no processo penal" and has published numerous peer-reviewed articles on criminal justice and procedural rights.

Dr Vieira's excellence in legal advocacy has been repeatedly acknowledged: he was voted one of Brazil's Most Admired Criminal Law Attorneys by Revista Análise Advocacia in 2023–2025, having also been invited as a lecturer on topics related to criminal procedure and evidentiary standards.

Corporate

M&A; International Business Transactions; Tax



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Founded in 1962, Araújo e Policastro Advogados has established itself as one of Brazil's most respected law firms. Based in São Paulo, the firm offers a full range of legal services, with a strong emphasis on corporate law, M&A and international business transactions. Over six decades, the firm has built a reputation for delivering high-quality, personalised legal counsel, combining deep local expertise with a global perspective.

Araújo e Policastro's core practice areas include international corporate law, contracts, M&A and tax. These are complemented by specialties in insurance, banking, finance and capital markets, antitrust, competition and cartel, infrastructure, regulatory and public law, privatisations and concession of public services, energy, oil and gas, mining and natural resources, roads, ports and airports, telecoms, IP, IT and data protection, litigation and arbitration, international trade, labour, real estate, environmental, consumer protection laws, healthcare and life sciences, wealth and succession planning, family law, as well as trusts and estates.

The firm's corporate and M&A practice is particularly notable. With more than six decades' experience, Araújo e Policastro advises clients across various industries – including insurance, healthcare, agribusiness, energy, education and telecoms – on domestic and cross-border transactions, joint ventures, restructuring of family-owned businesses, as well as corporate disputes. The firm's approach is characterised by client-focused service and the use of advanced technologies to deliver efficient and assertive legal solutions.

Meanwhile, Araújo e Policastro is part of Dentons' Nextlaw Global Referral Network, enhancing its international presence. The firm offers services in Portuguese, English, Spanish and French. In response to growing interest from Chinese companies, the firm launched a Chinese-language website to facilitate communication and provide information about its services to the Chinese business community.

Camila da Mota Pacheco Alvez de Araújo

The firm's leadership includes Managing Partner Camila da Mota Pacheco Alves de Araújo. Camila Araújo is a key contact for foreign entities doing business in Brazil. She holds a Bachelor of Laws from the University of São Paulo Law School, a Master's in Comparative Jurisprudence from New York University School of Law, as well as a specialisation in Financial Market Law from IBMEC. Camila is known for her outstanding work in corporate and M&A, energy and natural resources, as well as administrative law.

Camila has been recognised for her work in corporate and M&A, energy and natural resources and administrative law by The Legal 500, Best Lawyers Brazil, LACCA, Latin Lawyer 250, Análise Advocacia 500, Análise Advocacia Mulher, Leaders League, as well as PLC Which Lawyer?

Dispute Resolution

Tax; International Arbitration; Financial & Cross-Border Transactions



Marcos Hokumura Reis

Founding Partner
Reis, Souza, Takeishi & Arsuffi Advogados

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Qualified in Law and Business Administration, Marcos Hokumura Reis has more than 25 years' practice experience in arbitration and cross-border disputes. As the Founding Partner of Reis, Souza, Takeishi & Arsuffi Advogados, he primarily acts as counsel in complex domestic and international arbitrations. He is further a member of the Arbitration Advisory Committee of the Brazilian Federal Bar Association and the Miami International Arbitration Society (MIAS) – as well as author of the books Arbitragem no Agronegócio and Gestão de Conflitos no Agronegócio. He was ranked by Análise Advocacia as a leading counsel in the agribusiness sector for the period spanning 2023–2026.

Mr Hokumura Reis commented: "Our day-to-day practice focuses on international arbitration and cross-border transactions, with specific emphasis on high-value disputes involving complex contractual and regulatory frameworks. We routinely advise clients from diverse jurisdictions on dispute resolution strategies, contract negotiation and risk allocation in international commercial operations. In arbitration, we represent parties before leading institutions, both as counsel and strategic advisers.

"I believe our work is distinguished by technical precision, strategic discipline and discretion. My dual academic background in Law and Business Administration allows me to address not only legal aspects, but also the underlying commercial rationale of each case. I remain personally involved in all mandates. As such, clients rely on our ability to anticipate litigation risks and manage cross-border dynamics with efficiency and clarity."

Reis, Souza, Takeishi & Arsuffi Advogados is notable for representing international investors, financial institutions and Brazilian corporations engaged in large-scale transactions. Most matters involve substantial financial exposure, often with multi-jurisdictional implications. Clients receive a truly results-orientated service that prioritises responsiveness and clear legal positioning.

To date, the firm has advised global commodity producers, institutional investors and listed companies in disputes involving joint ventures, M&A transactions and supply agreements. It recently acted for a Brazilian company in an arbitration seated in London under the LCIA Rules, involving a dispute with a foreign SPC over a terminated commercial alliance. The case raised issues of international contract formation, parallel proceedings in Brazil, as well as procedural coordination across jurisdictions. The outcome was that the arbitral tribunal ultimately upheld the client's key claims.

Mr Hokumura Reis added: "Another recent matter involved defending a client against tactical litigation in multiple jurisdictions designed to delay arbitration. To this end, we coordinated with foreign counsel to obtain anti-suit measures – and pursued emergency relief before the arbitral tribunal. This case was also resolved without any interruption to the client's operations."

Labour & Employment

Litigation; Dispute Resolution; Compliance & Risk Management



Ana Lúcia Pinke Ribeiro de Paiva

Partner
Araújo e Policastro Advogados

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Established in 1962 in São Paulo, Araújo e Policastro Advogados has evolved into one of Brazil's most respected full-service law firms. With a strong foundation in corporate and litigation practices, the firm has expanded its expertise to encompass various legal domains, including telecoms, energy, oil and gas, banking, finance, securities, privatisations, IP, environmental and competition law.

The firm's commitment to excellence, global perspective, innovation, customised services and ethics has solidified its reputation in both domestic and international legal communities.

Araújo e Policastro Advogados offers comprehensive legal services in labour and employment law, catering to domestic and multinational clients across various industries, including manufacturing, IT, education, logistics, retail and energy.

The firm's Labour & Employment practice encompasses:

- **Litigation & Dispute Resolution:** Representation in all stages of judicial and administrative labour claims and class actions.
- **Advisory Services:** Expertise in remuneration matters, profit-sharing plans and union negotiations.
- **Compliance & Risk Management:** Guidance on labour compliance, audits and risk assessments to ensure adherence to Brazilian labour laws.
- **Data Protection:** Advising on the intersection of labour law and data protection, ensuring compliance with the General Data Protection Law (LGPD).

Ana Lúcia Pinke Ribeiro de Paiva

The Labour & Employment practice is led by Partner Ana Lúcia Pinke Ribeiro de Paiva, a distinguished lawyer with more than two decades' experience in employment law.

Education & Qualifications

- Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from Pontifícia Universidade Católica Law School – PUC Campinas (1992).
- Postgraduate course on Law & Labour Litigation from Pontifícia Universidade Católica Law School – PUC Campinas (1994).
- Master's degree in Labour Law from Pontifícia Universidade Católica Law School – PUC São Paulo (2008).
- Business Training in Labour Arbitration from Centro de Arbitragem & Mediação AMCHAM (2019).
- Postgraduate course on General Data Protection Law (LGPD) from Universidade Cândido Mendes, in partnership with the Escola Superior de Advocacia da Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil – ESA.

Ana Lúcia has been consistently recognised for her excellence in labour law, receiving recommendations by The Legal 500 Latin America (2015–2024), as well as recognition by Latin Lawyer 250 (2015–2024). She was further featured in Best Lawyers Brazil (2022 and 2024) for litigation, was named among the most admired lawyers in Brazil by Análise Advocacia in the Labour specialty and in such sectors as Oil & Gas and Paper & Cellulose (2021–2023), was recognised by Leaders League for her work in labour litigation (2017 and 2018), as well as being acknowledged by Chambers Latin America as a leading lawyer in labour law (2010–2014).

Business Development Advisory



Donna Takacs

Partner, Marketing & Communications Specialist
BComm (Marketing, Finance), CVB™, CEPA®, EMBA (Honours)
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Donna Takacs is an accomplished business leader with extensive North American and international experience. With more than 25 years' marketing, communications and business development experience, Donna has been recognised for her achievements in strategic planning, market development, brand management and stakeholder relations in both the private and not-for-profit sectors. Donna earned her Certified Value Builder™ (CVB) designation in 2017, and her Certified Exit Planning Advisor (CEPA) designation in 2022.

Donna is a collaborative, outcomes-focused leader with a passion for consumer insights, innovative planning and problem-solving, team-building and compelling communications across all platforms to drive results. Her accomplishments include leadership direction and operational oversight of all facets of marketing, communications and business development – including brand management, digital marketing, segmentation and analytics, CRM, corporate communications, as well as media and public relations, to successfully change perceptions, build awareness and drive growth at three complex national organisations. Donna's previous positions include President at CMU College of Makeup Art & Design, Vice President Marketing at The Royal Conservatory, Vice President Marketing & New Business Initiatives at Lumira Capital, Vice President Marketing & Business Development at Frank Schaffer Publications, as well as Director of Business Development, Overseas Division of Harlequin Enterprises.

As principal of her own consulting practice, Donna has led many successful assignments for organisations in the biotech, healthcare, financial services, social services, arts and culture, education, agricultural research, digital and web-based technology markets.

Donna earned a Bachelor of Commerce (magna cum laude) with a major in marketing and a minor in finance from Concordia University – as well as her Executive MBA (honours) from Quantic School of Business & Technology.

Business Exit Planning Advisory



Stephen L Cummings

Managing General Partner
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Stephen L Cummings is a leading adviser and financial expert who has worked extensively, and is well connected, in the Canadian private equity and venture capital industry. He has international credentials, being a qualified CPA, CA in Ontario, and is an FCA in England and Wales. Stephen received his Certified Value Builder™ (CVB) and CERTIFIED EXIT PLANNING ADVISOR® (CEPA) designations in 2017 and 2021.

Prior to founding Rizolve Partners, a leading strategic business advisory firm to the SME market, Stephen was a leading executive with top-quartile private equity firm DRI Capital and a Partner with Lumira Capital, one of Canada's leading venture capital firms. Prior to applying his skills in private capital, Stephen was the CFO at Harlequin Enterprises, a global publisher, and trained and qualified as a Chartered Accountant with Deloitte in London, UK.

Stephen has also conducted numerous successful consulting assignments in his own consulting practice involving acquisitions, disposals, financings, reorganisations, turnarounds and strategic advisory to numerous CEOs in both the public and private arenas.

He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Ontario Genomics Institute, and chairs its audit committee.

He received a BSc in Economics with honours from the University of Leicester in the UK, and is a member of the Canadian Venture Capital Association, as well as Financial Executives International.

Meanwhile, in the private equity industry, Stephen has chaired a country-wide CFO task force leading this industry group through paradigm changes in International Financial Reporting Standards and private equity valuation and reporting best practices.

He is also a much sought-after speaker, and has delivered presentations in both Toronto and New York.

Sales Advisory



Bob Cariglia

Partner, Sales Expert
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As a Certified Sales Leader® (CSL), Bob Cariglia helps companies build sales systems, processes and accountability to create record-breaking growth. Bob focuses on small and mid-sized companies to develop and implement customised strategies for profitable and sustainable growth.

With more than 30 years' leadership experience, Bob has worked with large companies and entrepreneurial organisations in technology, manufacturing, financial and customer service sectors in North America and abroad. He motivates sales teams to create lasting customer relationships and further assists companies in understanding the critical role that employees, process and technology play in driving client satisfaction, success and retention.

As principal of his own sales consulting practice, Bob focused on delivering measurable results in the areas of revenue generation, margin improvement, process improvement and organisational development for his clients, including DealNet Capital Corp., Ernst & Young, Daimler Truck North America, Harper Freightliner Inc. and OneCommand.

Bob's previous positions include President & COO at Minacs Worldwide, VP Sales North America at DaimlerChrysler's Freightliner Truck Division, President at Freightliner of Canada, as well as VP Sales & Marketing at Paccar's Kenworth Truck Division.

Bob earned his MBA (Entrepreneurial Studies) and Bachelor of Commerce from Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec – also earning his Certified Exit Planning Advisor (CEPA) designation in 2022.

Corporate

M&A; Foreign Investment; Real Estate Development



Carlos Hernández-Aguiar

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Invicta Legal is an elite boutique law firm headquartered in San José. The firm is renowned for delivering high-quality legal counsel with a focus on agility, precision and personalised service. Invicta Legal was established according to four guiding principles:

- **Lean:** Streamlined operations to avoid unnecessary complexity.
- **Focused:** Concentration on areas of expertise to ensure top-tier service.
- **Elite:** A team composed of highly skilled professionals.
- **Fast:** Prompt responsiveness to client needs.

This approach allows the firm to maintain the agility of a boutique practice while offering the comprehensive services of a larger firm. Today, Invicta Legal offers a wide range of corporate law services, including corporate structuring and governance, M&A, foreign investment advisory, project finance, real estate, as well as hospitality, labour, immigration and civil law.

The firm's multidisciplinary approach ensures clients receive comprehensive legal solutions tailored to their specific needs. Meanwhile, with offices in Escazú, Tamarindo, Santa Teresa and Nosara, Invicta Legal is strategically positioned to serve clients throughout Costa Rica. This geographic reach enables the firm to provide localised expertise and support for clients' diverse legal needs.

Carlos Hernández-Aguiar

Carlos Hernández-Aguiar, Founding Partner, brings more than three decades' legal experience, having previously co-founded Facio Abogados and Pragma Legal. One of the main strengths of Mr Hernández-Aguiar's professional practice is its client support, which combines not only legal expertise but also guidance on business matters. Therefore, all clients benefit from comprehensive legal and business advisory services – both during the establishment of their ventures and throughout their ongoing operations.

Mr Hernández-Aguiar's practice focuses on advising transnational companies on establishing and operating in Costa Rica, with expertise in corporate and commercial law, M&A, foreign investment and real estate development. He has dealt with cases concerning shoreline zone development and condominiums, as well as hospitality and leisure schemes. Moreover, he counsels prominent companies in the hospitality industry on corporate and labour matters. Mr Hernández-Aguiar is also an entrepreneur, serving as co-founder and board member of financial sector companies and real estate projects across Costa Rica.

Among his outstanding portfolio of clients are hotels (such as Four Seasons Península Papagayo, Andaz Península Papagayo Resort, Planet Hollywood Costa Rica, El Mangroove Autograph Collection, Waldorf Astoria Costa Rica, W Costa Rica Reserva Conchal, The Westin Reserva Conchal, JW Marriott Guanacaste Resort & Spa, as well as Hyatt Dreams Las Mareas), real estate projects (such as Cityzen, Become Nosara and Ventanas de Playa Grande), as well as construction companies (such as EDICA). He is also the Co-Founder of IMPESA, one of the most important FinTech companies in the region. It is worth highlighting that all the above are characterised by long-standing and stable client relationships.

Litigation

Dispute Resolution; Arbitration; Administrative, Regulation & Public Procurement



César J Linares Rodríguez

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Established in 2005, LMV | Central Law is a legal and business consultancy firm based in Santo Domingo. The firm is known for its comprehensive services, particularly in litigation and dispute resolution, under the leadership of Managing Partner César J Linares Rodríguez.

LMV | Central Law operates on the principle that law is interconnected with various disciplines, including corporate governance and financial management. The firm's philosophy emphasises delivering tangible results through integral values, customised services, direct client engagement and strategic alliances. This approach enables LMV | Central Law to provide not only legal advice, but also strategic business insights, ensuring a holistic advisory experience. The firm handles a broad spectrum of contentious matters, including commercial litigation, labour disputes, real estate and property claims, criminal litigation, as well as international arbitration.

The firm's litigation team is recognised for its analytical rigour and negotiation prowess – attributes that contribute to effective dispute resolution strategies. Moreover, LMV | Central Law's commitment to innovation is evident in its adoption of virtual meeting technologies, enhancing responsiveness and client accessibility. Meanwhile, the litigation practice has garnered accolades for its effectiveness and client satisfaction. The firm's capabilities are reflected in its handling of significant cases – such as representing Tenedora Las Terrenas, AFP Siembra, AFP Crecer and Banco Popular Dominicano, among others.

César J Linares Rodríguez

Leading LMV | Central Law's litigation practice is César J Linares Rodríguez, an attorney with extensive expertise in dispute resolution. His credentials include:

- **Educational Background:**
  - Law Degree (Magna Cum Laude), Universidad Católica Santo Domingo
  - Master's in Civil Procedural Law, Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra
  - Master's in Criminal Procedural Law, Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo
  - Master's in Administrative Law & Economic Regulation, Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra
  - Diploma in Administrative Sanction Law, University of Valladolid, Spain
  - Advanced Seminar in International Commercial Arbitration, American University Washington College of Law
- **Professional Affiliations:**
  - Bar of the Dominican Republic
  - Dispute Resolution Board Foundation
  - Latin American Construction Law Association (ALDEC)
  - International Bar Association (IBA)
  - Latin American Arbitration Association (ALARB)
  - Arbitrator, CIES Peru Arbitration Center
  - Arbitrator and Adjudicator, Arbitration & Conciliation Center, ADR LAWFIRM, Lima, Peru
  - First Vice President of the Higher Arbitration Council, Dispute Prevention Boards and the CIES Dispute Board

To date, Mr Linares Rodríguez's leadership has been instrumental in positioning LMV | Central Law as a formidable player in the Dominican legal landscape. Accordingly, his strategic insight and legal acumen have earned him recognition in prominent legal directories.

Environmental

Administrative; Energy



Gabriel Bustamante-Brambila

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Gabriel Bustamante-Brambila is the Co-Founder and Partner of Bustamante + Freyre, a prominent and prestigious environmental law firm in Mexico.

Mr Bustamante-Brambila has a Law degree from the Universidad Iberoamericana, where he graduated with honours, and has studied abroad in society, art and Italian culture, as well as academic stays in France and the US. He is part of the network of advisers of the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, derived from the North American Free Trade Agreement, for the formulation of factual dossiers. He is also a member of the International Environmental Lawyers Network.

To date, Mr Gabriel Bustamante-Brambila has actively participated in several international investment arbitrations and the processes of acquisition and sale of assets of infrastructure projects. As a Partner at B + F, he is focused on consulting for projects in the energy, tourism and industrial sectors, and has been the lead counsel for: renewable energy projects for more than 5,000 MW, gas transportation for more than 5,000 km – as well as numerous combined cycle power plants, transmission lines and distribution networks. The list of infrastructure projects in which he has played a key role include investments of more than 30 billion dollars.

Meanwhile, in social and indigenous peoples' matters, he has been involved in major discussions, such as the drafting of the first environmental legal instrument that incorporates the component of uses and customs for differing ethnic groups in the state of Oaxaca.

He leads part of the environmental consulting team for infrastructure projects, energy, tourism developments, hazardous waste landfills and governments on legislative matters.

In addition, Mr Bustamante-Brambila is a graduate of MIT Professional Education's Blended Professional Certificate Program (Chief Sustainability Officer). He further holds a Master's degree in Environmental Law & Public Policy, with special mention from the Center for Environmental Research & Learning (Universidad del Medio Ambiente, Mexico).

Real Estate

Corporate; M&A; Tax



Mario A Arias V

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Arias, Abrego, Lopez & Noriega (AALN) is a distinguished Panamanian law firm renowned for its comprehensive legal services, particularly in the realm of real estate. With more than a decade's experience, AALN has established itself as a trusted adviser to entrepreneurs, investors and businesses seeking to navigate Panama's dynamic real estate landscape.

Today, AALN offers a broad spectrum of legal services tailored to generate protection, profitability and success for its clients. The firm's commitment to providing optimal and comprehensive legal advice is reflected in its personalised approach, ensuring that each client's unique needs are met with the highest standards of professionalism and ethics. AALN's areas of expertise encompass corporate law and M&A, fiscal and tax law, estates, trusts and foundations, real estate and property, public procurement and government contracts, litigation and ADR, luxury services, as well as insurance law.

AALN's real estate law practice is a cornerstone of its service offering, reflecting a deep understanding of Panama's property market. The firm has a proven track record in advising both sellers and buyers on various transactions involving new and pre-owned properties. Such services include assistance with sales and purchase processes, property segregations, incorporations, lease contracts, usufruct agreements and other procedures related to properties.

AALN boasts further experience in matters related to Horizontal Property – advising promoters on the incorporation process of projects into the Horizontal Property Regime, as well as providing guidance to administrations and boards of directors of various horizontal properties nationwide. Accordingly, clients benefit from legal consultations, management of owners' assemblies and collection of delinquent fees, all in accordance with the most up-to-date laws.

Mario A Arias V

At the forefront of AALN's real estate practice is Mario A Arias V, a Founding Partner whose expertise has been instrumental in shaping the firm's success. Mr Arias is recognised as an ally to companies and economic groups aiming to establish and expand their presence in Panama and the broader Latin American region. His leadership in high-profile multinational contracts, M&A, capitalisations – as well as the structuring and implementation of corporate governance – has solidified his reputation as a leading figure in the legal community. Moreover, his strategic vision and deep understanding of the real estate sector have enabled AALN to navigate challenging transactions and provide clients with insightful, tailored legal solutions – while his commitment to excellence and client-centric approach continue to drive the firm's prominence in Panama's legal landscape.

Contract

Tort; Arbitration; Corporate



Gastón Fernández Cruz

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Gastón Fernández is an international consultant and expert on Peruvian law, issuing legal opinions and intervening as an expert in arbitrations before the ICSID (International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes), ICC (International Chamber of Commerce), CAIP (Paris International Chamber of Arbitration), IACAC (Inter-American Commercial Arbitration Commission), CCL (Arbitration Center of the Lima Chamber of Commerce), as well as proceedings before international judicial courts.

He was the last Chairman of the Reform Commission of the Peruvian Civil Code (2016–2019), and participated as amicus curiae ("friend of the court") in the VIII Pleno Casatorio Civil of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Republic of Peru (2015), where he was invited to illustrate his opinion to the Supreme Court of the Republic of Peru.

He is a member of the Arbitration Center of the Lima Chamber of Commerce (CCL), the Arbitration Center of the American Chamber of Commerce of Peru (Amcham Peru), the Conflict Resolution & Analysis Center of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (CARC-PUCP), the Arbitration Center of the Supervisory Body of Private Investment in Telecommunications (OSIPTEL), as well as the Arbitration Center of the Lambayeque Chamber of Commerce & Production.

Meanwhile, he fulfils the role of Main Ordinary Professor at the Law School of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (from 1992) – where he is also Full Professor of Torts & Law of Obligations courses – and is Professor at the Graduate School of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú on the Master of Civil Law (2001–2007, resuming in 2018), having also been the Director since 2017.

Over the years, Mr Fernández has acted as an esteemed national and international speaker, both within the Republic of Peru and abroad, having participated at prestigious universities. He has been a member of the Reform Commission of the General Arbitration Act of Peru and the Special Commission for the Comprehensive Reform of the Judicial Administration (CERIAJUS).

He is a member of the Scientific Committee and/or the Scientific Evaluation Committee of such high-profile Italian magazines as "Europa e Diritto Privato" (Giuffrè – Milano); "Rivista di Diritto Privato" (Cacucci Editori – Bari); "Rivista Teoría e prassi del diritto" (ESI – Napoli); "Archivio di Diritto Civile (Cacucci Editori – Bari); as well as "Pactum, Rivista di diritto dei contratti" (Pacini Giuridica – Pisa). He has written numerous articles and is the author of such books as: "La Cláusula Penal: Tutela contra el Incumplimiento vs Tutela Resarcitoria"; "Introducción a la Responsabilidad Civil: Lecciones Universitarias"; "Limitación de Responsabilidad, Exoneración y Liberación del deudor"; "Escritos Reunidos de Derecho Civil Patrimonial"; "Una Relectura de la Responsabilidad Vicaria: Entre la Responsabilidad por hecho propio y la Responsabilidad por hecho ajeno"; as well as "El Daño No Patrimonial y el Daño Moral (Dos ensayos)". He was the subject of a tribute book entitled "Dogmática y Práctica del Derecho Privado Moderno: Escritos Jurídicos en Homenaje al Profesor Gastón Fernández Cruz".

BOAST

US

R&D Tax Credit Software Advisory

FinTech; AI; Tax



Imad Jebara

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Boast.ai is a trailblazing FinTech company committed to simplifying and optimising the R&D tax credit process. Operating across the US and Canada, Boast blends advanced AI technology with in-house tax and technical expertise to help innovative businesses recover billions in unclaimed R&D tax credits. Under the leadership of CEO Imad Jebara, Boast is reshaping how companies access R&D funding, helping them fuel innovation without giving up equity.

The company's mission is to democratise access to R&D tax credits by equipping companies with the tools and support they need to move faster. With AI and machine learning at its core, Boast removes the headaches and red tape that have traditionally made tax credit preparation difficult so companies can focus on what matters most: innovation.

Imad Jebara brings more than 20 years' experience in operations and customer success in SaaS and finance. Before joining Boast, he was Senior Vice President of Global Customer Operations at Diligent (formerly Galvanize), where he supported more than one million users across 25,000 global organisations. His expertise in scaling operations and building exceptional customer experiences continues to guide Boast's evolution into a full R&D system of intelligence.

Boast.ai offers a full suite of solutions designed to streamline the R&D tax credit process, including:

- **US Tax Credit Advisory:** Specialised consulting services offering deep expertise in evolving US tax laws. This includes proactive identification of eligible R&D activities, AI-powered documentation tools to minimise audit risk, as well as strategic guidance tailored to each company's R&D priorities. The result is full compliance, precision and maximum credit value.
- **AI-Driven Platform:** Seamlessly integrates with payroll, accounting and project management systems to identify and categorise qualified R&D costs and activities. This minimises manual work and maximises accuracy.
- **AuditShield™:** Provides robust audit defence support. Boast compiles all necessary documentation and represents clients during IRS audits to reduce stress and avoid costly penalties.
- **Guided Service:** Pairs Boast's smart platform with expert tax professionals who support claim preparation, author technical reports and maximise eligibility. The process is designed to be simple and worry-free for clients.

In December 2024, Boast announced a strategic partnership with Rippling, a leader in workforce management solutions. This collaboration merges Rippling's workforce data with Boast.ai's automation engine to enhance speed and accuracy in tax credit claims. It reduces manual data entry and helps clients unlock capital faster.

To date, Boast.ai has helped more than 1,000 companies recover R&D expenses, reduce audit exposure and streamline the tax credit process. With deep system integrations and intelligent automation, Boast.ai ensures no eligible activity is missed. Clients get bigger returns with less time, effort and guesswork.

THE LAW OFFICES OF SELWYN D. WHITEHEAD

CALIFORNIA, US

Bankruptcy

Debt/Wealth Management; Real Estate; Taxation



Selwyn D Whitehead, Esq

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Headquartered in Oakland, California, the LAW OFFICES OF SELWYN D. WHITEHEAD has delivered exceptional legal services since 2005. Founded by Selwyn D Whitehead, Esq, a Certified Bankruptcy Law Specialist, the firm is distinguished by its dedication to client empowerment, strategic legal advocacy and commitment to economic justice. With a practice centred on bankruptcy law, financial elder abuse and estate planning, the firm assists individuals, families and small business owners facing complex financial challenges.

What sets the LAW OFFICES OF SELWYN D. WHITEHEAD apart is not only its legal acumen, but also its commitment to justice, equity and empowerment. Ms Whitehead has positioned her firm as a critical resource for clients navigating financial hardship, systemic inequality or elder abuse. Her practice is rooted in the belief that legal services should uplift and protect the most vulnerable, providing them with the knowledge and tools to transform their futures.

Selwyn D Whitehead, Esq

Ms Whitehead is renowned as a litigation attorney, published legal writer and media commentator with a robust background in financial law. She holds a Juris Doctor from New College of California School of Law and two Master of Laws (LLM) degrees in IP and Taxation.

Prior to establishing her own practice, Ms Whitehead held senior roles in both the public and private sectors. As Claims Legal Expense Audit Manager / Managing Attorney at Fireman's Fund Insurance Company, she led a team that generated significant operational cost savings – slashing $60 million in legal overhead over three years. She further played a vital role in developing litigation guidelines and compliance audits to enhance accountability in legal spending. Her earlier work as President and Executive Director of the Economic Empowerment Foundation demonstrated her lifelong advocacy for underserved communities. She is also an advocate for financial literacy and economic empowerment, serving as a Business Development Consultant to the City and County of San Francisco through the San Francisco Housing Development Corporation (SFHDC).

In addition, Ms Whitehead is the producer and host of "Selwyn's Law", a weekly radio show and podcast on KFAX AM 1100 and WWCR, and a published legal writer – contributing to such outlets as the National Association of Chapter Thirteen Trustees' ConsiderChapter13.org, LawyerMonthly.com, CorporateLiveWire.com and the San Francisco and Los Angeles Daily Journal. Through these avenues, Ms Whitehead shares her expert analysis on bankruptcy law, financial regulation and policy developments affecting consumers and small businesses.

BUXBAUMLOGGIA

CALIFORNIA, US

Insurance & Reinsurance Advisory

Claims & Underwriting; Contract Compliance; Due Diligence



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Joseph Loggia co-founded Buxbaum, Loggia & Associates, Inc. in 2000, and Buxbaum Loggia Ltd., its British company, to provide a comprehensive source of senior technical expertise to the insurance and reinsurance industry.

Mr Loggia's experience of more than 50 years includes management of ceded and assumed reinsurance portfolios, audit assignments for major domestic and international reinsurers, as well as expert witness testimony. He has served in senior executive positions for such companies as Armco, Home Insurance, Liberty Mutual and Northwestern National.

At Buxbaum, Loggia & Associates, Inc., Mr Loggia leads casualty and accident/health inspections and settlement teams for both insurers and reinsurers. He is highly regarded for his expert opinions and testimony, having been deposed as a fact and expert witness on more than 100 occasions in civil litigation and reinsurance arbitrations since 1986.

Mr Loggia has provided expert services in numerous cases involving workers' compensation, construction defect litigation, property loss, as well as EPLI issues. His decades of experience serve in evaluating and testifying on proper claims administration, including coverage analysis and good-faith claim decisions. He has represented policyholders and primary and excess carriers in complex matters, upholding industry customs and practices.

He is a Certified Arbitrator of ARIAS, and a member of industry organisations, including the American Bar Association (ABA), the California Association of Independent Insurance Adjusters, the Delegated Authority Reviewers' Association, the Insurance & Reinsurance Legacy Association, as well as the International Association of Claim Professionals. He has also been a featured speaker and panelist at annual conferences for the ABA, ARIAS, the Association of Insurance & Reinsurance Run-Off Companies, the Brokers & Reinsurance Markets Association and Casualty Actuarial Society.

After graduating from the University of California, LA, he served as a captain in the US Army, and attended the University of LaVerne, College of Law.

Buxbaum, Loggia & Associates, Inc.

Buxbaum, Loggia & Associates, Inc. is a California corporation with offices in Los Angeles and London. As a consulting firm, it regularly engages in underwriting services, claim and accounting audits, run-off management, as well as expert witness reporting and testimony. Today, the firm predominantly serves insurance companies, reinsurers, law firms, managing general underwriters and third-party administrators – representing this diverse spread of clients across six continents.

Insurance

General/Professional Liability; Litigation; Dispute Resolution



Carlos D Perez-Mesa, Jr

Partner
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Clay Iwamura Pulice & Nervell (CIPN) is a full-service law firm based in Honolulu, renowned for its comprehensive legal services and deep-rooted commitment to client advocacy. Since its inception in 1977, CIPN has cultivated a reputation for excellence, serving a diverse clientele that spans local enterprises, national corporations and international entities. The firm's affiliation with Pacific Lawyers, a consortium of law firms across the Pacific Rim and Southeast Asia, further amplifies its reach and resources – enabling it to address complex legal challenges with a global perspective.

CIPN's Insurance Law practice is a cornerstone of its litigation services, offering robust representation in both state and federal courts, including appearances before the Hawaii Supreme Court and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The firm's attorneys are adept at navigating the intricacies of insurance disputes, providing counsel on such matters as: first-party and third-party coverage; general liability, professional liability and directors/officers policies; bad faith claims; as well as litigation involving denial of coverage or defence.

Carlos D Perez-Mesa, Jr

At the helm of CIPN's Insurance Law practice is Carlos D Perez-Mesa, Jr, a trial attorney whose legal career spans nearly four decades. Admitted to practise in Hawaii since 1991, Mr Perez-Mesa has an impressive track record, having tried more than 20 jury and bench trials to verdict and participated in more than 300 arbitrations and mediations. His legal acumen encompasses a broad spectrum of litigation areas, including product liability, construction law, employment discrimination, personal injury, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, environmental law, automobile and premises liability, civil rights under Title VII, as well as workers' compensation.

Before joining CIPN, Mr Perez-Mesa honed his litigation skills as a Partner at Epstein & Perez-Mesa and served for seven years as a trial attorney for AIG's Staff Counsel in Honolulu. His tenure at AIG involved defending insured clients in complex personal injury and premises liability cases. Notably, his legal arguments have led to three published opinions by the Hawaii Supreme Court, underscoring his influence in shaping state insurance law jurisprudence.

Mr Perez-Mesa's educational background includes a Bachelor of Science in English from Washington University in St Louis and a Juris Doctor from Rutgers Law School-Newark, where he served as the general editor of the Rutgers Law Review. He began his legal career clerking for Judge Nicholas Mandak in Passaic County, New Jersey, laying a solid foundation for his subsequent legal endeavours.

Dispute Resolution

Arbitration; Mediation; ADR



Thomas P Valenti

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Thomas P Valenti is a Chicago-based attorney with more than 45 years' legal experience and a distinguished career in ADR. Practising law since 1977, Mr Valenti has focused on arbitration since 1990 and mediation since 2000, developing a robust practice in civil litigation, personal injury, property damage and commercial disputes.

He is certified as a mediator and arbitrator for several prominent institutions, including the Circuit Court of Cook County, the American Arbitration Association (AAA), the National Arbitration Forum and the CPR Panel of Distinguished Neutrals. He also serves on panels for FINRA, USCIB, CAM-CCBC (Brazil) and others, and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (FCIArb).

Mr Valenti brings a strong international perspective to his work, having trained and taught mediation, arbitration and negotiation in the UK, Europe, Dubai and India. He is particularly committed to exploring cross-cultural dimensions of dispute resolution, and facilitates dialogues on multicultural and international legal issues.

He is an adjunct instructor at Northwestern University's School of Professional Studies, where he teaches mediation and imparts practical ADR skills to emerging professionals. His credentials further include training in Title IX, international family mediation, Hague Convention child abduction cases and conflict transformation. In addition, he has been trained in human rights and anti-trafficking by the US Institute of Diplomacy & Human Rights, reflecting his broader humanitarian interests and contributions.

Mr Valenti is actively involved in numerous professional organisations. He is a member of the American Bar Association (ABA), including its Sections on International Law and Dispute Resolution, as well as the Illinois State Bar Association, the Chicago Bar Association and the International Bar Association's Mediation Committee.

He continues to be a respected figure in the ADR field – advancing best practices both domestically and internationally through his commitment to legal excellence and effective conflict resolution.

CRA Charles River Associates

ILLINOIS, US

Forensic Accounting Advisory

Fraud; Cybercrime; Securities



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Kristofer K Swanson leads Charles River Associates' Forensic Services Practice, helping companies and their counsel respond to allegations of fraud, cybercrime, misconduct and non-compliance – often during periods of crisis. These allegations span a broad range of matters, such as accounting irregularities, money laundering, cyber-crime, False Claims Act violations, ABAC/FCPA violations, healthcare fraud and abuse, Ponzi schemes, as well as trade secret theft.

Kris is particularly sought after to lead complex investigations – requiring deep industry knowledge, multiple technical competencies and the judgement and experience to navigate thorny jurisdictional, ethical, reporting and disclosure obligations. He has testified on both economic damages and liability, and served as a monitor under various settlement and deferred prosecution agreements. From a geographic perspective, his assignments have extended to Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, Australia, the Middle East, North America and South America.

He is recognised as a "Global Leader", "Thought Leader", "Digital Forensics Expert" and "Expert Forensic Accountant" by Who's Who Legal, and has been awarded "Client Choice" award recognition by Lexology. Under his leadership, the practice – including its state-of-the art digital forensics, eDiscovery and cyber incident response labs – has grown to be the second largest practice in the firm worldwide, and is certified annually under ISO 27001 requirements as part of its industry-leading commitment to its clients and their information security.

Moreover, the practice has been recognised by the National Law Journal for being one of the top three Forensic Accounting Providers in America, and by Global Investigations Review as one of the leading investigative consultancies from around the world for handling sophisticated cross-border, government-driven and internal investigations. Since 2021, Chambers has recognised it with a ranking in recognition of its deep litigation support, crisis and risk management competencies.

Kris serves on the Board of Trustees of the Securities & Exchange Commission Historical Society; on the Civic Leadership Committee of the Better Government Association; on the Planning Committee and Faculty of the ABA's National Institute on White-Collar Crime; as well as on the Planning Committee for Northwestern University's Ray Garrett Jr Corporate & Securities Law Institute. He is a frequent speaker and author on forensic matters, and has guest lectured at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and at various law schools.

In addition, he is a Certified Public Accountant, a Certified Fraud Examiner, a Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist and is certified in Financial Forensics. He is a member of the International Association of Independent Corporate Monitors, the National Association of Federal Equity Receivers and the Private Directors Association.

Labour

Employment; Bankruptcy; Litigation



Darrell S Gay

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Darrell Gay represents management with respect to labour and employment issues. A practitioner with more than four decades' experience, Darrell uses his wealth of experience and connections to assist his clients with traditional issues, employee relations issues, EEO matters, workforce planning and future-of-work developments.

Darrell focuses on helping clients proactively comply with national and local labour and employment laws, as well as the institution of management best practices to avoid operational problems. With the working world changing dramatically following the pandemic, and the ever-evolving use of technology and new approaches to workforce management, Darrell assists his clients with navigating the resulting legal and operational requirements. He has developed – and provides his clients' management teams with – unique training on issues ranging from "Management Techniques – Enhancing Employee Performance", "Conducting Internal Investigations", "Navigating Leave Laws" and "Sexual Harassment Training".

Darrell has led and conducted several internal investigations of senior-level executives, including several C-Suite matters, on behalf of his corporate clients – frequently being retained by the entities' corporate boards of directors. He also uses his experience working with City, State and Federal Governments, and as a New York State Commissioner, in helping his clients navigate claims before governmental agencies.

Darrell has handled and managed significant cases involving single and multiple plaintiffs, single and multiple defendants, cases with allegations of serious continuing violations, matters involving issues of significant importance to the existence of the client, as well as high-profile media cases. The latter includes those that combine political, community and legal tentacles of concern. He also represents his clients in traditional matters at the bargaining table as chief negotiator, counsel on labour issues, as well as arbitrations and union relations issues.

He not only has experience before administrative agencies and Federal and State courts, but has additionally handled investigations conducted by the New York State Attorney General's office.

Darrell is a frequent speaker at various Bar conferences, and is politically active. During the course of his career, he has received a host of recognitions from an assortment of organisations.

Environmental

Energy; Financial Services; Healthcare



Gerald J Pels

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Troutman Pepper Locke LLP is an international law firm formed on January 1st, 2025, through the merger of Troutman Pepper and Locke Lord. The combined firm boasts more than 1,600 attorneys across 33 offices in the US and Europe, including a significant presence in Texas. With its headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, Troutman Pepper Locke offers comprehensive legal services across various industries, including energy, financial services, healthcare, insurance, private equity and real estate.

Troutman Pepper Locke's Environmental & Natural Resources Practice is a cornerstone of the firm's offering, particularly in Texas. The practice encompasses a broad spectrum of environmental law areas, including compliance, air quality and climate change, contaminated sites and waste management, environmental litigation and enforcement defence – combined with environmental, social and governance (ESG) counselling.

The firm's environmental attorneys represent clients at all levels, including the US Supreme Court, administrative hearings and settlement negotiations. Moreover, they handle litigation and appeals involving environmental liabilities under various statutory and regulatory schemes, such as CERCLA, RCRA, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, TSCA and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Meanwhile, Troutman Pepper Locke's air quality team advises clients on permitting, compliance, enforcement actions and civil lawsuits related to air quality issues. Clients include businesses from various industrial sectors – including oil and gas, power generation, waste management, manufacturing, chemical, mining and agriculture.

In 2025, four partners from Troutman Pepper Locke's Environmental & Natural Resources Practice Group, including Gerald J Pels, were recognised in the Lawdragon Green 500: Leaders in Environmental Law list. This recognition highlights the firm's commitment to shaping the future of environmental law in the US. Mr Pels is also listed by Lawdragon as a leader in energy law based on his environmental work with the industry.

Gerald J Pels

Steering the firm's environmental practice in Texas is Gerald J ("Gerry") Pels, a Partner based in Houston. With more than 40 years' experience, Mr Pels is recognised as a leader in the Texas environmental legal community. His practice focuses on compliance, permitting, enforcement defence, risk management, agency negotiation, counselling, litigation and representing clients at contested permit, enforcement and other hearings. Gerry has extensive experience representing heavy industry in air permitting, compliance and enforcement defence.

To date, Mr Pels has led teams on significant environmental law matters, including resolving the well-known Cooper v Aviall litigation and arguing Clean Air Act issues before the Fifth Circuit involving the Texas State Implementation Plan (SIP). He is consistently recommended by Chambers USA and The Best Lawyers in America® for Environmental Law, and further served as an adjunct law professor for seven years, teaching environmental law and an advanced RCRA seminar. He provides strategic board-level guidance on environmental risk mitigation, incident investigation, reporting and oversight – including development of corporate environmental compliance and risk minimisation policies, management training, stakeholder involvement and community relations planning.

MARY JOYCE CARLSON ESQ

WASHINGTON DC, US

Compliance Advisory



Mary Joyce Carlson ESQ

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Mary Joyce Carlson ESQ is known for representing clients in accordance with OECD guidelines, as well as coordinating investor prosecution of cases under the remit of European Competition Law. Across a wide-ranging career, Ms Carlson's efforts to combat injustice have evoked the spirit of her fellow Tennessean, renowned civil rights activist George Barrett. Ms Carlson has advised, in a supervisory capacity, on the activities of legal practitioners handling German, French and Italian competition law matters under the auspices of the European Commission. She has collaborated with the European Public Service Union and the European Federation of Food, Agriculture & Tourism Trade Unions, as well as providing client representation before the Brazilian Labor Prosecution Service. She holds an International Global Legal (IGL) designation, having previously maintained a busy practice that focused its attention on global business and public sector legal matters.

Today, Ms Carlson specialises in domestic and global public and employment law, and has won awards for her endeavours in this field. She has further won landmark cases in which she represented high-profile public and private sector clients based in the US, Latin America, the UK and wider Europe, as well as Africa. Her additional practice areas encompass civil rights, as well as international business practices and securities fraud, having successfully litigated matters of business conduct among major multinationals.

Ms Carlson completed her education at the Duke University School of Law in Durham, North Carolina, after which she began her legal career in Atlanta, taking the lead on cases that questioned the diversity of juries, ultimately leading to an increase in women and people of colour. Later, in Washington DC, she worked as an employment attorney, helping to lift caps on wages for nurses, as well as forcing an investigation that would end a practice wherein hospitals were systemically discriminating when filling roles for nurses in specialty units. She has worked for such labour unions as the SEIU, CWA and UAW, and served a term as Deputy General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board. She brought successful competition lawsuits against prominent hospital networks that had conspired to keep wages down for nurses.

Ms Carlson's voting rights cases have included one in Ohio that successfully challenged the Republican National Committee's efforts to exclude black voters, as well as a case in India that overturned the state's closure of polling stations in majority-black areas. Many of these cases are now landmarks for advocates seeking methods to counter monopolies in the new economy. More recently, her global projects have spanned shareholder due diligence training, supply chain investigations, workforce interventions, working alongside a prominent Brazilian law firm to address gender-racial harassment in the workplace, re-addressing pension funds in South Africa, as well as collective bargaining training among the Taiwanese Labor Ministry.

ASIA & OCEANIA

Asia and Oceania continue to occupy a central position in the global economy, accounting for around 60% of global growth according to recent IMF assessments. Yet the region enters the final months of 2026 facing a more demanding external environment, shaped by geopolitical conflict, energy-market disruption, trade-policy uncertainty and increasingly visible climate risks. At the same time, strong technology exports, domestic demand and investment are providing important support. This update reviews the latest developments across Asia and Oceania, drawing on the IMF, World Bank, UN and Asian Development Bank to assess the outlook for 2026 and beyond.

Regional Overview

The latest ADB outlook puts growth in developing Asia and the Pacific at 5.0% in 2026, down from 5.5% in 2025, with a modest acceleration to 5.1% in 2027. Inflation is expected to rise to 4.2% this year, reflecting higher energy and food costs, before easing to 3.5% in 2027. The IMF similarly expects Asian growth to remain resilient, although its April reference forecast was for a moderation to 4.4% in 2026. The UN's September update highlights a broader deterioration in the global environment, with world growth now projected at 2.6% this year.

China: Rebalancing Amid Persistent Pressures

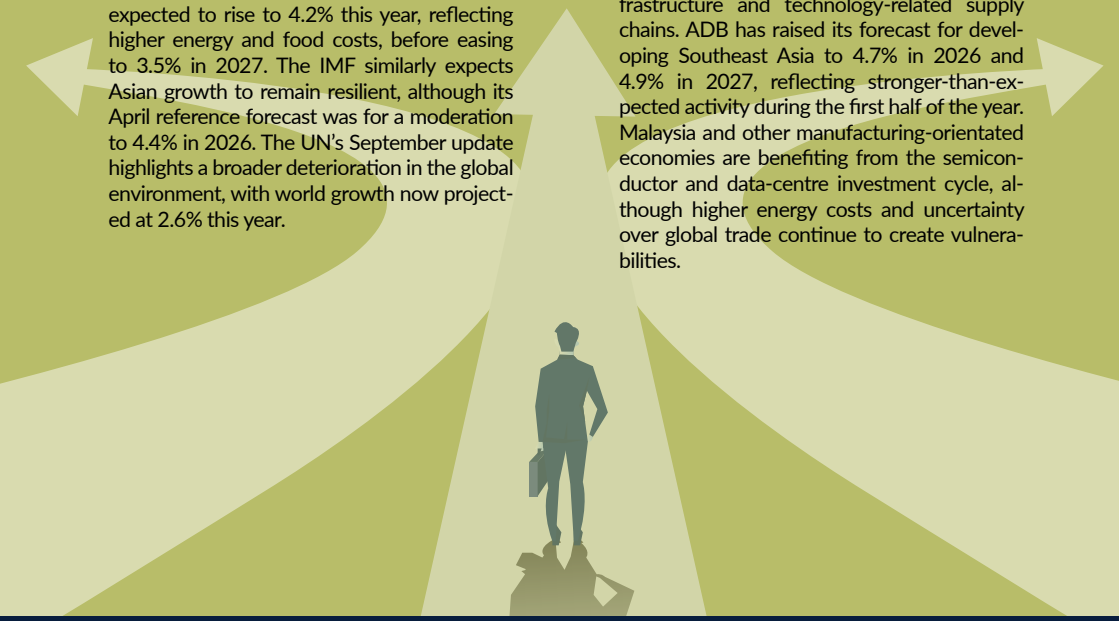
China's economy remains supported by high-tech investment, exports and policy measures, but domestic demand continues to lag. The World Bank's July update projects growth of 4.4% in 2026 and 4.3% in 2027, with the property-sector adjustment and cautious household spending continuing to weigh on activity. Efforts to shift the growth model towards consumption, strengthen social protection and improve productivity are becoming increasingly important as demographic pressures intensify.

India: Strong Domestic Momentum

India continues to record comparatively rapid expansion despite a difficult international environment. The latest ADB outlook raised its forecast for FY2026–27 to 7.0%, following stronger-than-expected first-quarter growth of 7.8%. Investment, consumption, manufacturing and services remain important drivers, while resilient services exports are providing additional support. Risks nevertheless include geopolitical tensions, elevated commodity prices and the potential effects of energy and weather shocks.

Southeast Asia: Technology & Trade Support Growth

Southeast Asia is benefiting from continued investment in electronics, digital infrastructure and technology-related supply chains. ADB has raised its forecast for developing Southeast Asia to 4.7% in 2026 and 4.9% in 2027, reflecting stronger-than-expected activity during the first half of the year. Malaysia and other manufacturing-orientated economies are benefiting from the semiconductor and data-centre investment cycle, although higher energy costs and uncertainty over global trade continue to create vulnerabilities.



South Asia: Resilient but Uneven

South Asia remains one of the fastest-growing parts of the region, although performance varies considerably across economies. ADB has raised its 2026 growth forecast for the subregion to 6.4%, largely reflecting stronger investment and exports in India, while reducing its 2027 projection to 6.5%. Bangladesh continues to face weaker export and investment conditions, while Pakistan and Sri Lanka remain constrained by financial and structural vulnerabilities despite improved economic stability. Higher energy prices and weather-related disruptions remain important risks across the subregion.

Oceania: Resilience Under Pressure

The Pacific faces a more challenging outlook as higher fuel, food and shipping costs combine with climate-related vulnerabilities. ADB has lowered its forecast for Pacific economies to 3.0% growth in 2026 and 2.9% in 2027, citing prolonged energy-market disruption and the expected effects of a strengthening El Niño on agriculture and mining. The World Bank similarly warns that repeated external shocks are becoming a persistent feature of the Pacific economic environment. Australia and New Zealand face a different set of pressures, balancing inflation management, domestic demand and exposure to global commodity and financial conditions.

Monetary Policy: Balancing Inflation & Growth

The policy environment has become more complicated as the energy shock has revived inflationary pressures. The IMF notes that inflation expectations remain broadly anchored in much of Asia, giving some central banks room to look through the initial increase in energy prices. However, prolonged disruption could generate currency pressures and second-round inflation effects, limiting the scope for further easing. Policymakers therefore face a delicate balance between supporting activity and preventing temporary price shocks from becoming persistent.

Trade Dynamics: Technology Amid Fragmentation

Trade remains a major source of regional resilience, but its composition is changing. The WTO's September 2026 indicators show merchandise trade continuing to perform above trend, supported particularly by electronic components and goods linked to AI investment. UN Trade and Development reports that East Asia was the strongest contributor to global goods-trade growth during the first quarter – with semiconductors, critical minerals, batteries and electric vehicles among the fastest-growing categories. At the same time, tariffs, geopolitical tensions and the restructuring of supply chains are increasing uncertainty for exporters.

Structural Reforms & Future Outlook

The region's longer-term prospects will depend increasingly on productivity, skills and economic diversification rather than trade expansion alone. The IMF highlights ageing populations, fragmented trade, energy security and slower productivity growth as key structural challenges, while also identifying AI as a potential source of significant productivity gains. The World Bank similarly emphasises stronger social protection, better jobs and digital investment, while the UN highlights demographic change, youth employment and inequality as important policy priorities for Asia and the Pacific.

Asia and Oceania enter the remainder of 2026 with considerable underlying resilience but a more complicated set of external pressures. Technology investment, domestic demand and regional trade continue to support growth, particularly across India and Southeast Asia, while China faces a more gradual rebalancing. Energy-market disruption, geopolitical tensions, trade fragmentation and the emerging El Niño cycle nevertheless create significant uncertainty. Sustaining progress will require policymakers to combine short-term measures to protect households and businesses with longer-term investment in productivity, skills, infrastructure, resilience and regional economic integration.

Civil

Criminal



Peter O'Brien

Principal Solicitor
O'Brien Criminal & Civil Solicitors

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O'Brien Criminal & Civil Solicitors is a leading law firm based in Sydney, Australia, renowned for its commitment to justice and comprehensive legal services. Established by Principal Solicitor Peter O'Brien, the firm has built a formidable reputation over two decades, representing clients in criminal defence, civil litigation and defamation matters across New South Wales and nationwide. It is distinguished by its specialist expertise, ethical practice and proactive advocacy for marginalised communities. The civil law division at O'Brien Solicitors is dedicated to securing justice for individuals who have suffered harm due to unlawful actions by authorities or institutions. The firm handles a diverse array of civil cases, including:

- **Claims Against Police & Authorities:** Representing clients in cases of unlawful arrest, false imprisonment, police misconduct and abuse of power.
- **Institutional Abuse Cases:** Pursuing claims for victims of historical sexual abuse and other mistreatment by such institutions as schools, churches and government entities.
- **Medical Negligence:** Assisting clients in seeking compensation for harm caused by substandard healthcare services.
- **Defamation:** Protecting clients' reputations through legal action against false and damaging statements in media and social platforms.

The firm's civil law team employs a trauma-informed approach, recognising the emotional and psychological impact of such legal proceedings on clients. This sensitivity ensures that clients receive compassionate and effective representation throughout the process.

Peter O'Brien

Peter O'Brien, founder and Principal Solicitor, is a distinguished figure in Australian law. With more than 20 years' experience, Mr O'Brien has demonstrated his dedication to civil justice, particularly in cases involving institutional abuse and unlawful conduct by authorities. His notable contributions include:

- **Co-Founding the UTS Community Law & Legal Research Centre:** Established in 1996, the centre focuses on community legal education and research.
- **Representation in Major Royal Commissions:** Mr O'Brien has acted for clients in all major Royal Commissions over the past decade, including the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- **Legal Precedents:** He served as the instructing solicitor in a false imprisonment case that resulted in the establishment of new legal principles in Australia.
- **Academic Contributions:** He co-authored Intentional Torts Litigation in Australia, a leading text in the field.

Mr O'Brien's commitment to civil law has been recognised through various awards, including the Law Society's President's Medal in 2023 and the President's Award by the Law Council of Australia in 2024, underscoring his impact on the legal profession and social justice. Meanwhile, the firm provides pro bono assistance and supports clients eligible for legal aid – ensuring access to justice for disadvantaged individuals and communities.

Family

Divorce; Child Custody; Property Settlement



Merridy Gordon

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Gordon & Barry Lawyers Pty Ltd is a distinguished Sydney-based law firm specialising exclusively in family law. Renowned for delivering tailored legal solutions, the firm adeptly handles matters ranging from straightforward separations to intricate property divisions and international custody disputes. With a commitment to ethical, efficient, egalitarian and environmentally conscious practices, Gordon & Barry has established itself as a leader in the New South Wales family law sector.

The firm's ethos is encapsulated in its guiding principles: Ethical, Efficient, Egalitarian & Environmentally Conscious. These values permeate every aspect of their practice, ensuring clients receive not only expert legal advice but also compassionate and socially responsible service. Gordon & Barry's approach emphasises transparency, cost-effectiveness and a commitment to achieving equitable outcomes for all clients.

Gordon & Barry offers a wide array of family law services, including:

- **Divorce & De Facto Relationships:** Guiding clients through the complexities of relationship breakdowns with sensitivity and legal acumen.
- **Child Custody & Parenting Arrangements:** Prioritising the best interests of children while advocating for fair parenting plans.
- **Property Settlement:** Handling asset divisions ranging from modest estates to complex financial structures with precision.
- **Spouse Maintenance & Child Support:** Ensuring financial arrangements are just and sustainable post-separation.
- **Court Representation:** Providing robust advocacy in the Family Court and Federal Circuit Court when litigation is necessary.
- **Family Law Planning:** Advising on proactive measures to minimise future disputes, including relationship planning sessions.

Notably, the firm exercises caution regarding Binding Financial Agreements (commonly known as prenuptial agreements), opting not to advise on such contracts prior to marriage or de facto relationships due to their potential legal uncertainties and complexities.

At the forefront of Gordon & Barry are Legal Practitioner Directors Merridy Gordon and David Barry, both accredited specialists in family law with decades of combined experience. Admitted to practise in New South Wales in 1987 and the Northern Territory in 2000, Merridy brings extensive litigation experience to the firm. Her expertise spans all facets of family law, including property settlements and children's matters. She has been recognised in Doyle's Guide as a Recommended Family Lawyer in Sydney, as well as a Recommended Parenting & Children's Matters Lawyer in New South Wales. Furthermore, she is a panel member for Independent Children's Lawyers in New South Wales, and actively participates in various legal associations, reflecting her commitment to the profession.

Family

Divorce; Wills & Estates



Kate Rafton

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Kate Rafton is the Managing Director and founder of Rafton Family Lawyers, a boutique law firm specialising in family and divorce law, as well as wills and estates.

Established more than 20 years ago in Sydney, the firm has seen expansion during that time and now has more than seven locations offering local specialist law services.

Ms Rafton has received numerous awards and accolades across her distinguished career. She is also a registered nurse and accredited arbitrator and mediator. She is known for her expertise in complex family law litigation, as well as matters involving state welfare and child protection.

Energy

Corporate/Commercial; Employment & Family; Litigation



Hasan Nasibov

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With more than 26 years' legal experience, Hasan Nasibov is a highly respected Azerbaijani lawyer and Senior Partner at HGNS COUNSELOR Law Firm, based in Baku.

His practice spans Corporate & Commercial Law, Employment & Family Law and high-stakes Litigation.

Hasan Nasibov is particularly recognised for his counsel on complex M&A, contract structuring and regulatory compliance for international and domestic clients.

He has served as Chief Legal Counsel for leading oil, gas and mining companies, and is certified in FIDIC contracts and experienced in ICC arbitration.

His employment law work includes representing both employers and executives in contentious and advisory matters, while his litigation practice encompasses commercial disputes across Azerbaijani courts.

Hasan advises clients in English, Russian and Azerbaijani, and is known for his strategic, solution-orientated approach to legal challenges in both private and corporate sectors.

Property & Litigation

Business



Nihad Aliyev

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Nihad Aliyev is a Partner at HGNS COUNSELOR Law Firm with a strong reputation in Property Law and Civil Litigation.

With more than a decade of professional legal experience, he advises clients on a broad range of real estate matters, including property acquisition, land use, development rights and ownership disputes.

He is frequently engaged in high-value litigation concerning real property, construction contracts and enforcement of ownership rights.

Nihad has successfully represented both corporate entities and individuals before all levels of courts in Azerbaijan.

Known for his meticulous case preparation and practical legal insight, Nihad delivers results-driven counsel in complex property disputes, often involving overlapping regulatory and contractual issues.

His clear communication and client-focused approach make him a trusted adviser in Azerbaijan's evolving property and legal landscape.

Business Crime & Fraud

Anti-Corruption & Anti-Bribery; Compliance; Economic Crime & White-Collar Crime



Wang "Morgen" Weining

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Established in 2020, Starrise Law Firm has swiftly emerged as a prominent boutique legal practice in China, renowned for its expertise in business crime, fraud and corporate compliance. Based in Beijing, the firm has expanded its presence with an office in Wuhan, reflecting its commitment to addressing the evolving legal needs of clients across the nation. Starrise's multidisciplinary approach integrates criminal defence, civil litigation and regulatory compliance – offering comprehensive legal solutions tailored to complex corporate challenges.

Starrise specialises in defending clients against allegations of white-collar crime, including securities violations, tax evasion and data-related offences. The firm's legal teams are adept at navigating the intricacies of cases that intersect criminal, civil and administrative law, ensuring a holistic defence strategy. Notably, Starrise has successfully represented entrepreneurs in high-profile cases involving organised crime allegations, demonstrating its capability to manage multifaceted legal issues.

Meanwhile, recognising the increasing importance of regulatory adherence, Starrise offers specialised compliance services across various sectors, including finance, environmental protection, data security, IP and healthcare. The firm's comprehensive compliance services encompass risk identification, management system construction and evaluation of operational mechanisms, assisting clients in establishing robust compliance frameworks. Beyond its criminal law expertise, Starrise provides legal services in dispute resolution, bankruptcy, reorganisation, M&A, IP rights, banking and finance, real estate, as well as construction engineering.

Starrise distinguishes itself through its integrated service model, which combines contentious and non-contentious legal services. This approach allows the firm to address complex issues that span multiple legal domains effectively. By leveraging digital operations and fostering industry collaboration, Starrise ensures that its solutions are both innovative and aligned with clients' evolving needs. In its pursuit of excellence, the firm has garnered several accolades, including:

- Named a "Golden Law Firm" in Financial Criminal Defense in the 2021 "21st Century Golden Law Firm/Lawyer" selection;
- Recognised as one of the most promising law firm employers in the 2022 Excellence in Law Firm Employer Awards;
- Shortlisted for the "Rising Law Firm of the Year" at the 2024 ALB China Law Awards.

Wang Weining

As Deputy Director and Founding Partner, Mr Weining brings a wealth of experience in criminal defence and compliance. Under his guidance, the firm has cultivated a culture of innovation and collaboration.

Corporate & Insolvency

M&A; Restructuring; Corporate Compliance



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Established in 1989, JunHe LLP stands as one of China's pioneering private partnership law firms. With its headquarters in Beijing and a network of 14 offices across major cities – including Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, as well as international hubs like Hong Kong, New York, Silicon Valley and Seattle – JunHe has cultivated a formidable presence in the legal landscape.

Catherine Miao

Catherine Miao serves as legal counsel for many large financial institutions, international investment banks, overseas PE funds, multinational companies and real estate developers. She excels in complex and difficult non-litigation projects and has successfully handled multiple innovative legal matters that were unprecedented in China. She was recognised as one of the 2020 ALB China Top 15 Female Lawyers and one of the 2019 ALB China Top 15 M&A Lawyers. She was also named as one of the outstanding lawyers in the category of "Corporate/Commercial: East Coast (Guangdong)" by Chambers in 2019–2021, as well as one of the recommended lawyers in the fields of "Bankruptcy and Restructuring" and "Real Estate and Construction" by The Legal 500 Asia-Pacific in 2020.

Catherine has practised in the field of special situation/opportunity investment in China since the establishment of the four major financial AMCs in 1999, and is a pioneer and leading lawyer in that field. She has completed many benchmark projects in the industry, including: assisting China Orient AMC in closing China's first deal of disposing of NPL portfolios by using foreign capital in 2002; assisting AMCs in establishing Sino-foreign cooperative joint ventures engaged in the NPL business; as well as assisting AMCs in completing a large number of projects involving the acquisition or transfer of non-performing assets, debt restructuring, bankruptcy reorganisation and liquidation, as well as debt-for-equity swap of listed companies. Over the years, she has further assisted well-known overseas special situation funds in closing many deals – including Bain, Oaktree, Blackstone, Cerberus, TSSP, CDH and other internationally renowned special situations funds in actively making investments in the Chinese NPL market and helping them successfully complete multiple NPL acquisitions. The accumulated book value of projects that Catherine has served in this field exceeds RMB 100 billion.

In the corporate and M&A sectors, Catherine has acted as the Relationship Partner of JunHe for Shell, as well as the Relationship Partner for Mars Wrigley – coordinating resources on a firm-wide basis so as to provide quality legal services for the clients over many years. She has provided legal services to many multinational corporations, stated-owned enterprises and private-owned enterprises in their acquisitions of equity and assets of various nature, as well as their routine operation.

Intellectual Property

Trademark; Copyright; Trade Secrets & Domain Names



Yingzi Liu

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Established in 1997, Beijing Hylands Law Firm has grown into one of China's leading full-service law firms. The firm offers comprehensive legal services across various practice areas, including IP, corporate law, dispute resolution and more.

Hylands' Intellectual Property Department is renowned for its depth of expertise and breadth of services. The firm assists clients in protecting and enforcing a wide array of IP rights, including: trademarks and patents, copyrights, trade secrets and technical know-how, domain names and trade names, as well as franchise resources and integrated circuit layout designs.

The firm's IP practice is particularly noted for its proficiency in handling complex disputes, administrative litigation, as well as providing strategic legal advice to clients in such industries as entertainment, media, technology, healthcare and education. Hylands has represented clients in several high-profile IP cases that have had significant legal and commercial implications:

- **Genius GmbH:** A German kitchenware company enlisted Hylands to combat counterfeit products in China. The firm implemented a comprehensive strategy involving monitoring e-commerce platforms, initiating administrative actions and conducting customs training, leading to successful enforcement actions and the destruction of counterfeit goods.
- **International Fruit Genetics:** Hylands represented this client in China's first administrative hearings for the enforcement of new plant variety rights, showcasing the firm's pioneering role in emerging IP areas.

Yingzi Liu

Ms Yingzi Liu is a Partner at Hylands' Beijing office, specialising in IP, corporate law, as well as media and entertainment. Ms Liu has extensive experience in: advising on cultural and creative projects, including due diligence, investment, production and distribution – as well as providing legal services to celebrities and artists, including contract negotiations and IP protection. Her contributions have been recognised by The Legal 500, which listed her among recommended attorneys for TMT and IP practices in the Asia-Pacific region.

Practice Areas & Cases

- Legal due diligence, financing, IP protection and transaction advice for diverse talent-driven projects, including films, TV, animations, living performances, games, art and exhibitions, merchandising and licensing deals, with an emphasis on cross-border transactions.
- Corporate law guidance in company establishment, compliance and risk management, as well as M&A transaction advice involving such major entities as Alibaba and Tencent.
- Providing IP protection advice for the NBA.

Professional Affiliations

- Litigation expert volunteer for the Supreme People's Court of PRC.
- Recognised expert in the Legal Experts Database by the China Association for Small & Medium Commercial Enterprises.

Media & Entertainment

Film & TV; Internet & New Media; Commercialisation & Marketing



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Beijing Hylands Law Firm's Media & Entertainment team leverages the firm's extensive experience in IP to provide end-to-end legal solutions in the TMT industry:

- **Film & Television:** Legal support for planning, script adaptation, joint investments, Sino-foreign co-productions, financing, copyright procurement, production, distribution and the establishment of broadcasting agencies.
- **Cultural & Entertainment Fields:** Advisory services for sports events, music production, gaming, performances and artist management, including contract negotiations and personal image rights.
- **Industrial Access & Financing:** Assistance with industry access research, investment structure design, establishment of media institutions, equity financing, M&A, as well as tax compliance.
- **Internet & New Media:** Guidance on e-commerce operations, Internet culture business compliance, live streaming and MCN (Multi-Channel Network) company operations.
- **Network Security & Data Compliance:** Services include corporate network security assessments, data management process improvements, compliance training and assistance in responding to investigations.
- **Commercialisation & Marketing:** Support for advertising, derivative development, celebrity brand development, sponsorships and theme park operations.
- **Detective Chinatown II:** Provided legal services for the investment, filming and production of this major film, showcasing the firm's capability in handling high-profile entertainment projects.

Yingzi Liu

Partner Yingzi Liu is a key figure in Hylands' Media & Entertainment practice, bringing a wealth of knowledge and international perspective to her practice. Her expertise encompasses: cultural and creative projects, litigation and arbitration, celebrity and artist services, as well as IP protection. Meanwhile, her contributions to the legal field have been recognised through her selection as an expert member of the Rule of Law Talent Pool for SMEs of China, reflecting her commitment to supporting small and medium enterprises.

Practice Areas & Cases

- Legal due diligence, financing, IP protection and transaction advice for diverse talent-driven projects, including films, TV, animations, living performances, games, art and exhibitions, merchandising and licensing deals, with an emphasis on cross-border transactions.
- Effective dispute resolution for entertainment industry clients, securing a notable victory for Huayi Brothers and director Mr Feng Xiaogang in the copyright case involving the film "Youth".

Professional Affiliations

- Member of the Legal Committee of the China TV Drama Production Industry Association.

Honours & Awards

- **Chambers and Partners:** ranked in TMT: Media & Entertainment (PRC Firms) in the Greater China Region Guide for 2024–2025.
- **The Legal 500:** listed as a Recommended Lawyer in TMT for the Asia-Pacific region from 2021–2024.

Sports

Business Launches & Enterprise Compliance; Dispute Resolution; CSR



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Established in 1997, Beijing Hylands Law Firm is one of China's most renowned full-service commercial law firms, garnering recognition from such esteemed legal directories as Chambers and Partners, The Legal 500 and China Business Law Journal. Notably, in 2021, the firm was honoured with the "Law Firm of the Year" award by China Business Law Journal for its excellence in such areas as media, entertainment and sports.

Today, Hylands' Sports & Entertainment Law practice comes highly recommended for its comprehensive services across the entire industry chain. The firm's expertise encompasses IP operations, business launches, investment, financing, M&A, restructuring, tax compliance, enterprise compliance and dispute resolution.

Hylands is dedicated to legal excellence and contributing to the broader community. To this end, the firm has implemented a comprehensive training system, including initiatives like the "Seedling Program" and "Forest Program", aimed at nurturing young legal talent. Hylands also emphasises the importance of social responsibility – via programmes focused on providing legal support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as participating in public welfare activities.

Yingzi Liu

At the forefront of Hylands' Sports & Entertainment Law practice is Partner Yingzi Liu. With a Bachelor of Law from Capital University of Economics & Business and an LLM in Banking, Corporate & Finance from Fordham University School of Law, Ms Liu brings a wealth of knowledge and international perspective to her practice. Her notable achievements include advising on cultural and creative projects, providing comprehensive legal services in due diligence, investment and financing, production, distribution, as well as M&A. She has significant experience in cross-border transactions and has represented clients in litigation and arbitration. Ms Liu has further advised on services centred around celebrities and artists, IP protection, as well as foreign investment in the sports business. One of her notable accomplishments includes advising on M&A in the cultural, entertainment and technology sectors, with deal amounts exceeding RMB 16 billion.

Practice Areas & Cases

- Effective dispute resolution for sports industry clients.
- Sports law expertise, providing IP protection advice for the NBA, M&A transaction advice for ESPN and UEFA licensing support for Chinese enterprises, as well as personal brand and dispute management for elite athletes.

Professional Affiliations

- Council Member of the China Law Society's Sports Law Research Association.
- Deputy Secretary-General and Council Member of the Beijing Law Society's Sports Law and Olympics Legal Affairs Research Association.

Honours & Awards

- **China Business Law Journal:** named a Rising Star – among the top 60 up-and-coming lawyers in China for 2022.
- **Chambers and Partners:** ranked in TMT: Media & Entertainment (PRC Firms) in the Greater China Region Guide for 2024–2025.
- **The Legal 500:** listed as a Recommended Lawyer in TMT for the Asia-Pacific region from 2021–2024.

Venture Capital

Private Equity; Cross-Border Investment; Financing



Candice Du

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Candice Du is the lead Partner of the transaction team at Llinks Law Office (Shenzhen Office). Meanwhile, she is also an arbitrator at the Shenzhen Court of International Arbitration (SCIA).

In the field of private equity / venture capital, Candice's clients include renowned domestic and international investment funds, multinational corporations, startups and rapidly growing enterprises – spanning such industries as AI, industrial and advanced manufacturing, new energy, pharma and life sciences.

Candice has been recognised in numerous rankings by prestigious legal rating institutions, including:

- "China Legal Elite Top 40" (2025) by GCProfiles
- "The A-List: Rising Stars" (2024–2025) by China Business Law Journal (CBLJ)
- "Highly Recommended Lawyer for Investment Funds & Private Equity" (2025), "Recommended Lawyer for Investment Funds" (2024, 2023) and "Recommended Lawyer for Private Equity" (2021) by The Legal 500 Greater China Region Edition; additionally recognised as a key lawyer in Private Equity (2026)
- "Top 15 Female Lawyers in China" (2024), "Top 30 Rising Legal Talents in China" (2016) and "Client First Choice: Top 15 Regional Rising Stars" (2020) by LEGALBAND
- "South China Top 15 Rising Lawyers" (2023) by Asian Legal Business (ALB)
- "Outstanding Legal Professional Award in the Greater Bay Area" (2025) and "Top 10 Outstanding Young Lawyers" (2020) by CLECSS
- "40 Under 40 Asia" (2025) by LexisNexis

Candice has consistently received acclaim from clients over the years.

Client Testimonial

"Faced with highly challenging transactional issues and complex disputes, Ms Candice Du can swiftly clarify the key points and get straight to the heart of the matter. While comprehensively managing the pace and risks of transactions for clients, she efficiently advances deals with her professional legal expertise. Her solution design and collaborative communication skills have earned widespread praise from clients."

Commercial Litigation



Shri Venkatesh

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SKV Law Offices, established in 2012 in New Delhi, is a distinguished full-service law firm known for its deeply specialised and high-stakes legal practice. The firm operates through its two principal offices – Delhi (Defence Colony) and Mumbai (Nariman Point) – and has cultivated a national reputation for its proficiency in commercial company litigation, dispute resolution, energy and infrastructure law, environmental law, insolvency and restructuring, as well as arbitration.

Guided by its mission to deliver pragmatic, outcome-orientated legal solutions, SKV marries domain expertise with innovative thinking. It has been regularly retained by major private and public sector clients to handle complex commercial controversies, regulatory disputes, insolvency proceedings, as well as energy or environmental litigation.

At the core of SKV's litigative strength is Shri Venkatesh, Founding Partner and Head of the firm's Disputes & Regulatory practice. For more than 16 years, Mr Venkatesh has had a commanding presence before the Supreme Court of India, various High Courts, tribunals and commissions in matters involving commercial suits, regulatory contours, arbitration, insolvency and sector-specific regulation.

Mr Venkatesh's litigation portfolio includes: Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) in the Supreme Court challenging High Court judgments across India; Statutory Civil Appeals in such sophisticated domains as energy, competition and environmental law; as well as Transfer Petitions in the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, he has represented and advised both creditors and corporate debtors under the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code, in proceedings before both the National Company Law Tribunal and the Supreme Court. His IBC litigation work addresses contested defaults, resolution plans and creditor-debtor rights.

He has led numerous arbitration matters, both domestic and international, representing clients before sitting and retired judicial members. His authorship – most notably, a recent contribution analysing possible modifications to arbitral awards post–Sections 34 and 37 reforms – demonstrates his deep involvement in thought leadership on arbitration jurisprudence.

SKV, under Mr Venkatesh's leadership, has represented a wide range of major power, infrastructure, energy and corporate entities, including Tata Power, Reliance Power, Vedanta, NTPC, NHPC, Damodar Valley Corporation and others:

- **Delhi High Court Injunction, IDBI Bank vs SEUPPTCL:** SKV acted for the transferee in a high-value bank guarantee dispute worth ₹58.5 crore, successfully obtaining interim injunctive relief.
- **Cogoport–Mituj Arbitration:** SKV's team obtained an award of ₹24–41 crore against Cogoport for illegal SPA termination, led by Shri Venkatesh alongside Aditya Vardhan Sharma.
- **Tata Power–Druk Green Hydropower Deal:** SKV advised Tata Power in a strategic investment in the 600 MW Kholongchhu hydropower project in Bhutan.
- **Renewable Energy Writ Petitions:** SKV represented renewable generators before the Supreme Court in AP tariff disputes and transfer petitions.
- **Income Tax Section 80-IA Case:** The firm successfully argued before the Supreme Court for Jindal Steel & Power in a landmark market-value interpretation dispute.

Employment

TMT; Intellectual Property; M&A



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Kochhar & Co. is one of India's leading corporate law firms. With more than 200 lawyers, the firm has a pan-India presence with full-service offices in the seven prominent cities, namely New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Gurugram, Hyderabad and Chandigarh, as well as three overseas offices – Dubai, Chicago and Toronto.

Savitha Kesav Jagadeesan is the Senior Resident Partner, based in the firm's Chennai office. In addition to heading the IP practice in Chennai, her areas of expertise include employment law, corporate transactional law and TMT.

Ms Jagadeesan provides extensive advice on labour matters, including employer-employee disputes, termination issues and industrial relations. Her work involves advising on retrenchments, terminations and layoffs under Indian labour laws. She has further conducted domestic inquiry processes and advised on labour transaction matters, such as company unit hive-offs, business transfer agreements, asset purchases and acquisitions.

Meanwhile, she has provided guidance on employee hires in foreign holding companies and speaks at various forums – also facilitating training on employment-related issues, including labour compliance, the new labour codes and other subjects related to employment law. She has served as an external member of the Internal Complaints Committee (IC) for several companies, advising on matters related to workplace harassment and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH).

She commented: "Notably, I was involved in the setup of the GCC on its entry into India, advising on a variety of employment issues, such as preparation of employment contracts, service contracts with clients, review of employment policies, as well as advice on aspects related to overtime and gratuity payments. More recently, I assisted a Fortune 500 company in selling of one of its business verticals along with its employees to another entity, which included strategising the structure of the hive-off, drafting and negotiating the business transfer agreements, as well as advice on the steps for employee transfer."

In her other specialist areas, Ms Jagadeesan advises numerous large foreign and domestic clients on negotiating and managing joint ventures, private equity investment documentation, FDI, technical collaborations, share and asset purchase deals, M&A, as well as investment strategies in India. In addition to dealing with traditional IP rights issues, she manages IP portfolios – in both litigation and prosecution – across diverse industry sectors, including FMCG, auto parts, IT, education, media and entertainment.

Regarding her accolades, Ms Jagadeesan has been featured by Forbes India as one of the Top 100 Legal Professionals in India. Business Today named her among the Top 15 lawyers in Corporate Commercial Law in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Moreover, she is included in the prestigious A-List of the India Business Law Journal among India's Top 100 Legal Professionals, and has been recognised as one of the Top 100 IP Professionals by Asia IP – as well as among the top 100 Women IP Professionals by the World IP Forum.

Joint Ventures

Corporate/Commercial; Transactions: M&A, PE/VC & Funds; Intellectual Property



Aaron Solomon

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Aaron Solomon is the Managing Partner of Solomon & Co., a full-service Indian law firm headquartered in Mumbai, with multiple offices in Mumbai and Pune. With more than 25 years' legal practice, Mr Solomon is a fourth-generation solicitor who brings unmatched experience and insight into India's complex legal and business environment. He qualified as an advocate in 1995, and ranked first in the All-India Solicitor's Examination in 1996. Prior to joining Solomon & Co. in 2006, he was a Partner at two major Indian law firms.

Today, Mr Solomon specialises in a wide range of transactional work, including M&A, joint ventures, exchange control regulations, private equity, investment funds, capital markets, banking and securities laws. His approach is hands-on and collaborative, with a proven ability to lead and execute large, cross-border and high-value transactions.

He has advised an extensive and diverse roster of Indian and multi-national clients across such sectors as banking and finance, technology, defence, agribusiness and renewable energy. Notable mandates include advising Jain Irrigation on a US$120 million investment by Mandala Capital – the largest private equity investment in the Indian agri-tech sector – and representing Fonroche Energie S.A.S. in the sale of two solar power plants to the Hinduja Group.

Mr Solomon's clients include global and domestic entities, such as Larsen & Toubro, MAN Trucks, Hewlett Packard and several others. Meanwhile, he serves as an empanelled adviser to several banks and financial services companies, including HSBC Bank, L&T Finance, Bank of Baroda, State Bank of India and Bank of Maharashtra. He is also actively involved in advising startups and handling technology transactions, reflecting his adaptability and forward-looking mindset in an evolving legal ecosystem.

In addition to his legal practice, Mr Solomon is a member of the Association of Independent European Lawyers, and is further affiliated with two other leading international networks, Alliott Global Alliance and Pragma International – enabling the firm to support clients seamlessly across jurisdictions and collaborate effectively on cross-border matters. He also heads the Mumbai Chapter of the Association, and is President of the Friends of Tel Aviv University in India.

Under his leadership, Solomon & Co. has expanded into a multi-disciplinary firm with a strong presence in Corporate/M&A, banking and finance, dispute resolution, IP and real estate. Accordingly, the firm is ranked among India's most reputable law firms by Chambers and Partners, The Legal 500 and Benchmark Litigation.

With a legacy spanning more than 115 years, Solomon & Co. continues to thrive under Mr Solomon's vision of excellence, client-centric service and commitment to navigating the complexities of Indian and international law.

Regulatory



Shri Venkatesh

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Founded in New Delhi in 2012, SKV Law Offices is a full-service legal practice distinguished by its entrepreneurial ethos and solution-driven work culture. With dual offices in Delhi and Mumbai, the firm spans a wide scope of legal expertise, including general dispute resolution, corporate advisory, real estate, taxation and – its strategic focus – energy, infrastructure and regulatory law.

SKV's growth has been fuelled by its ability to deliver consistent, high-value legal services tailored to its clients' pressing needs. The firm serves a diverse clientele, including infrastructure companies, power utilities, associations and financial institutions. Its regulatory practice is significant, representing major players before such bodies as the CERC, state electricity regulatory commissions (SERCs), APTEL, NCLT and the Supreme Court of India.

Shri Venkatesh, Founding Partner and Head of the Disputes & Regulatory Practice, steers the firm's high-stakes engagement with regulatory law. With 16 years at the bar in New Delhi, he has built a formidable reputation before the Supreme Court, various High Courts, tribunals and quasi-judicial bodies.

Mr Venkatesh's strengths include:

- **Supreme Court & High Court Advocacy:** Frequently appears in Special Leave Petitions (SLPs), statutory civil appeals and transfer petitions.
- **Regulatory Leadership:** Advises state and central electricity commissions on licensing, tariff regime framing, energy sector policy and dispute resolution.
- **Thematic Expertise:** His practice spans energy, competition and environmental law, as well as arbitration, insolvency and bankruptcy.
- **Insolvency & Arbitration:** Represents stakeholders – including financial creditors and corporate debtors – before NCLT and the Supreme Court.
- **High-Value Client Portfolio:** Counsels and represents Tata Power & subsidiaries, Reliance Power & infra entities, Vedanta, Nabha Power, NTPC, Damodar Valley Corporation, NHPC, National Solar Energy Federation, Association of Power Producers and others.

Firm affiliations include the Bar Council of Delhi, the Supreme Court Bar Association, the Energy Bar Association, as well as the Delhi High Court Bar Association.

Last, but not least, SKV's regulatory practice – which encompasses representation before CERC, SERCs (MERC, UPERC, WBERC, TN GEC, etc) and appellate tribunals, such as APTEL – includes such notable triumphs as:

- **CERC** – Teesta Low Dam IV tariff review petition (₹21 cr of IEDC), resulting in unit-wise apportionment win (March 2025).
- **MERC** – Secured critical approval for Tata Power Distribution's 200 MW medium-term procurement scheme (March 2025).
- **CERC** – Successfully represented TPREL in a GNA regs petition to allow financial documents from its subsidiary under GNA (January 2025).
- **CERC** – Represented NTPC and NTPC Renewable Energy (Jan 2025) for CPSU solar tariff adoption under Change in Law.
- **APTEL** – Assisted Rosa Power in a UPERC truing up appeal invalidating underestimation of IOwC (May 2025).

SKV has further secured victory in tariff procurement and licensing matters for clients including NHPC, NTPC RE, Tata Power and numerous private sector generators.

Bankruptcy

Dispute Resolution; Projects & Construction; Energy & Resources



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Agus Dwi Prasetyo, Managing Partner of ADP Counsellors at Law, has more than a decade's experience in insolvency and commercial litigation.

Mr Dwi Prasetyo specialises in bankruptcy, debt restructuring, corporate reorganisation and business closure, and is widely recognised for his strong negotiation and litigation capabilities. He is a member of the Indonesian Advocates Association (PERADI) and the Indonesian Association of Receivers & Administrators (AKPI), reflecting his active involvement in the country's legal and insolvency community.

Today, Mr Dwi Prasetyo provides comprehensive legal services in the field of insolvency, advising and representing clients in Suspension of Debt Payment Obligations (PKPU) and bankruptcy proceedings, including appointments as court-appointed administrator or receiver. His work further includes the verification and reconciliation of creditors' claims, formulation of debt restructuring schemes, as well as legal handling of liquidation and business closure. Combining strategic legal insight with a strong understanding of commercial realities, he offers effective solutions for both debtors and creditors.

Meanwhile, he regularly assists clients from various sectors, such as financing companies, national and international banks, oil and gas enterprises, as well as state-owned companies – addressing legal needs related to insolvency, restructuring, dissolution and commercial disputes.

Professional Highlights: Bankruptcy, Insolvency & Restructuring

- Represented a leading Indonesian private bank in filing a petition for the annulment of a ratified peace agreement (homologation) against an Internet service provider by reviewing the fulfilment of obligations under the agreement, as well as preparing for further insolvency proceedings, with a transaction value of IDR 90,073,986,006.32;
- Acted as administrator in a court-supervised Suspension of Debt Payment Obligations to facilitate the formulation of a fair and acceptable debt restructuring scheme, verified creditors' claims, conducted reconciliation and classification of debts in compliance with prevailing laws, with a transaction value of IDR 86,689,095,853;
- Assisted a leading Indian palm oil plantation company in serving as the liquidator for the liquidation and dissolution of two Indonesian subsidiary companies, with total managed assets amounting to IDR 15,634,756,569.

Through Mr Dwi Prasetyo's leadership, ADP Counsellors at Law has garnered several notable recognitions that reflect its growing presence and commitment to excellence in the Indonesian legal sector. Since its establishment in 2019, the firm has been named one of the Top 99 Indonesian Corporate Law Firms by Hukumonline – and was further recognised in 2022 as a Rising Star Full-Service Law Firm and Rising Star Litigation Practice Law Firm, also by Hukumonline.

Intellectual Property

Trademark; Patent; Copyright



Chamelia Sari

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Established in 1996, PRAWIRANEGARA Intellectual Property has emerged as a leading law firm in Indonesia, specialising in comprehensive IP services. With its headquarters in Jakarta and an additional office in Bali, the firm is strategically positioned to serve a diverse clientele, including individuals, startups, SMEs, government institutions and multinational corporations. The firm's commitment to excellence is reflected in its tailored solutions, which address the unique IP challenges faced by clients across various industries.

PRAWIRANEGARA offers a full spectrum of IP services, including:

- **Trademarks:** Conducting clearance searches, registration, renewals, assignments, licensing, monitoring and litigation.
- **Patents:** Providing patent drafting, filing, prosecution and enforcement services.
- **Copyrights:** Assisting with registration, licensing and protection of creative works.
- **Industrial Designs:** Handling registration and enforcement of design rights.
- **Geographical Indications:** Advising on the protection of products linked to specific geographic origins.
- **Trade Secrets:** Offering strategies to safeguard confidential business information.

The firm's integrated approach ensures that clients receive end-to-end support, from initial consultations to enforcement actions.

PRAWIRANEGARA's influence extends beyond Indonesia – with established collaborations in more than 198 countries. This global network enables the firm to assist clients in navigating international IP landscapes effectively. The firm's excellence has also been acknowledged through several prestigious awards, such as: International Professional Award (2004) from the Ministry of Research & Technology, Republic of Indonesia; Global Awards Winner (2010, 2017) from Corporate INTL magazine, UK; Annual Awards Winner (2013, 2015) from Global Law Experts, UK; as well as Corporate IP Lawyer of the Year in Indonesia (2020) from Leaders in Law, UK.

Chamelia Sari

Leading PRAWIRANEGARA is Managing Partner Chamelia Sari, a distinguished IP attorney with a robust academic and professional background. Ms Sari holds a Bachelor of Economy from LABORA School of Management (2001), an LLB from Universitas Krisnadwipayana (2004) and two LLM degrees – one from Gadjah Mada University (2011) and another from Northeastern University School of Law, US (2018), specialising in IP & Technology. Her international training includes programmes at Harvard Law School and UC Davis School of Law.

Ms Sari's professional affiliations are extensive. She is a member of the Association of Indonesian Advocates (PERADI) and the Association of Indonesian Intellectual Property Consultants (AKHKI). Internationally, she serves as Vice President of the Association of European Lawyers (AEA), representing the Asian region, and holds committee positions in the International Trademark Association (INTA) and the American Intellectual Property Law Association (AIPLA).

Tax Litigation



DR Mulyono SH, SE, AK, MH, MM, MKn, CPA, CA, CFP, CMA, BKP

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Mul & Co is one of a very few law firms in Indonesia to specialise in the fields of taxation. The firm was founded by experienced practitioners with multi-disciplinary backgrounds in tax, law, accounting and finance. We believe our success depends upon our clients' satisfaction; therefore, we always strive to provide clients with the best possible solution to their tax matters. The firm brings a rich understanding of Indonesia's unique business and legal culture, and is staffed by dedicated professionals with a deep understanding of business and regulations. Furthermore, we are independent and free from lengthy conflict checks processes, which can be time-consuming.

In the case that taxpayers receive unfavourable appeals or decisions from the tax court, we can assist in filing a civil review petition to the Supreme Court for reconsideration. After the objection decision has been issued by the regional tax office, the next step is the appeal process in the tax court. In the case that the tax office issues a decision other than an objection, the taxpayer can file a lawsuit to the tax court, and at this stage we can represent the taxpayers as their legal counsel. If the taxpayers disagree with the tax assessment letters as the result of a tax audit, the taxpayer can file for objection to the regional tax office, and the regional tax office will issue an objection decision.

Meanwhile, we can assist taxpayers in handling tax audits. For example, in an overpayment position (income tax and VAT), the taxpayer can file for a restitution to the tax office. In this matter, we can represent, advise and assist in preparing the necessary documentation. Corporate taxpayers may also need to undertake corporate restructuring to comply with regulations – since efficient and early planning adds value to a transaction by reducing both actual transaction tax costs and long-term sustainable rates.

Operating at the helm of Mul & Co is DR Mulyono, who is passionate to learn and share about taxation, accounting, finance and legal topics. Accordingly, he has accounting, finance and legal backgrounds, as well as triple Master's in finance, law and notary – and several professional certifications. These include: Certified Public Accountant, Chartered Accountant, Certified Financial Planner, Certified Management Accountant and Affiliate Wealth Manager. He is also a licensed legal counsel in the tax court, a licensed advocate and member of the Indonesian Advocate Association (PERADI), as well as a registered tax consultant. Before setting up Mul & Co, he accrued extensive working experience in tax and legal environments. His experience in taxation extends to disputes, due diligence, advisory, compliance and company restructuring – and today he serves a variety of multinational clients from such industries as manufacturing, trading, real estate, mining, oil and gas, telecoms and hospitality.

Banking & Finance

Structured & Project Finance; Banking & Trust; Real Estate Investment & Financial Regulation



Toshikazu Sakai

Partner Attorney / Legal Profession Corporation CastGlobal
Certified Public Tax Accountant / CastGlobal Tax Corporation CastGlobal Group
Outside Director / The Shikoku Bank, Ltd.

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With a legal career spanning more than two decades, Partner Attorney Toshikazu Sakai, who is also a Certified Public Tax Accountant, brings extensive experience in both domestic and cross-border corporate legal and tax affairs, with a particular focus on financial practice.

- **Education & Early Career:** Completed his legal training at the Legal Training & Research Institute of the Supreme Court of Japan in 1999, and commenced his career at Nagashima, Ohno & Tsunematsu (one of the Big Four) as an Associate.
- **Subsequent Roles:** Served as Special Counsel at Bingham McCutchen Murase (NY firm), Tokyo office, from 2008, later at Anderson Mori & Tomotsune (another of the Big Four) starting in 2015. In 2020, joined Wizards Worldwide (London firm), Tokyo branch, as Special Counsel, before becoming a Partner at CastGlobalGroup in 2021.
- **Secondments:** Seconded to leading Japanese and foreign financial institutions; MUFG Bank in Tokyo, Deutsche Securities Inc., and JP Investment (Japan Post Group).
- **Additional Roles:** Serves as an outside Director of The Shikoku Bank, Ltd., a licensed local bank under the Banking Act and listed on Prime Market of Tokyo Stock Exchange, and as a compliance officer of a foreign investment advisory firm, which is registered as the Investment Advisory Business Operator under the Financial Instruments & Exchange Act in Japan.

CastGlobalGroup brings together an exceptional team of legal, financial and business professionals, which has 15 professional group companies (a law firm, a tax accountant firm and a judicial scrivener firm, etc); a trust company that has licences not only for the Trust Business but also Type II Financial Instruments Business and the Real Estate Brokerage Business; as well as several other group companies, including consulting companies. The group provides comprehensive professional services for cross-border transactions for clients in Japan and overseas, including:

- **FDI**
  1. **Real Estate Investment:** Mr Sakai and CastGlobalGroup provide professional services when foreign investors invest in real estate in Japan. It is common to use certain tax-saving structures with establishment of real estate funds by SPC schemes, such as (i) GK-TK scheme and (ii) TMK scheme. In recent years, trust schemes have become a new trend, such as STO (securities token offering), whose underlying asset is a Special Beneficial Interest in Securities Issuing Trust (SBIST). At present, CastGlobal Trust is the only trust company to accept direct investment by foreign investors in real estate in Japan through SBIST.
  2. **Equity Investment:** Mr Sakai and CastGlobalGroup further provide professional services when foreign companies or individuals invest in Japanese listed and private companies.
- **Banking & Finance**
  1. Advice on the establishment and regulation of investment funds, such as real estate funds (real estate securitisation), as well as private equity funds;
  2. Project finance, including PFI and PPP;
  3. Various trust businesses, such as trusts for real estate investment, including SBIST;
  4. Obtaining various financial and real estate licences, such as under the Financial Instruments & Exchange Act (FIEA), the Real Estate Specified Joint Enterprise Act, the Fund Transfer Business Act, the Money Lending Business Act, the Real Estate Business Act, etc; and
  5. The establishment of various compliance systems, including preventative measures.

Regulatory

FinTech; Finance & Financial Institutions; International Practice



Keisuke Hatano

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Keisuke Hatano is a Partner at Anderson Mōri & Tomotsune (AMT). Mr Hatano specialises in payment- and settlement-related regulations. He has also been involved in a number of significant finance transactions, including representing clients in many cross-border and domestic litigations on finance-related matters, among others.

During his time at AMT, he was also seconded to the Financial Services Agency of Japan (FSA), where he was an instrumental part of the team tasked with making significant amendments to the Banking Act with the aim of facilitating a pro-FinTech ecosystem and environment in Japan.

In addition, Mr Hatano serves as a member of the committee on self-regulation of the Japan Association for Financial APIs, which is a self-regulatory body certified by the FSA under the Banking Act.

In the period spanning 2023–2025, leveraging his knowledge in payment and settlement-related regulations – and his experience working at the FSA – Mr Hatano played significant roles in several leading stablecoin projects under the new regime established under the amended Payment Services Act.

Trademark

Patents; Designs



Masahiro Asamura

Senior Managing Partner
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Masahiro Asamura is Senior Managing Partner and an experienced lawyer who manages ASAMURA IP P.C. and Asamura Law Offices. He specialises in IP litigation and disputes related to patent, trademark, designs, copyright and Unfair Competition Prevention Act (UCPA) matters.

He is further experienced in handling invalidation trials, warning letter correspondence, negotiations and licensing. As each such case is unique, Mr Asamura regularly teams up with other patent attorneys to utilise a team approach that is proven to be highly successful and efficient.

Prior to joining ASAMURA, he gained experience as a lawyer at Kagoshima District Court. Moreover, at Nagashima & Hashimoto, he acted as an associate focusing on domestic and international legal disputes. He established Asamura Law Offices in 2011 – a dedicated law firm that provides clients with expert legal guidance in disputes concerning IP rights.

As a Master's degree student at the University of Edinburgh, he researched a method for the quantitative analysis of iron components in soil. At Lancaster University, he conducted research on a method for analysing compositional changes in fumaric acid and fulvic acid by soil depth.

Mr Asamura was also involved in examining court cases and the Japanese litigation system when he served as a member of the Japan Patent Attorneys Association's Amicus Brief Committee.

Energy

Corporate/M&A; Banking & Finance; Project Finance



Madiyar Bekturganov

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Zan Hub LLP is a distinguished law firm based in Astana, Kazakhstan, known for its comprehensive legal services across various sectors, with a particular emphasis on energy law. Established as part of the Attorneys Group Zanger in 2016, Zan Hub has cultivated a reputation for excellence in advising both domestic and international clients on complex legal matters. The firm's expertise encompasses corporate and M&A, banking and finance, project finance, public-private partnerships (PPP), as well as capital markets, among other areas.

Zan Hub's proficiency in energy law is evidenced by its involvement in numerous high-profile projects within Kazakhstan's energy sector. The firm's legal team is recognised for providing exceptional support to energy initiatives, including the development of power plants, distribution networks and renewable energy projects – such as solar, wind and hydropower. Zan Hub offers comprehensive legal services in this domain, covering aspects like regulatory compliance, financing arrangements and the drafting of Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contracts.

Madiyar Bekturganov

Leading Zan Hub's energy law practice is Madiyar Bekturganov, Partner. Holding an LLM from Kazakh Humanity & Law University and a BA in Law from Almaty State University, Mr Bekturganov is fluent in Kazakh, Russian, English and Turkish. His legal acumen spans various sectors, including energy and power, transportation, infrastructure and construction.

Mr Bekturganov has played a pivotal role in several significant projects, including:

- Advising on the construction of the Balkhash Coal Power Plant, a project exceeding US$4 billion in investments.
- Providing legal counsel to the European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD) on financing transport infrastructure, district heating, water supply and electricity supply projects across Kazakhstan.
- Assisting Royal Dutch Shell in the acquisition of BG Group's assets in Kazakhstan, a deal valued at more than US$70 billion, marking it as the largest M&A transaction globally in 2015.
- Guiding Samruk Energy in the US$1.3 billion acquisition of a 50% stake in the Ekibastus Gres-1 power plant from Kazakhmys.

Beyond transactional work, Mr Bekturganov contributes to legislative development – participating in working groups aimed at improving Kazakhstan's electric capacity market legislation.

Commercial

Commercial Dispute Resolution; Commercial Contracts; Employment & Industrial Relations



Yan Leong

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Yan Leong, Founding Partner at Foo Leong Tan & Chan, is a corporate and commercial lawyer, called to the Malaysian Bar in 2016. Her commercial practice mainly focuses on dispute resolution and advisory matters. Over the years, she has acted for a wide range of clients, from SMEs to established companies, across such industries as construction, food and beverage, education, printing, IT, beauty and retail, to name but a few.

In the area of commercial dispute resolution, she has represented companies in litigation primarily involving breach of contract, non-performance and debt recovery claims. Her approach goes beyond legal positioning, working closely with clients to understand their broader commercial objectives and to tailor dispute strategies that align with business continuity, reputational risk and cost-efficiency. Depending on the circumstances, this has included aggressive court enforcement – such as obtaining injunctions, freezing orders and writs of seizure and sale. In other situations, she has secured favourable outcomes through negotiated settlements, restructuring of payment obligations or the strategic termination of unfavourable agreements.

Ms Leong noted: "My commercial advisory work encompasses drafting and negotiating a wide range of agreements, including service-level agreements, distribution contracts, software licensing terms, partnership arrangements, affiliate agreements and compliance-related documents under personal data protection laws. I frequently advise on risk allocation, indemnity provisions, limitation of liability clauses and dispute resolution mechanisms – ensuring each agreement is aligned with the client's commercial objectives and operational realities. Leveraging my litigation background, I take a practical approach to contract drafting, aiming to pre-empt disputes and ensure that the terms are not only legally sound, but also enforceable in the relevant business setting."

In the employment and industrial relations space, Ms Leong has acted for employers in defending claims of wrongful and constructive dismissal before the Industrial Court. She has further advised on a range of employment issues, including employee misconduct, domestic inquiries, strikes, retrenchment exercises and employee terminations or exits.

Meanwhile, she is a member of the Malaysian Bar, an affiliate of the Malaysian Institute of Chartered Secretaries & Administrators (MAICSA), as well as a legal adviser to several community organisations and temples. She was honoured to be recognised as one of The Elite by The Page in 2022 – and to be accepted as a member of British Publishing House Ltd's Successful People in Malaysia & Singapore in July 2024.

Ms Leong added: "A recent challenge I've observed in my practice is the increasingly fast-paced evolution of the legal and commercial landscape. Many emerging issues – such as new financing models, hybrid employment structures and cross-industry collaborations – are not yet well established in conventional legal frameworks, but they do exist and are becoming more common. As legal advisers, we must stay ahead of market developments, understand evolving business models and translate them into practical legal strategies for our clients. To overcome this, I constantly update myself on industry trends, regulatory shifts and commercial innovations to ensure my advice remains commercially relevant, forward-thinking and grounded in the client's real-world context."

Corporate

Company Shareholding Structuring; Corporate Drafting; Corporate Dispute Resolution



Yan Leong

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Yan Leong, Founding Partner at Foo Leong Tan & Chan, is a corporate and commercial lawyer, called to the Malaysian Bar in 2016. Her corporate practice focuses primarily on dispute resolution and advisory matters. Over the years, she has acted for clients across a diverse range of industries, including – but not limited to – construction, IT and e-commerce, food and beverage, education and training, printing and signage, beauty, as well as religious and charitable organisations.

Ms Leong's work further includes handling complex shareholder disputes involving minority oppression, boardroom deadlocks and breaches of directors' duties. She successfully resolved a shareholder dispute through a High Court action that resulted in a favourable buy-out at market value. In another matter, she acted for the minority shareholders of a company in resolving a boardroom deadlock via negotiated corporate restructuring and exit provisions.

She noted: "I regularly advise companies on internal governance, restructuring and compliance with Malaysian company law. Notably, I assisted a mid-sized company in establishing its presence in Malaysia, from structuring its shareholding with a foreign holding company to the issuance of preference shares and subscription of ordinary shares in the Malaysian entity, including drafting the shareholders' agreement and subscription agreement. I also provide ongoing advisory services to several non-profit religious organisations on regulatory compliance, land-related matters and trustee responsibilities."

In addition, Ms Leong is an active member of the Malaysian Bar, an affiliate of the Malaysian Institute of Chartered Secretaries & Administrators (MAICSA), as well as a legal adviser to several community organisations and temples. She was honoured to be recognised as one of The Elite by The Page in 2022 – and to be accepted as a member of British Publishing House Ltd's Successful People in Malaysia & Singapore in July 2024.

One of her key strengths is her patience and attentiveness in understanding each client's unique circumstances and ultimate goals. She takes the time to understand where the client is coming from, both commercially and personally, before proposing tailored legal solutions.

She explained: "I believe in offering practical options, explaining the pros and cons of each – and working closely with the client to determine the most effective course of action. This approach allows me to provide legal advice that is not only sound in law, but also aligned with the client's long-term interests and business realities.

"Meanwhile, a recent challenge I faced in my practice was the perception of youth, which initially caused some clients to question my experience or authority. While I cannot change how young I appear, I've learned to overcome this by letting the quality of my work speak for itself. I focus on being well prepared, responsive and clear in my communication – making sure that clients feel heard and supported from the very first meeting. I also take the time to explain legal strategies in a way that builds trust and demonstrates competence. Over time, clients who were initially hesitant became my strongest advocates, referring others based on the results I delivered."

Trademark Advisory

Patent; Copyright; Industrial Design



Low Chee Keong

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Established in 2013, IPMAN Global Intellect Sdn Bhd is a leading IP consultancy firm based in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. Specialising in trademark advisory, patent registration, copyright protection and industrial design services, IPMAN has positioned itself as a trusted partner for businesses seeking complete IP solutions. With a commitment to excellence and innovation, the firm has garnered recognition for its contributions to the IP landscape in Malaysia and the broader Asia-Pacific region.

Leading IPMAN is Low Chee Keong, a skilled professional with extensive experience in the field of IP. As Managing Partner, Mr Low brings a wealth of knowledge and a strategic vision that has propelled the firm to its current stature. His affiliations with the Malaysia Intellectual Property Corporation and the Singapore Intellectual Property Office underscore his commitment to staying abreast of the latest developments in IP law.

Today, IPMAN offers a comprehensive suite of services designed to protect and enhance the value of clients' intellectual assets. These include:

- **Trademark Advisory:** Assistance with trademark searches, applications and registrations to safeguard brand identity.
- **Patent Registration:** Guidance through the patenting process to secure inventions and innovations.
- **Copyright Protection:** Strategies to protect original works of authorship, including literary, artistic and musical creations.
- **Industrial Design Services:** Protection of the visual design of objects that are not purely utilitarian.
- **ISO Certification Support:** Assistance in obtaining ISO certifications, enhancing organisational credibility and operational efficiency.

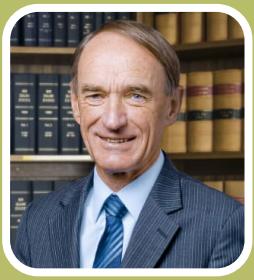
Moreover, IPMAN's dedication to excellence has been acknowledged through various accolades, including: National Quality Expert in the field of Intellectual Property 2022, World Trademark Review 1000 Recommended Firm 2022, World Trademark Review 1000 Recommended Firm 2021, Leading Intellectual Property Protection & Enforcement Advisor of the Year 2021, Most Innovative Intellectual Property Firm Award 2020, European Quality Choice Award 2019, Asia-Pacific Entrepreneur Excellence Brand Award in 2018, First ISO22301 Intellectual Property Consultancy Firm with business continuity practice in the Books of Malaysia Records, as well as UKAS ISO 9001 Quality Management System for provision of Intellectual Property.

IPMAN has also established itself as a pioneer in the IP services sector within the Iskandar Economic Zone of Malaysia. The firm's strategic location enables it to serve as a bridge between Malaysian enterprises and international markets – particularly Singapore. By offering tailored IP solutions, IPMAN empowers businesses to navigate the complexities of IP law and leverage their intangible assets for competitive advantage.

Central to IPMAN's success is its client-centric philosophy. The firm prides itself on delivering personalised services that address the unique needs of each client. By prioritising long-term relationships and maintaining open lines of communication, IPMAN ensures that clients are always well-informed and confident in their IP strategies.

Arbitration

ADR



Alan Galbraith KC

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Established in 1986, Shortland Chambers has become synonymous with legal excellence in New Zealand. Located in Auckland, the chambers is home to 38 barristers, including 20 King's Counsel (KCs), making it the most KC-populated set in the country. Renowned for its depth of expertise across commercial, civil, criminal and regulatory law, Shortland Chambers stands out for its formidable arbitration and ADR capabilities.

Shortland Chambers has consistently achieved top-tier recognition in leading legal directories. The set was awarded Band 1 for Dispute Resolution: The Bar in New Zealand in the Chambers Asia-Pacific Guide in both 2025 and 2026. In its 2026 edition, Chambers highlighted the set's exceptional capability across practice areas, depth of expertise, as well as experience and breadth of specialist knowledge across commercial disputes.

Members of Shortland Chambers act as both counsel and arbitrators in a broad range of disputes involving national and international parties. Their arbitration practice encompasses such areas as banking, securities, tax, financial regulation, competition, insurance and IP.

Alan Galbraith KC

Among the distinguished members of Shortland Chambers, Alan Galbraith KC stands out as a leading figure in arbitration and commercial litigation. With more than four decades' experience, he has represented such major clients as Air New Zealand, Fonterra CoOperative Ltd and the Commerce Commission.

Mr Galbraith's expertise spans a wide array of practice areas, including competition and fair trading, contract, civil, government and commercial disputes, insurance and IP. He has appeared in numerous high-profile cases, such as Proprietors of Wakatu v Attorney-General, Bathurst Resources Ltd v L&M Coal Holdings and Attorney-General v Strathboss.

Recognised in Band 1 for Dispute Resolution: The Bar by Chambers and Partners, Mr Galbraith is praised as "strategically excellent and a great advocate, with an innate understanding of, and rapport with, judges".

Franchise

Commercial; Mediation; Trusts & Wills



Stewart Germann

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Stewart Germann is a Partner at Stewart Germann Law Office and has more than 40 years' experience in New Zealand, acting for multiple franchise systems. He has advised franchisors across a wide spectrum of businesses throughout the region, and is passionate about franchising – regularly writing articles on the topic for both New Zealand-based publications (including Franchise Magazine) and international releases. Mr Germann frequently presents seminars and has close ties with the Franchise Association of New Zealand (FANZ). He is a past Chairman of the FANZ. Moreover, he is an experienced mediator and has a high success rate in this area. He has also been a Notary Public for many years, and is the President of the New Zealand Society of Notaries.

Stewart Germann Law Office specialises in all services related to franchising, including drafting franchise agreements and related contracts, reviewing franchise agreements, acting for franchisors and franchisees in enforcing franchise agreements, as well as advising clients on the pros and cons of a particular franchise. He acts for many overseas clients entering the New Zealand market and adapts their franchise documentation to suit New Zealand conditions.

Mr Germann noted: "We are a small firm, which means we can provide a tailored service to our clients. We are able to respond to their needs quickly and directly, and have formed lasting relationships with many, who know we can respond to their matters with speed.

"Our clients comprise a mixture of franchisors and franchisees. With franchisors, they will either be longstanding franchisors, or we will help set up the system. We will draft the agreements, issue the agreements and act for the franchisor in relation to any issue. We also act for franchisees and review and advise on the franchise agreements."

To date, the firm has been counsel to such high-profile clients as Carpet Court and Guthrie Bowron, and its selected success stories include:

- Water Babies International Ltd v Williams [2021] NZHC 2404
- Vision Personal Training Franchises Pty Ltd & Anor v Williams & Ors [2023] NZHC 2848
- Top Ten Group New Zealand Ltd v Tasman Tourism New Zealand Ltd [2024] NZHC 1508

The firm has continued to receive international recognition for its franchise law practice. In 2025, Stewart Germann Law Office was named "Highly Commended" in the Best Franchise Law Firm category at the Global Franchise Awards, held in Las Vegas. In 2026, the firm was named "Franchise Law Firm of the Year – New Zealand" at the GLOBAL 100 Awards.

Franchise

Commercial; Conveyancing; Trusts & Wills



Khushbu Sundarji

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Khushbu Sundarji, Partner at Stewart Germann Law Office, has more than 10 years' experience practising law in Australia and New Zealand. She joined the firm in 2017 to specialise in franchising, licensing and commercial contracts. To this end, she acts for multiple franchise systems and has advised franchisees across a wide spectrum of businesses throughout New Zealand. Ms Sundarji is passionate about franchising, and regularly writes articles on the topic for both New Zealand (including Franchise Magazine) and international publications. She is further involved in presenting informative seminars, and has participated in many Franchise Association of New Zealand (FANZ) events from 2020 onwards.

Stewart Germann Law Office is notable for providing comprehensive services related to franchising, such as drafting franchise agreements and the relevant contracts, as well as reviewing agreements and acting for franchisors and franchisees in enforcing such agreements.

Ms Sundarji noted: "Our main strengths include ensuring total legal support to help people deal with a business problem, or to manage any statutory or regulatory issue related to their business. We work holistically to provide this advice, which means we don't look at any single issue in isolation. Instead, it is key to truly analyse the big picture to understand how we can make a difference and improve the client's situation. We are a small firm, but we certainly punch above our weight."

Today, Stewart Germann Law Office's client base is very much a combination of franchisors and franchisees. According to Ms Sundarji, in the case of franchisors, they will either be longstanding franchisors or the firm will help set up their system – also drafting and issuing the agreements, as well as acting for the franchisor in relation to any issues that may arise. The firm is also instrumental in acting for franchisees – in order to review and advise on the resulting franchise agreements.

Last, but not least, in recognition of its high-level service offering within its specialist area, Stewart Germann Law Office was named "Highly Commended" in the Best Franchise Law Firm category at the Global Franchise Awards. In 2026, the firm was named "Franchise Law Firm of the Year – New Zealand" at the GLOBAL 100 Awards.

Immigration

Litigation



David Ryken

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Ryken & Associates, Barristers and Solicitors specialises in all areas of immigration law. As its advisers also possess comprehensive expertise in matters of litigation, they are able to bring a unique perspective to the table for their clients.

The firm is equipped to anticipate and avoid the need for appeals, as well as to maximise outcomes in applications of all types. Furthermore, its in-house collaborative approach means that if a case is being treated unfairly by a decision maker – or not in accordance with policy or law – it is well positioned to intervene. While the firm's main focus is on investor, family and corporate visa applications, it also caters to a broad array of additional categories.

David Ryken

David Ryken is the Principal / Senior Counsel of Ryken & Associates. He has practised law in New Zealand since 1989, with experience working with the Crown Solicitor in Whangarei, and subsequently with a litigation boutique firm in Auckland. Following a number of years working for well-known human rights law firm Haigh Lyon – specialising in immigration, refugee law and employment law – Mr Ryken set up his own business in 1995 to focus on litigation and immigration, including corporate immigration, judicial review, as well as tribunal work.

Today, he is an active member of a number of committees, and regularly writes papers for conferences in New Zealand, as well as internationally. Beneficially, he has a reading knowledge of a number of European languages. Meanwhile, he has, for many years, been featured in the peer-reviewed Who's Who Legal Corporate Immigration listings, and makes regular appearances on the R&A Newsroom with updates regarding news, cases, articles and more. He possesses experience in all types of litigation, and has been involved in a number of prominent cases. Following a collaborative approach, Mr Ryken's expertise is often called upon as senior counsel. With time-sensitive appeal rights, accessing prompt, senior-level advice can be critical for the client, and so he has been called upon to give evidence as an expert witness on frequent occasions.

When not at work, Mr Ryken reads avidly in a number of European languages (Russian, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese) and keeps a close eye on world events. He has an MA (Hons) in Russian language and literature and, before his law studies, was a foreign language teacher, as well as being an interpreter for New Zealand's Ministry of Defence.

Commercial

Corporate/M&A; Infrastructure; Oil & Gas



Zaki Rahman

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FGE Ebrahim Hosain is a leading full-service law firm in Pakistan, with offices strategically located in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad. Established by the esteemed jurist Justice (Retd) Fakhruddin G Ebrahim, the firm has evolved into a modern legal institution renowned for its comprehensive legal services and commitment to excellence.

FGE Ebrahim Hosain offers a broad spectrum of legal services, including: corporate and commercial law; M&A; banking and finance; energy, oil and gas; telecoms and IT; real estate and construction; employment and labour law; IP; media and entertainment; sports law; taxation and customs; as well as dispute resolution, including arbitration and litigation.

The firm has a distinguished track record in dispute resolution, particularly in arbitration. It has represented clients in proceedings under local laws and international frameworks, such as the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). Notably, FGE Ebrahim Hosain represented the Government of Pakistan in high-profile arbitration proceedings with Karkey Karadeniz Elektrik Uretim A.S. before ICSID.

Moreover, FGE Ebrahim Hosain continues to receive recognition from leading international legal directories. In the Chambers Asia-Pacific Guide 2025 and 2026, the firm was ranked Band 2 for Dispute Resolution: General Commercial in Pakistan. In its 2026 edition, Chambers highlights the firm's expertise across commercial litigation, arbitration and mediation, with particular strength in the energy sector, as well as its work in significant constitutional matters before the High Courts and Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Today, the firm's diverse clientele comprises national and multinational corporations, regulatory institutions and government entities. Notable clients include Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), Pakistan Cricket Board, British American Tobacco Group, Shell International Limited and Newsweek Pakistan.

FGE Ebrahim Hosain prides itself on providing high-quality, practical and cost-effective legal advice. At all times, the firm's lawyers strive to build long-term relationships with clients – continuously endeavouring to uphold the highest standards of legal representation.

Zaki Rahman

Zaki Rahman, Managing Partner, is a Barrister-at-Law from Lincoln's Inn and a graduate of the University of Sussex. His legal practice encompasses a wide range of areas, including commercial, company, infrastructure, oil and gas, banking, M&A and telecoms. He has served as legal counsel and expert witness in international arbitrations, including engagements by the Government of Pakistan and the Government of Balochistan in ICSID and ICC arbitrations, respectively.

Commercial

Corporate; Regulatory Compliance



Elita Joy P Quicho

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Elita Joy P Quicho is a Senior Partner at Siguion Reyna, Montecillo & Ongsiako. She is also concurrently the Partnership Secretary. She joined the firm in December 2008.

Ms Quicho's practice includes both commercial law and corporate litigation.

As a commercial law practitioner, Ms Quicho has rendered legal advice and transactional assistance to both Philippine and foreign clients on a wide range of issues. She enjoys working on cross-border corporate and commercial transactions, project finance and M&A, involving such industries as telecoms, energy and power, online gaming, banking, property development, media and advertising. She also advises clients on their data privacy, competition and antitrust concerns. She has supervised major due diligence projects of the firm on key players in the pharma, cement, offshore banking, business process outsourcing, maritime tourism, real estate and online gaming industries. Ms Quicho's practice further includes dealings with Philippine regulators, such as the Securities & Exchange Commission, the Philippine Stock Exchange and the Bureau of Internal Revenue, as well as being appointed as corporate secretary and director for various Philippine companies.

Ms Quicho's extensive background in commercial law has also led to her participation in important corporate litigation matters handled by the firm involving shareholder disputes, corporate rehabilitation, debt recovery, corporate fraud government contracts and commercial arbitration.

She graduated from the University of the Philippines College of Law in 2002 as a member of the Order of the Purple Feather, and gained her Master's in Law at the University of California at Berkeley in 2018, with honours. She teaches civil and commercial law courses at the University of the Philippines College of Law, University of Makati School of Law and San Beda College Alabang School of Law.

Corporate

Litigation; Labour; International & Local Commercial Arbitration



Cesar P Manalaysay

**Managing Partner &
General Partner
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Cesar P Manalaysay is the Managing Partner and a General Partner at Siguion Reyna, Montecillo & Ongsiako. He joined the firm in 1975. Mr Manalaysay's practice includes litigation, arbitration and corporate.

He has 45 years' experience in corporate litigation before the Securities & Exchange Commission and Regional Trial Courts, as well as appellate practice before the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court. He handled intra-corporate controversies involving struggles for control of some of the largest publicly listed companies in the Philippines, and engaged in fields as diverse as universal banking, food manufacturing, telecoms, mining, oil exploration and real estate holdings. For 10 years, he was part of the team that handled Philippine legal issues for Fraport A.G. of Germany in connection with the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal III (NAIA III) arbitration suit, at the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) in Washington DC. He gives advice and handles litigation on the Philippine Anti-Dummy Law, which penalises violations of nationality restrictions on certain investments and business activities. He also handles a variety of corporate rehabilitation cases, two of which arose from the bankruptcy proceedings of Lehman Brothers in New York.

He counselled Siemens AG on its (1,500 MW) power generation project in the Philippines and assisted clients on BOT Light Rail and Subway Transportation Systems. He assisted Unilever to establish an ice cream business in the Philippines through a joint venture arrangement, and also helped in its acquisition and sale of other businesses. He has advised Nestlé Philippines on sales, distribution and other related matters.

He handled the public listing of shares of one of the largest universities, and counselled the underwriter on the listing of one of the most popular fast food chains in the Philippines. He defended the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) in a lawsuit arising from its refusal to list the shares of a real estate company despite approval by the Securities & Exchange Commission. The Supreme Court affirmed PSE's authority to deny listing. He further assisted a Bermuda company that has interests in manufacturing plants in the Philippines to list in the Singapore Stock Exchange.

He holds several directorship and/or officer positions in key companies, such as: The Thomson (Philippines) Corporation; Amicus Realty, Inc.; Siemens, Inc.; Siemens Power Operations, Inc.; Omni Aviation Inc.; Atos IT Solutions & Services Inc.; XBS Disposition Subsidiary Philippines, Inc.; Lakelands Country Club, Inc.; as well as Muntinlupa Development Foundation.

Intellectual Property

Litigation; Licensing & Due Diligence; ADR



Editha R Hechanova

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Hechanova Bugay Vilchez & Andaya-Racadio (HBVAR) is a leading law firm based in Makati City, renowned for its comprehensive expertise in matters of IP. Established in 2006 by Editha R Hechanova, Rodinil D Bugay and Gladys C Vilchez, the firm expanded in 2014 with the addition of Yasmin A Andaya-Racadio to strengthen its tax practice. Guided by the principle "Passion for Service, Service with Integrity", HBVAR is committed to delivering exceptional legal services across diverse practice areas.

Today, HBVAR offers a full spectrum of IP services, encompassing both contentious and non-contentious matters. The firm works in tandem with its affiliate, Hechanova & Co., Inc., which specialises in non-contentious IP services, such as patent and trademark prosecution, copyright and domain name registrations, IP audits and valuation. This integrated approach allows the Hechanova Group to provide seamless and comprehensive IP solutions to its clients.

Moreover, HBVAR serves a varied clientele, including multinational corporations and local enterprises. Notable clients include Alibaba Group Holding Limited, for whom the firm assisted in filing 44 patent applications covering various technologies within a 12-month period; Guangdong OPPO Mobile Telecommunications Corp. Ltd., for which it enforced IP rights against infringers in the Philippines; as well as Silca Coffee Roasting Company, whom the firm supported in enforcing the "KICK-START" trademark.

Editha R Hechanova

At the helm of HBVAR's IP practice is Managing Partner Editha R Hechanova, a distinguished lawyer and CPA. She holds a business degree, magna cum laude, from the University of the East, a law degree from Ateneo de Manila University, as well as a certificate in strategic business economics from the University of Asia & the Pacific. Ms Hechanova is also a Certified Patent Valuation Analyst and an alumna of the South East Asia Patent Drafting Course.

Her professional affiliations include: President of the Association of Patent Agent Qualifying Examination (PAQE) Professionals; Vice President of the IP Collegium, an organisation of IP experts in ASEAN, India and Brazil; as well as Accredited Mediator and Arbitrator with the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

Last, but not least, Ms Hechanova's contributions to IP law have been recognised by numerous publications, such as AsiaLaw Magazine: Leading Lawyer in IP Law (2002–2021); Who's Who Legal: recognised in Trademarks (2012–2021); as well as Asia Business Law Journal: listed among the Top 100 Lawyers in the Philippines (2018–2021).

International-Legal

R&D



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Kwon, Park & Rhee (KPR) is a respected South Korean law firm recognised for its deep expertise in international legal matters. With a strong foundation in cross-border transactions, regulatory advisory and dispute resolution, KPR has built a solid reputation as a key legal partner for foreign individuals and multinational companies operating in or in connection with Korea. The firm's commitment to legal excellence and global perspective has positioned it as a trusted leader in South Korea's international legal landscape.

KPR's international legal division provides a broad range of services tailored to the needs of a global clientele. These include foreign investment advisory, corporate governance, regulatory compliance, international contract review and civil/criminal litigation involving cross-border elements. With a focus on clear communication, cultural understanding and jurisdictional fluency, KPR helps clients navigate Korea's legal system and achieve their objectives with clarity and confidence.

The firm places significant emphasis on staying attuned to international legal developments and maintaining strong global networks. KPR actively collaborates with law firms and institutions across jurisdictions, enabling it to deliver nuanced and effective legal solutions in a transnational context. This commitment to ongoing legal development ensures clients benefit from well-informed, globally relevant advice.

At the heart of KPR's international practice is a client-centric philosophy. The firm recognises that foreign clients – whether individuals, startups or global corporations – face distinct challenges when dealing with the Korean legal environment. KPR works closely with clients to develop practical, responsive strategies that reflect not only legal requirements but also business realities and cultural sensitivities.

Today, KPR stands as a beacon of excellence in South Korea's international legal field – dedicated to supporting clients across borders and across sectors. With its commitment to precision, responsiveness and global acumen, the firm continues to deliver high-value legal solutions that enable clients to succeed in Korea and beyond.

Ko Hyung-Chan

Leading KPR's international legal initiatives is Ko Hyung-Chan, a seasoned attorney with a unique blend of in-house and law firm experience. Having served as Head of Legal for South Korea at a major multinational corporation and now as a Partner at KPR, Mr Ko brings a practical, business-minded approach to cross-border legal matters. Fluent in both Korean and English, and deeply experienced in advising foreign clients, Mr Ko is widely recognised for his ability to bridge legal systems and cultures, delivering strategic counsel that meets the highest standards of professionalism and clarity.

Intellectual Property

Litigation; Arbitration



Anomi Wanigasekera

Attorney-at-Law
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Julius & Creasy offers an extensive range of legal services, consistently providing sustainable solutions for its clients' corporate and commercial endeavours. The work undertaken by the firm encompasses traditional IP – such as trademarks, patents, designs, copyright and domain names – combined with more contemporary areas, such as data protection and privacy, cloud computing and AI.

Anomi Wanigasekera, Attorney-at-Law, was called to the bar and joined Julius & Creasy in 1984. She is the Senior Partner of the firm and heads the IP division, holding a Master's degree from the University of Wales, as well as diplomas in IP Law. Moreover, she is a member of the International Trademark Association (INTA) and chaired the INTA Anti-Counterfeiting South Asia Subcommittee for the term 2024–2025, as well as being a member, councillor and Vice President of the Sri Lanka Group of the Asian Patent Attorneys Association (APAA). She has contributed to many local and international journals and has extensive experience – spanning more than 42 years – in all aspects of IP law.

Ms Wanigasekera possesses wide-ranging expertise across a comprehensive array of enforcement, management and transactional matters related to IP law. These include representing clients before the National Intellectual Property Office and acting for multinationals, as well as Sri Lankan conglomerates, in respect of infringement actions, applying for injunctions and search and/or seizure orders. She further oversees the drafting and reviewing of contracts and advises on regulatory compliance matters – and has participated in several seminars/workshops, both inland and abroad.

In 2026, Ms Wanigasekera was recognised in the ACQ5 Global Awards as Female Lawyer of the Year (IP). She also received the Leaders in Law "Full-Service Law Firm of the Year" Global Award for 2026, as well as a Leading Advisor Award for Intellectual Property Services in 2025.

Memberships

- Life member of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka
- Life member of the Law Society of Sri Lanka
- Council member of the Asian Patent Attorneys Association (APAA)
- Vice President of the APAA Sri Lanka Group
- Member of the International Trademark Association (INTA)
- Committee member of the Anti-Counterfeit Committee of INTA
- Chairperson of the Anti-Counterfeit Subcommittee South Asia (INTA) 2024/2025
- India and South Asia Global Advisory Council Member (INTA) 2024/2025

Intellectual Property

Patent; Global IP Strategy & Management; Dispute Resolution



Linda Cheng

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Linda Cheng, a Partner of Lexcel Partners IP Firm, has practised in the intellectual property field for around 20 years. She graduated from the National Taiwan University with a Bachelor of Science from the Department of Botany, as well as earning a Master of Science from the Graduate Institute of Microbiology.

Ms Cheng is licensed as a patent attorney in Taiwan and is a member of the Taiwan Patent Attorneys Association, as well as the Asian Patent Attorneys Association, Taiwan Group. She is highly professional in her handling of a wide array of patent-related matters across diverse technical fields, including biomedical, biotechnology, chemistry, pharmaceutical science, food science, regenerative medicine, stem cells, molecular biology, genetic engineering, microbiology, immunology, antibodies, peptides, diagnosis, biomarkers, treatment methods, transgenic/animal/plants and gene modification, among other areas.

Meanwhile, Ms Cheng is well experienced in drafting patent specifications, filing patent applications and responding to office actions, as well as maintenance and management of patents. She handles patent prosecution not only in Taiwan, but also in other jurisdictions spanning the Patent Corporation Treaty (PCT), the US, China, Europe, Japan, Korea, Canada, Australia, Brazil, Mexico, India, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. Furthermore, she handles the deposit of biological materials, and further prepares patentability, non-infringement, validity and freedom-to-operate opinions – in addition to providing consultation on strategy for patent filing, management infringement risk, licensing and dispute resolution.

Litigation

International Trade; Dispute Resolution / Arbitration; Corporate/M&A



Po-Cheng Lin (Harvey)

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In addition to the legal profession, Po-Cheng Lin (Harvey) is a Certified Business Valuator and International Certified Valuation Specialist. He received an Energy & Environmental Law Master's degree from Tulane University (US) and an LLB degree from the Law School of National Taiwan University (Taiwan).

Harvey has been Vice Chairman and Executive Director of the Environmental Jurists Association (Taiwan) since 2025, as well as Executory Committee Member of the Judicial Reform Foundation (Taiwan) since 2022. Moreover, he is Vice Chairman of the Attorneys' Code of Ethics Interpretations Committee under the Taiwan Bar Association, a member of the Legal Aid Committee and Environmental Law Committee of the Taiwan Bar Association – and has further taken the position of Vice Chairman of the Environmental Law Committee of the Taipei Bar Association since 2020.

Today, Harvey is renowned for his robust skill set combined with extensive experience related to litigation matters, as well as possessing high-level expertise regarding energy law and policy resulting from his work history for the private sectors, local government and the Bureau of Energy under MOEA.

Aside from Harvey's professional career in civil law litigation – in parallel with criminal law and administrative law/remedies – his practice extends to arbitration, IP law (i.e. copyright, patents, trademarks and trade secrets), labour law, corporation law, banking and finance, M&A, personal data protection, ESG and CSR, environmental law and energy law, maritime law, international public law, international trade, as well as notary law and negotiation.

Harvey's primary role is as a senior Attorney-at-Law at Primordial Law Firm, established in 1996, which is engaged in a broad spectrum of legal services spanning international trade, IP, banking, M&A, commercial arbitration, administrative procedures and environmental law. The partners of the firm are held in high esteem, not only for their professional legal service, but also in the public service fields, including judicial reform, law-related education, human rights education and environmental issues. With effectiveness, efficiency and ethics on its side, Primordial Law Firm's continuing mission is to be its clients' most reliable partner in all matters that may arise.

Trademark

Patent; IP Portfolio & Management; Dispute Resolution



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Jolene Wang is a founder and CEO of Lexcel Partners IP (including Lexcel Partners IP Firm and Lexcel Partners IP Co., Ltd.).

With more than 30 years' experience in intellectual property, Ms Wang handles all aspects of IP matters, mainly focusing on IP prosecution, including patents and trademarks, opposition and cancellation proceedings, IP management, consultation on IP strategy and IP portfolio, IP licensing, dispute resolution, IP litigation support, patent/trademark search and analysis, as well as rendering opinions on IP issues. These include Freedom to Operate (FTO), Patent Infringement Assessment, Patent Validity Analysis, Patentability Analysis, etc. She represents both plaintiffs and/or defendants, and attends the Taiwan Intellectual Property & Commercial Court (IPCC) in trademark, patent and plant variety right disputes in matters of infringement and ownership, among other areas.

Lexcel Partners IP's practice primarily focuses on patent and trademark prosecution, IP management and portfolio, trademark and patent (prior art) search, as well as advice on IP litigations and transactions. It regularly assists clients in negotiating with the government agency on the client's behalf for regulation-related issues, in addition to providing expert legal opinion. Meanwhile, the firm periodically holds seminars and conferences regarding laws and regulations pertaining to IP, and issues alert sheets to inform the clients of such updates and amendments that may affect them.

Its client base encompasses foreign and local major-listed companies, covering a broad industry scope in the fields of biotechnology healthcare, food, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, software, financial institutions and entertainment, among other areas. The firm has, over the years, been engaged by leading research institutes, as well as the leading universities in Taiwan.

Today, Ms Wang is the Vice President of the Taiwan Trademark Association (TTA), a committee member of the Intellectual Property Section, Chinese National Federation of Industries (CNFI) and a member of the core team of the Asia Pacific Intellectual Property Association (APIPA). She was Vice Director of the Taiwan Intellectual Property Training Academy (TIPA), and is one of the authors/editors of TIPA's training materials. She was also invited as a member of the Committee of Patent Examination Quality by the Taiwan Intellectual Property Office (TIPO).

Audit & Assurance Services Advisory

Tax Advisory; Tax Compliance



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Maksat Sahedov (Auditor MS) provides audit and assurance, tax advisory and compliance services to FLEs that have operations or potential business interests in the developing market of Turkmenistan by acting as their trusted adviser. Maksat Sahedov has more than 15 years' professional experience in audit and advisory, including 12 years in leading international audit and consulting firms.

Practice areas include, among others:

- **Taxation:** In-depth expertise in all tax matters, including international taxation, proper interpretation and application of international double taxation treaties, tax planning and optimisation, support during tax audits, tax litigation, dispute resolution and defence of clients in court, as well as high-level expertise in taxation advisory for clients working under Production Sharing Agreements.
- **Audit & Accounting:** Proven experience in the conduct of audits and audit-related services as per local auditing standards and ISA, financial due diligence, payroll & HR assurance and consultancies.
- **Business Compliance Advisory:** Business compliance advisory covers, inter alia, business setup compliance advisory (getting to know the Host country), tax registration of permanent establishments of FLEs, as well as ongoing compliance advisory.

Maksat Sahedov is unique in servicing entities that operate in Turkmenistan under Production Sharing Agreements. This uniqueness is achieved through deep knowledge and expertise in such agreements, petroleum and tax laws, cost recovery and profit-sharing mechanisms, as well as their nexus with taxation. These unique masteries assure the ability to puzzle out various engagements and serve as a foundation for multiple success stories.

Maksat Sahedov's mission is to be possessive of not only professional technical attributes related to practice areas, but also to be a well-rounded attorney for clients, combining – all in one place – the critical characteristics of honesty, ethics and independency. Aiming to always pursue the optimum for his clients, Maksat Sahedov is committed to continuous improvement of his services in order to become the best in the market. He has close access to an international network of audit and consulting firms to ensure the latest information and ideas are brought to clients.

Despite the global pandemic's negative effect on all businesses around the world, Auditor MS's finance, tax and compliance teams have been busier than ever due to new, unwitnessed matters. As such, the pandemic brought significant changes to external auditors and consultants – some of which can be opportunities for improvement. Being flexible, and continuing to be helpful and productive for clients, we also had to adopt a new work-life format via more efficient collaboration and technology adoption.

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

As of late 2026, the economic outlooks for Africa and the Middle East reflect a combination of resilience, structural pressures and heightened geopolitical uncertainty. Both regions are contending with tighter financing conditions, disrupted trade and energy markets, and the longer-term challenge of generating sufficient employment and investment for rapidly growing populations. This introduction draws on the latest assessments from the IMF, World Bank and African Development Bank, alongside recent international initiatives and economic developments.

Africa: Resilience Amid Rising Pressures

Sub-Saharan Africa's economy has continued to expand, although the pace remains vulnerable to external shocks. The IMF estimates that regional growth reached 4.5% in 2025 and projects growth of around 4.3% in 2026. The World Bank is somewhat more cautious, forecasting growth of 4.0% this year. Both institutions stress that aggregate growth masks substantial differences between countries and that stronger growth is needed to make significant progress against poverty and development gaps.

The recovery nevertheless faces substantial risks. Higher energy, food and fertiliser prices, geopolitical tensions, weaker external financing and elevated debt-service costs are putting pressure on governments and households. The IMF also notes that countries dependent on imported energy and other commodities are particularly exposed to deteriorating trade balances and higher living costs.

Fiscal Challenges & Development Finance

Debt and limited fiscal space remain central concerns. The African Development Bank estimates that 21 African countries remained in debt distress or at high risk of debt distress between 2023 and 2025, while debt-service costs continue to restrict public investment. The Bank's 2026 outlook places particular emphasis on strengthening domestic resource mobilisation, deepening financial markets and attracting private capital to close Africa's substantial development-financing gap.

The AfDB estimates that Africa faces an annual development-financing shortfall exceeding $1.3 trillion. It argues that improved tax collection, more efficient public investment, stronger capital markets, public-private partnerships and better mobilisation of diaspora and natural-capital resources could help expand the pool of available finance.

Structural Inequality & Employment

Employment remains one of the continent's defining economic challenges. Sub-Saharan Africa has the world's fastest-growing working-age population, with approximately 740 million additional working-age people expected by 2050. At the same time, around 10–12 million young people enter the labour market each year, compared with only about three million new formal wage jobs.

This imbalance reinforces the importance of productivity growth, skills development and economic diversification. The World Bank argues that industrial policy, investment in human capital and job-rich private-sector development can help economies translate demographic growth into broader economic opportunity. Digitalisation, energy access and infrastructure investment are also increasingly important to this transition.

Investment Over Aid

The emphasis in African development finance is increasingly shifting from traditional aid towards mobilising investment at scale. The African Development Bank's 2026 Economic Outlook, themed "Mobilising Africa's Development Financing at Scale in a Fragmented World", highlights the need for greater African agency over domestic and international capital. The Bank argues that stronger financial institutions, integrated capital markets and improved risk assessment can help unlock resources for infrastructure and structural transformation.

International partners are also seeking to catalyse private investment. In May 2026, the World Bank Group announced plans to double guarantees for Africa, with new guarantees over four years expected to mobilise approximately $23 billion in private capital for sectors including agriculture, energy, infrastructure, healthcare and digital services.

Middle East: Conflict, Energy & Economic Resilience

The economic outlook for the Middle East and North Africa has deteriorated markedly during 2026. The World Bank projects growth of 1.6% for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan region this year, excluding Iran, compared with 4% in 2025. The IMF's July outlook is even more cautious for its MENA grouping, projecting growth of just 0.7% in 2026 before a sharp rebound in 2027, reflecting the impact of the regional conflict and disruption to energy and transport networks.

The aggregate figures conceal substantial differences between economies. Gulf producers, energy importers and countries directly exposed to conflict are experiencing different combinations of higher energy costs, disrupted trade, weaker tourism and pressure on public finances. The World Bank estimates that, excluding Iran, GCC growth could slow from 4.4% in 2025 to 1.3% in 2026.

Impact of Conflict & Geopolitical Tensions

Conflict has become an even more significant economic factor across the region. Disruptions to energy production, shipping routes and critical infrastructure have increased market volatility and raised transportation and food costs. The World Bank reports that the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and damage to energy infrastructure have materially weakened the regional outlook, while the IMF identifies renewed conflict as a major downside risk to growth and financial stability.

Energy markets have also been transformed. The IMF reported in July that crude prices had initially surged following the conflict before settling in the $90–100 per barrel range. Its July baseline assumed an average oil price of approximately $89 per barrel for 2026, although the outlook remains highly sensitive to developments in the region and the reopening of key transport routes.

Structural Reforms & Diversification

The renewed economic disruption has reinforced the case for diversification and structural reform. The IMF emphasises the importance of rebuilding fiscal buffers, strengthening monetary and financial frameworks and advancing reforms that can improve productivity and private-sector development. Digitalisation, trade diversification and a more competitive business environment remain important elements of longer-term resilience.

Several economies continue to pursue diversification strategies despite the difficult environment. Gulf states are investing in non-oil sectors, while countries across North Africa are seeking to expand manufacturing, renewable energy, tourism and digital services. These efforts are intended to reduce vulnerability to commodity cycles and create more sustainable sources of employment and investment.

International Support & Initiatives

The EU's Global Gateway strategy remains an important source of investment in Africa and neighbouring regions. Its Africa-Europe Investment Package is intended to mobilise €150 billion for projects supporting the green and digital transitions, sustainable growth, employment, healthcare, education and connectivity. Recent initiatives include expanded cooperation with Kenya and new investment commitments in Ethiopia.

Relations between the EU and Egypt have also developed since the launch of their Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership in March 2024. The partnership is backed by a €7.4 billion financial and investment package for 2024–2027, comprising concessional loans, additional investment and grants. Following the first EU-Egypt Summit in October 2025, cooperation has continued across trade, investment, energy, skills, research and macroeconomic support.

Mining

Business, Corporate & Commercial; Maritime/Admiralty; Tax Litigation



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TI&A SCA (Tshibangu Ilunga & Partners) is a full-service law firm based in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), with additional offices in Lubumbashi and Pointe-Noire. The firm specialises in business law, with a strong focus on mining and quarrying, tax litigation, corporate and commercial. TI&A SCA is recognised for its deep understanding of the legal landscape in the DRC and the broader OHADA (Organisation pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires) region, providing comprehensive legal services across 17 French-speaking African countries.

The DRC is rich in mineral resources, including gold, diamonds, cobalt, coltan, tantalum, copper, tin and more. As such, TI&A SCA has established itself as a leading authority in mining law, offering expert counsel to both local and international clients seeking to navigate the challenging regulatory environment of the sector. The firm is officially registered as a mining and quarrying agent under Ministerial Decree No 00836/CAB.MIN/01/2021, enabling it to represent clients in all matters related to mining investments.

TI&A SCA's mining law services encompass due diligence, acquisition and maintenance of mining licences, environmental compliance – as well as assistance with administrative procedures. The firm's attorneys have advised clients on significant mining transactions, including those involving changes in shareholding control of mining companies financed through international stock exchanges, such as the London Stock Exchange and the Toronto Stock Exchange.

The multilingual team is proficient in English, French, Lingala, Swahili, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin) and Spanish, enabling effective communication with a diverse client base. This linguistic versatility ensures that clients receive tailored advice that aligns with their specific needs and cultural contexts.

Benoît Tshibangu Ilunga

Benoît Tshibangu Ilunga, Founding Partner, brings more than two decades' legal experience to the firm. He holds a Master of Laws from UPC and a postgraduate degree from UNIKIN. As an attorney-at-law and registered mining and quarrying agent, Mr Tshibangu specialises in mining, tax, commercial, corporate, environmental, telecoms, insurance, forestry, M&A, insolvency, arbitration and litigation.

He has played a pivotal role in assisting foreign investors with major M&A, tax planning, mining and corporate transactions – combined with the establishment of subsidiaries and branches of international firms in the DRC. His expertise extends to arbitration and litigation, where he has served as both an expert and legal counsel in such jurisdictions as Australia, Canada, France, England, Belgium, the US and South Africa.

Employment

Labour; Social Security; Investigation



Mohamed Ibrahim

Partner
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Mohamed Ibrahim is a seasoned lawyer with extensive experience at several top-tier law firms in Egypt. He joined Ibrachy & Dermarkar in 2014 and has since become a key member of the firm's litigation and employment practices. His expertise spans a wide array of legal disciplines, with a particular focus on labour and employment matters, real estate and lease disputes, social insurance regulations, as well as corporate legal affairs.

Within the Employment Department, Mr Ibrahim plays a leading role in advising clients on a range of strategic employment and HR-related issues, including:

- **Social Insurance & Benefits:** Offering both procedural and advisory support, Mr Ibrahim helps clients navigate Egypt's social insurance framework, aligning compliance strategies with organisational priorities.
- **Management Compensation:** He supports clients in structuring and managing executive employment contracts, with particular attention to compensation and benefit schemes.
- **Human Resources Support:** Mr Ibrahim provides ongoing legal counsel to HR departments, ensuring smooth handling of employee relations, regulatory compliance and operational risks.
- **Internal Investigations:** With the introduction of internal investigations as a unique offering by Ibrachy & Dermarkar's Employment Department, Mr Ibrahim contributes to fact-finding processes critical to litigation readiness. In a legal system where discovery procedures are limited, this work plays a vital role in shaping case strategy. Ibrachy & Dermarkar was the first firm in Egypt to formalise this service, and Mr Ibrahim is instrumental in assessing legal relevance, sourcing evidence and supporting high-stakes dispute preparation.

Education
Diploma in Private Law
LLB, Ain Shams University

Languages
Arabic

Memberships & Affiliations
Egyptian Bar Association

Intellectual Property

Patent Litigation; IP Litigation; Franchising



Mostafa Mohamed Ahmed

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Since 1997, Mostafa Mohamed Ahmed has built an impressive career as a civil litigator, representing major multinationals in complex litigation proceedings before the Egyptian Court of Appeals and Supreme Court.

Mostafa has more than 27 years' diverse experience in the field. He has pursued postgraduate studies, earning an LLM from King's College London, where he focused on the tension between competition law and IP law in the pharma sector. His dissertation, entitled "Misleading Public Authorities in Evergreening as Anti-Competitive Practice", demonstrates his deep understanding of these complex legal issues.

Mostafa specialises in IP litigation. He has successfully defended the interests of pharmaceutical originators against generic companies, leading to the cancellation of registrations for generic pharma preparations and the removal of these products from the records of the Egyptian Drug Authority. His extensive involvement in these disputes has allowed him to address comprehensive IP issues, such as the application and interpretation of the Bolar Exemption and Compulsory License, as well as to contribute to the establishment of new judicial principles in Egypt.

He has also achieved significant victories in IP litigation related to the oil and gas sector. He successfully defended the IP rights of one of the largest companies in the industry, resulting in the removal of the CR and trademarks of the infringer. He also won counter actions for the cancellation of trademarks owned by the oil and gas company, further solidifying his track record of success. Meanwhile, he successfully defended French and multinational cement companies in upholding an acquisition agreement with the Egyptian government to acquire a public cement company. His contributions to teamwork showcased the agreement's legitimacy, which was concluded in good faith through public bidding. The court dismissed the lawsuit, affirming the validity of the transactions.

Scholarships & Recognition

- King's College London, LLM, (2017–2019)
- The British School of Excellence (course)
- King's College London (Modern Judiciary course)

Insolvency Advisory

Corporate/Commercial; Tax; Capital Markets



Audrey Naa Dei Kotey

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AudreyGrey is a legal, tax, and compliance firm based in Accra, known for its expertise in corporate and commercial law, taxation and insolvency advisory services. Established in 2018, the firm has rapidly become a leading adviser to both local and international corporations seeking holistic solutions in Ghana's business environment.

AudreyGrey offers a broad spectrum of services, including corporate and commercial law, taxation, capital markets, corporate insolvency, immigration, employment law, oil and gas, business restructuring, debt recovery and compliance. The firm's multidisciplinary team is comprised of dual-qualified lawyers and chartered accountants, many of whom have honed their skills at leading global firms, such as PwC and HSBC. This diverse expertise enables AudreyGrey to provide comprehensive solutions that address both the legal and financial aspects of clients' operations.

In the wake of Ghana's Corporate Restructuring & Insolvency Act, 2020 (Act 1015), AudreyGrey has positioned itself at the forefront of insolvency advisory services. The firm assists clients in navigating the complexities of the new legal framework, offering services related to corporate restructuring, administration, liquidation and business recovery strategies. AudreyGrey's approach emphasises preserving viable businesses, protecting creditor rights and facilitating post-commencement financing to support restructuring efforts.

Meanwhile, the firm is committed to thought leadership and knowledge dissemination in the field of insolvency and corporate restructuring. To this end, its expert advisers regularly publish articles and conduct training sessions to educate stakeholders on the implications of up-to-date insolvency laws.

Audrey Naa Dei Kotey

Managing Partner Audrey Naa Dei Kotey is a legal and finance professional with more than 18 years' experience. A qualified lawyer and a member of the Ghana Bar Association, Ms Kotey is also a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) UK and a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants Ghana (ICAG). Her dual qualifications in law and accounting uniquely position her to offer integrated solutions to complex corporate challenges.

Ms Kotey played a pivotal role in the development of Ghana's Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992), as well as the Corporate Restructuring & Insolvency Act, 2020 (Act 1015) – contributing to policy formulation and advocacy efforts. Furthermore, she is a founding member of the Ghana Association of Restructuring & Insolvency Advisors (GARIA), and serves as the Chair of its Technical, Education, Research & Publications Committee. She is a licensed insolvency practitioner (IP No 0003) and has administered complex insolvency cases, including the restructuring of NewGift Ventures Ghana Ltd, a mining services company.

Last, but not least, Ms Kotey has authored several insightful pieces, such as "Set-Off Under the Corporate Insolvency Act in Ghana", as well as "Netting Arrangements in Insolvency Proceedings" – contributing to the broader understanding of insolvency practices in the region.

Corporate

M&A; Corporate Restructuring; Commercial Advisory



Abdullah Al Khurafi

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Miras Legal is a law firm based in Kuwait, recognised for delivering exceptional services with a comprehensive understanding of local and international legal frameworks. The firm has been recognised by such directories as The Legal 500, where it is lauded for its responsive service and technical expertise; meanwhile, clients describe its lawyers as "thorough, technically accurate and commercially savvy". Core specialisms include:

Corporate/Commercial: The team advises both listed and non-listed entities on all aspects of company formation, corporate governance, shareholder rights, joint ventures and constitutional reviews.

M&A: Abdullah Al Khurafi excels in transactional law, having led Kuwait's first acquisition under the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) Law No 7 of 2010, representing AREF Investment Group in a transaction worth $238 million, as well as many other high-value transactions.

Cross-Border Transactions / Legal Matters: Mr Al Kharafi has advised on multinational joint ventures, project finance and multi-jurisdictional settlements, demonstrating his ability to manage intricate legal matters across diverse markets, including the US, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sri Lanka, the UK, the Netherlands and many other jurisdictions.

Islamic Finance: The firm is also adept at structuring Sharia-compliant transactions – executing financial instruments, such as Murabahah, Mudharabah and Depreciating Musharakah.

Abdullah Al Kharafi

With nearly two decades' experience, Mr Al Kharafi – Co-Founder and Managing Partner of Miras Legal since 2016 – is known for his strategic acumen, regulatory insight and ability to manage high-stakes transactions. Although a respected figure in the legal community in a general, he is known for his unique approach to solving legal matters related to shareholders, board of directors and corporate legal restructuring – as he guides companies through legal restructuring processes, particularly during financial crises, providing innovative solutions to navigate challenging economic environments.

He is frequently consulted by multinational law firms, including King & Spalding LLP and White & Case, for transactions requiring nuanced interpretation of Kuwaiti law. His multilingual capabilities (Arabic and English) and cultural fluency enable him to navigate cross-border challenges with confidence.

His portfolio includes advising the Kuwait Investment Authority on the $815 million establishment of the Kuwait Health Assurance Company (KHAC), overseeing a complex $885 million restructuring for a publicly listed company, as well as structuring a debt-to-equity settlement via a joint venture agreement for a Kuwaiti company. Beyond legal practice, Mr Al Kharafi has a demonstrated commitment to social impact, providing pro bono legal counsel to charitable organisations and supporting young entrepreneurs with legal mentorship – while also helping develop legal internship and training programmes in partnership with Kuwait University and the Capital Markets Authority.

Dispute Resolution

Litigation; Legal Consultations; Trademark



Khaled Yousef Al Jallal

Co-Founder & Managing Partner
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Based in Kuwait, Miras Legal is a leading law firm renowned for its innovative, results-orientated services and commitment to excellence.

At the heart of Miras Legal's practice is its dispute resolution division, led by the firm's Co-Founder, Khaled Yousef Al Jallal. The firm has earned its reputation as a powerhouse in complex dispute resolution, consistently achieving favourable outcomes in contentious matters across commercial, financial and regulatory domains. The dispute resolution practice is further distinguished by: strategic litigation planning with an emphasis on risk mitigation; sophisticated handling of high-value and cross-border commercial disputes; mastery of Kuwaiti legal procedures combined with international arbitration capabilities; as well as a results-driven ethos that places client interests at the forefront of every case.

The firm has successfully represented corporate clients in major disputes related to construction, government procurement, commercial contracts, financial services and agency law. Its lawyers have appeared before all levels of the Kuwaiti judiciary – demonstrating litigation excellence and a thorough grasp of procedural nuances.

In addition, the firm's proven skill set in matters of arbitration and ADR means it can offer mediation and negotiation strategies that very often result in efficient and amicable settlements. This holistic approach ensures clients are equipped with multiple avenues for resolution, always guided by strategic foresight and legal precision.

Khaled Yousef Al Jallal

Khaled Yousef Al Jallal, Managing Partner – and Head of Dispute Resolution & Litigation – is a key architect of the firm's practice. With more than a decade's high-stakes litigation experience, Mr Al Jallal is celebrated for his innovative strategies, mastery of courtroom advocacy and ability to resolve even the most intricate legal disputes. Prior to founding Miras Legal, Mr Al Jallal held a senior position at one of Kuwait's most prestigious law firms, where he was instrumental in resolving high-value commercial disputes and managing large-scale litigation portfolios. His reputation as a leading litigator was forged through his ability to develop defence strategies that consistently deliver measurable outcomes for his clients.

One of his hallmark achievements includes the legal structuring of a USD 33 million real estate fund, a testament to his multidisciplinary capabilities that span litigation, finance and investment law. His clientele includes some of the region's most prominent companies and public institutions, such as Aamal Holding, ADES International Holding, the Creative Industries National Group, the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) and the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS).

Mr Al Jallal and his team remain dedicated to shaping the future of dispute resolution in Kuwait by adopting emerging technologies, fostering innovation – and promoting legal reforms that enhance transparency and efficiency in the judicial system.

International Trade Advisory

International Macroeconomics; Trade Negotiations & Policy; Investment & Export Strategies



Paul Baker

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Paul Baker is the Founder and CEO of International Economics Consulting Ltd, a global management consultancy firm, which operates across multiple sectors in 135+ countries, with offices in the UK, Mauritius and Vietnam. He leads a team of highly qualified and experienced senior economists and lawyers who provide clients from both the private and public sectors with critical policy and strategy advice.

Mr Baker has 31 years' experience as an economic adviser to governments from G7 to G90 countries, and has held lead economist positions on projects with a range of clients, such as the European Commission, World Bank, WEF, WTO, Asian Development Bank and several UN agencies. He has advised governments on trade negotiations and trade policies, such as those of the UK, New Zealand, Germany and many others across Europe, Africa and the Asia-Pacific. His recent engagements include:

- Developing analytics and economic models to help several governments determine sustainable and high-growth trade pathways for their economies;
- Identifying digital ledger technologies solutions for development financing and trade across a range of markets;
- Building a continental-wide approach to e-payments to support digital trade and e-commerce in Africa;
- Designing trade-related provisions in FTAs for regional data markets;
- Advising businesses in Southeast Asia on e-marketplaces and digitalisation strategies to acquire new business segments;
- Designing strategies for global value chains for ASEAN governments in several sectors, including agro-processing, electronics, automotive, renewable energy, medical devices, footwear/apparel and clothing;
- Identifying investment and trade opportunities for multinationals.

For his significant contribution and extensive experience in his professional field, Mr Baker has been named a Thought Leader and Global Elite Thought Leader in Trade & Customs in the Lexology Index (formerly Who's Who). He currently serves as an Advisory Board Member of UNESCAP's Trade Intelligence Negotiation Advisor, as well as Research Advisor at ARTNeT, the largest trade research network in the Asia-Pacific. He is a member of the expert trade, data flows and technology group of the World Economic Forum (TradeTech), and in 2023, he founded – and is Chairman of – the Africa Trade Foundation, a non-profit organisation.

Meanwhile, Mr Baker is a visiting professor at the College of Europe, where he teaches the political economy of international trade, and has been a faculty member and visiting professor at international universities in Europe, Asia and Latin America – teaching game theory and economic models in trade and negotiations. He has published several handbooks and articles on trade.

Audit & Assurance Services Advisory

Accounting; Tax; Business



Mohamed Fouzi Dinari

President
Chartered Accountant & Auditor
Registered at the International Association of Accountants, Region Casablanca & South (Morocco) & Paris ile- de France (France)
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Established in 1999 by Mohamed Fouzi Dinari, Proximo Expertise began as Cabinet Dinari, leveraging his extensive experience, before rebranding to better reflect its strategic vision of providing personalised support to SMEs across various sectors.

Today, Proximo Expertise is a leading Moroccan firm offering comprehensive services in audit, assurance, accounting, tax, legal and business advisory. With a strong geographic presence, the firm is renowned for its commitment to excellence, proximity to clients and adherence to professional standards. Under the leadership of its founder and President, Mr Fouzi Dinari, Proximo Expertise has become a key partner for businesses seeking tailored financial solutions.

Notably, the firm operates in all major regions of Morocco – including Casablanca, Marrakesh, Rabat, Essaouira and Kenitra – as well as maintaining an international office in Paris. Its wide range of services include:

- **Audit & Assurance:** Conducting statutory audits and providing assurance services to ensure financial transparency and compliance.
- **Accounting & Financial Management:** Offering expertise in accounting practices and financial management to optimise business operations.
- **Tax & Legal Advisory:** Providing guidance on tax planning and legal compliance to navigate complex regulatory environments.
- **Business Consulting:** Assisting in business strategy development, project studies and implementation plans.
- **Payroll Management:** Managing employee compensation processes to ensure accuracy and compliance.
- **International Support:** Facilitating business expansion and operations in international markets through comprehensive services.
- **Support for Investors in Morocco:** Providing business plan development, market research, asset mobilisation for projects, mobilising financial resources, recruitment of staff, as well as identification of strategic partners.

Meanwhile, the firm's audit and assurance services are designed to provide clients with confidence in their financial reporting and compliance processes. To this end, Proximo Expertise employs a risk-based approach – focusing on areas of significant importance to stakeholders. The firm's auditors are trained to identify potential issues and provide actionable recommendations to enhance financial integrity and operational efficiency.

The firm is further dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion within its workforce. With nearly 48% of its staff being women, Proximo Expertise actively supports gender equality in a traditionally male-dominated field. In addition, the firm invests in youth development through training and education initiatives, contributing to national progress.

Mohamed Fouzi Dinari

Mr Fouzi Dinari brings a wealth of experience to the firm. His background includes significant roles in both the public and private sectors, providing him with a deep understanding of various industries. Mr Dinari's leadership is characterised by a strong commitment to innovation, client service and professional excellence. As a result, he has been instrumental in steering the firm towards embracing digital transformation and adapting to the evolving needs of clients.

Banking, Project & Infrastructure Finance

Dispute Resolution; FinTech; International Trade



Reda Lafrouji

Lawyer at the Casablanca Bar
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Established in 2000 by Mohammed Lafrouji, Lafrouji Avocats has emerged as a leading law firm in Casablanca. The firm offers comprehensive legal solutions across various sectors. Its multilingual team – proficient in Arabic, French, English and Spanish – ensures effective communication with a diverse clientele, including multinational corporations, financial institutions and governmental bodies.

Today, Lafrouji Avocats provides top-tier legal services in the realm of banking and finance. The firm's lawyers possess deep knowledge of Morocco's regulatory landscape, including compliance with Bank Al Maghrib and the Moroccan Capital Market Authority. The firm excels in guiding clients through the intricacies of project and infrastructure finance, particularly in such sectors as energy, transportation and real estate. Services include:

- **Legal Structuring:** Advising on the legal frameworks for large-scale infrastructure projects, ensuring compliance with Moroccan laws and international best practices.
- **Contract Negotiation:** Drafting and negotiating contracts related to project development, financing and operations.
- **Regulatory Navigation:** Assisting clients in obtaining necessary permits and approvals, as well as ensuring adherence to environmental and safety regulations.
- **Dispute Management:** Handling disputes arising from project execution, including arbitration and litigation support.

Reda Lafrouji

In charge of the firm's banking and finance practice is Reda Lafrouji, an attorney registered with the Bar of Casablanca. With a robust background in business and international law, Mr Lafrouji specialises in cross-border transactions and dispute resolution. His expertise spans various sectors, including banking, FinTech, real estate, international trade and energy. His notable achievements include:

- **International Arbitration:** Representing clients in high-stakes disputes under such frameworks as ICC and SAC.
- **Corporate Transactions:** Advising on joint ventures, mergers, share purchases and restructuring, particularly for clients in FinTech, mining, banking and construction.
- **Banking & Financial Services:** Supporting banking clients in regulatory compliance, transactional matters and market expansion strategies.

Mr Lafrouji's multilingual capabilities and international perspective make him a valuable asset to clients navigating complex legal landscapes.

Corporate

M&A; Commercial; Arbitration



Ghiyta Iraqi

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I&I Law Firm

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Founded in 1975, I&I Law Firm has established itself as a leading legal consultancy in Morocco, known for its expertise in business law and its commitment to delivering services that align with international standards. With 50 years' experience, the firm has become a trusted adviser to public institutions, national enterprises and international corporations.

At the heart of I&I Law Firm's practice is its robust corporate law department, which provides a full spectrum of services essential for businesses operating in today's complex legal environment. The firm's offering includes company incorporation, legal secretarial services, M&A, joint ventures, legal due diligence, corporate restructuring, shareholder agreements, employee shareholding plans and company dissolution. These services are designed to support clients through every stage of their business lifecycle – from inception to expansion, as well as eventual exit strategies.

I&I Law Firm's commitment to international standards is reflected in its multilingual team, proficient in Arabic, French and English, enabling effective communication with a diverse client base. The firm's international experience is further bolstered by its membership in the ADVOC International network, connecting it with more than 92 law firms worldwide, as well as its association with LEX Africa, enhancing its capabilities in cross-border transactions and international legal matters.

The firm's excellence in legal services has been recognised through various accolades, including being named the "Corporate Law Expert of the Year" in 2022 by Global Law Experts and "Best Litigation & Arbitration Law Firm 2024 – Morocco" by MEA Markets.

Ghiyta Iraqi

Under the leadership of Ghiyta Iraqi, I&I Law Firm has significantly expanded its global clientele. A graduate of Sciences Po Paris – and admitted to the Paris Bar in 2010 – Ghiyta brings a wealth of experience from her tenure at prestigious international law firms, including August & Debouzy and Baker & McKenzie, before joining I&I Law Firm as a Partner.

Today, she advises public institutions, significant Moroccan companies, as well as leading international companies. Her expertise centres around business law, particularly corporate law, along with commercial law and pharma law, mediation and arbitration – making her a pivotal figure in the firm's growth and success.

Restructuring & Insolvency

Labour; Civil; Insolvency

Amal Mazouzi

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Founded in 2000 by Mohammed Lafrouji, a former judge with two decades' judicial experience, Lafrouji Avocats has established itself as a leading law firm in Casablanca. The firm offers comprehensive legal services to a diverse clientele, including multinational corporations, financial institutions and individual clients.

Lafrouji Avocats provides strategic legal counsel in restructuring and insolvency, assisting clients in navigating complex financial challenges. The firm's services encompass advising on debt restructuring, insolvency proceedings and corporate reorganisations. Its multidisciplinary approach ensures that clients receive tailored solutions that align with both Moroccan legal frameworks and international standards. In addition, the firm's legal expertise spans various industries, including manufacturing, technology, finance, healthcare, energy, telecoms, hospitality and consumer goods.

Beyond restructuring and insolvency, Lafrouji Avocats offers a wide range of legal services, including:

- **Corporate Law:** Incorporation, M&A, shareholder agreements and corporate governance.
- **Banking & Finance:** Legal advice on financing agreements, compliance with banking regulations and investment projects.
- **Litigation & Dispute Resolution:** Representation in civil, commercial and administrative disputes, as well as arbitration and mediation.
- **Real Estate & Construction:** Property acquisitions, leasing, real estate financing and construction projects.
- **International Arbitration:** Expertise in representing clients in both domestic and international disputes, with a strategic approach to dispute resolution.

Amal Mazouzi

A key figure in the firm's restructuring and insolvency practice is Amal Mazouzi, an attorney registered with the Casablanca Bar. Before joining Lafrouji Avocats, Ms Mazouzi gained substantial experience in labour, civil and insolvency law through her work with various law firms. Her recent engagements include advising a major Moroccan agricultural export company in litigation before Moroccan courts, representing a prominent clinic in civil and commercial disputes, as well as assisting a royal family in inheritance litigation. Ms Mazouzi's proficiency in Arabic, French and Spanish enables her to effectively serve a diverse clientele.

Corporate/M&A

Capital Markets; Tax; Dispute Resolution



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Established as a full-service commercial law firm in Nigeria, The Metropolitan Law Firm (MetLaw) has earned a sterling reputation for delivering bespoke legal solutions in corporate, commercial and M&A transactions. Headquartered in Abuja, the firm is strategically positioned at the heart of Nigeria's legal and regulatory ecosystem, offering clients deep insight, expert counsel and a relentless commitment to service excellence.

Steering the course of MetLaw's operations are Ummahani Ahmad Amin, Founder and Managing Partner, as well as Mohammed Awwal Yunusa, an accomplished Partner. Together, they have positioned the firm as a trusted adviser to corporations, financial institutions, state governments and private investors, guiding them through complex corporate structures, regulatory compliance, capital raising and strategic acquisitions.

MetLaw's Corporate/M&A practice is designed to support the full corporate lifecycle – from incorporation and structuring to mergers, acquisitions, divestitures and liquidation. Services include legal due diligence, share and asset acquisitions, joint ventures and strategic alliances, private equity and venture capital investments, corporate restructuring and insolvency, as well as regulatory compliance and post-transaction support. Moreover, the firm's commitment to best practice – combined with ethical standards of excellence – is reflected in its involvement in professional and regulatory bodies. Ms Ahmad Amin is a trustee of the Capital Market Solicitors Association of Nigeria, Chair of the African International Conference on Islamic Finance, as well as being a member of several institutions, including the Institute of Directors Nigeria and the Society of Corporate Governance. Similarly, Mr Awwal Yunusa is affiliated with the Nigerian and International Bar Associations, the Chartered Institute of Taxation and the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (UK).

Ummahani Ahmad Amin

A certified PPP expert with an LLM in Business & Commercial Law, Ms Ahmad Amin brings more than 15 years' experience advising public and private entities. She has spearheaded landmark deals, such as: leading legal teams in Sukuk bond issuances for Adamawa State (₦25 billion), Gombe State (₦35 billion), Sokoto State (₦10 billion) and TAJ Bank's ₦30 billion Sukuk issuance programme; acting as legal counsel on the ₦50 billion LFZC FUNDING SPV PLC bond issuance (Series 1–3); as well as representing clients in real estate-backed Islamic finance structures, such as Ijarah Sukuk and Halal fixed-income funds.

Mohammed Awwal Yunusa

Since joining MetLaw in 2018, Mr Awwal Yunusa has contributed significantly to the firm's growing corporate law practice. With a background rooted in litigation and ADR, he adds a critical layer of legal risk analysis to transactional engagements. His strengths in negotiation, drafting and regulatory compliance have proved invaluable in closing major deals. He has also served as Assistant Team Lead on multiple high-profile transactions, including: the ₦50 billion LFZC bond programme, Adamawa State's ₦25 billion bond issuance, as well as Family Homes Funds Ltd Project Shelter Series 1 and 2 (₦20 billion).

Litigation

Banking & Finance; Corporate/Commercial; Employment & Immigration



Seni M Adio

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Copley Partners is a distinguished full-service law firm based in Lagos, renowned for its adeptness in litigation and dispute resolution. Under the leadership of Managing Partner Seni M Adio, SAN, the firm has established a formidable reputation for delivering innovative legal solutions across various sectors.

Established in 2006, Copley Partners offers a comprehensive suite of legal and business consulting services. The firm's approach is proactive, flexible and responsive, combining high-calibre legal advice with practical commercial expertise. With a team of experienced attorneys and consultants, the firm addresses complex legal challenges both locally and internationally.

At the heart of Copley Partners' offering is its Litigation & Dispute Resolution practice. The firm's philosophy, "the best win is an early win", underscores its commitment to efficient and effective legal representation. The team possesses extensive experience in handling jury and bench trials, as well as complex appellate matters. Their track record includes securing multimillion-dollar judgments for clients, as well as successfully defending substantial claims.

Today, the firm's litigation expertise spans numerous sectors, including: oil and gas, technology, pharma, real estate, food and confectionery; insurance; as well as construction.

Meanwhile, subject areas of representation encompass corporate governance, directors' and officers' liability, product liability, IP, insurance, financial fraud, tax abatement, eminent domain takings, employment discrimination, real estate and immigration.

Beyond litigation, the firm provides specific legal services in the following areas: banking and finance, corporate and commercial, employment and immigration, energy (oil and gas), IP litigation and enforcement, as well as real estate, tax and telecoms.

Copley Partners' team brings a wealth of experience from legal and business practices in Nigeria, Europe and the US. This international exposure enables the firm to provide clients with comprehensive legal services that meet global standards while addressing local nuances.

Seni M Adio, SAN

Seni M Adio, SAN, serves as the Managing Partner of Copley Partners. He is a highly experienced legal practitioner admitted to the Supreme Court of Nigeria and also an Attorney-at-Law in the US, licensed to practise in New York and Massachusetts. Before returning to Nigeria, Mr M Adio was a Partner at Mintz Levin in Boston, Massachusetts, where he represented multinational conglomerates and private companies on matters including banking and finance, complex commercial litigation, fiduciary law, public procurement, legislative and regulatory affairs, tax abatement, IP, Internet technology and insurance. His international experience enriches Copley Partners' capabilities, allowing the firm to offer clients a blend of local insight and global perspective.

Commercial

M&A; Mining & Infrastructure Projects; FDI



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Yves Constant Amani is the Managing Partner of YAC & Partners, a new firm specialising in the following areas, both in Guinea and internationally: M&A; Energy, Mining & Infrastructure Projects; FDI; Commercial Contracts; Commercial Litigation & Arbitration; PPPs; Employment Law; Real Estate; Corporate Immigration; Blockchain & Emerging Technologies; Private Equity & Venture Capital; Project Finance; Corporate Law & Securities; Banking & FinTech; Legal Secretary Services; as well as Legal Tech.

He was previously a Partner and Head of the Consulting Department at BAO & Fils, providing legal counsel on a wide array of local and cross-border transactions.

With a high level of experience, he provides strategic legal advice in various sectors of activity, excelling particularly in the structuring and negotiation of complex transactions. His fluency in English enhances his ability to interact effectively with a diverse global clientele, thereby facilitating cross-cultural communication.

He holds an LLM in International Business Law from the University of Cumbria, Carlisle, UK – as well as Master's degrees from the Catholic University of West Africa in Abidjan and the Centre for Languages & Professional Studies in Accra. To deepen his expertise, Yves is certified in Project Infrastructure & Financing by the Edureka distance learning centre, and has completed a full course in Corporate Finance at the EDC Business School in Paris. Moreover, he is certified in AI for the Legal Profession, which allows him to integrate cutting-edge AI knowledge into legal processes, improving both efficiency and accuracy.

In 2023 and 2024, Yves was honoured with a Certificate of Excellence from Advisory Excellence. His expertise is further recognised by Global Law Experts in the area of commercial law. In addition, his qualifications are highlighted by his inclusion in the Chambers and Partners Global Guide, affirming his status as a leading legal expert.

Meanwhile, Yves contributed to the Chambers and Partners Corporate Governance Guide 2024, with a specific focus on Guinea: https://practiceguides.chambers.com/practice-guides/corporate-governance-2024/guinea/trends-and-developments. Yves noted at the time: "This recognition is a testament to our dedication to excellence and our commitment to providing the highest quality legal advice to our clients. I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who has supported me and my team throughout this journey."

To date, Yves's career is distinguished by his commitment to providing thorough and effective legal solutions – earning him a long-lasting reputation for exceptional service and strategic insight in the field of commercial law.

Marine Surveyors Advisory



Mike Patterson

Managing Director
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Having worked in the marine insurance and shipping industry for 41 years, PATTERSON & ASSOCIATES Managing Partner Mike Patterson has attended to various cases on behalf of a variety of local and international insurers, maritime law firms and insurance brokers. Such cases include the investigation of fraudulent claims, cargo truck hijackings, derailments, certification of cargo quality and condition after a vessel had been hijacked by Somali pirates, warehouse fires, contractual liability claims, as well as numerous general average cases following ship casualties.

Through its regional offices in southern Africa, and further afield as and when required, the firm principally attends to the investigation of Marine cargo and GIT claims. Services include logistics risk assessments, pre-shipment condition and verification assessments, storage risk assessments, contractual liability claims investigations, as well as claims arising from losses/damages sustained to liquid and dry bulk cargo, break bulk cargo and containerised cargo.

Mr Patterson noted: "We are the only privately owned South African surveying company that has offices cross-border in the SADC region. We do not subcontract other surveyors/assessors. All survey work entrusted to PATTERSON & ASSOCIATES is undertaken internally, and we pride ourselves on our quick reaction time – as well as the provision of regular and continuous updates to our principals as investigations progress. We can say with pride that all survey reports issued by the company over the years have stood up in court without question, as and when subrogated cargo underwriters have litigated against third-party carriers."

According to Mr Patterson, in the African context, importers and exporters face numerous logistics and storage challenges for a variety of reasons. This increases the risk of cargo damage/loss. In addition, the firm is often asked by insurers to undertake logistics risk/storage assessments to help importers/exporters and their insurers more accurately understand the challenges faced. In particular, these exercises enable insurers to customise policy cover and derive a measure of comfort in knowing that rights of recovery are protected in the event of losses being sustained.

He added: "Our typical clients are professional and are well known to us; we have made many professional friends globally over the years. Trust, technical ability and speed of service are key factors in our industry, and we strive to ensure that these factors are strictly adhered to. This, coupled with our friendly relationship with our clients, guarantees continued appointments. In recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated global lockdowns resulted in more claims and losses than ever before. Meanwhile, political uncertainty and security risks always create a negative environment from a risk and claim point of view, and South Africa is no exception. If anything, our company was affected positively, given that our role is to deal with claims that often increase in an uncertain and unfavourable environment. Advancements in technology have also proved highly effective – allowing us to expedite cases and facilitate a quick turnaround time."

Intellectual Property

Trademark; Patent; Litigation



Francis Kamuzora

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Established in 2017, BOWMANS TANZANIA LIMITED is a prominent full-service law firm based in Dar es Salaam. As part of the pan-African Bowmans network, the firm leverages a deep understanding of local legal landscapes and a broad continental reach to provide comprehensive services. Among its diverse practice areas, the firm has developed a robust IP law practice, offering strategic counsel and litigation services to both domestic and international clients. The team's end-to-end services include:

- **Trademark Registration & Prosecution:** Assisting clients with the registration of trademarks, ensuring compliance with Tanzanian laws and international treaties.
- **Patent Advisory:** Offering guidance on patentability, filing procedures and enforcement strategies.
- **Litigation & Enforcement:** Representing clients in disputes involving infringement, passing-off and opposition proceedings.
- **Portfolio Management:** Managing IP portfolios to maximise value and ensure protection across jurisdictions.

Furthermore, Tanzania's membership in the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) and signatory status to the Banjul Protocol enable the firm to offer clients cost-effective international filings, extending protection across multiple jurisdictions. As part of the broader Bowmans network, BOWMANS TANZANIA is well positioned to handle cross-border IP matters. Moreover, the firm's alliances with Aman & Partners LLP in Ethiopia and Udo Udoma & Belo-Osagie in Nigeria further enhance its capacity to serve clients operating across Africa.

Francis Kamuzora

Francis Kamuzora is a pivotal figure in the firm's IP practice – a Consultant based in the Dar es Salaam office. With more than a decade's experience, Mr Kamuzora specialises in both contentious and non-contentious IP matters, particularly trademarks and patents. His expertise extends to tax, employment and general commercial law, providing clients with a holistic legal perspective. His notable engagements include representing Serengeti Breweries Limited in a passing-off action, representing Tiffany & Co. in a trademark dispute over the Tiffany trademarks, representing Coachella Music Festival LLC in opposition proceedings in connection with the Coachella trademark, advising Google LLC in a copyright matter in Tanzania, advising JC Decaux SA in a trademark dispute with a competitor in Tanzania, as well as:

- **Representation of Godrej Consumer Products Limited:** Successfully acted in multiple proceedings before the High Court and Court of Appeal of Tanzania, including passing-off actions and trademark restoration cases involving the "HIT" brand.
- **Advocacy for Shinyanga Emporium (1978) Ltd:** Led trademark infringement litigation concerning the "NEELAM" mark, demonstrating adept handling of complex IP disputes.
- **Counsel for Sineria Holland B.V.:** Managed proceedings for the cancellation of registered trademarks, showcasing proficiency in navigating regulatory frameworks.

Intellectual Property

Employment; Commercial Contract; Business Formation/Registration



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Patric David hold a Master's degree in IP Law, a Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the University of Dar es Salaam School of Law, a Postgraduate Diploma and bachelor's degree in Human Resources Management from the Open University of Tanzania, as well as a Postgraduate Diploma in Taxation from the Institute of Tax Administration.

Today, Mr David is employed as In-House Legal Manager at SBC Tanzania Limited, a leading Pepsi-franchised company in Tanzania. He also works at Law Exchange Associates as a Founding/Managing Partner.

His expertise spans matters of IP rights, corporate and regulatory, as well as taxation and arbitration, having qualified to practise in Tanzania and Zanzibar. Accordingly, he is enrolled as an advocate of the High Courts of Tanzania and Zanzibar, and is a member of various professional bodies, including the Tanganyika Bar Association, the Zanzibar Law Society, the East African Law Society and the Tanzania Association of Tax Consultants – being further certified by the Ministry of Constitutional & Legal Affairs as private arbitrator. Registered as an agent for African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), he routinely represents trademark and business brand owners on the execution of IP rights through an online filing system covering all ARIPO-designated member states.

Mr David noted: "Our firm is notable for boasting a team of highly skilled, flexible and experienced attorneys who excel in diverse areas of law. We prioritise our clients and their interests, taking the time to understand their unique needs so that we provide tailored legal solutions. We continually strive to deliver the highest quality service – staying up to date with the latest legal developments and utilising best practices by offering transparent pricing while exploring alternative fee structures."

Mr David is known for his legal excellence and diverse skill set – accumulated over ten years' practice – which position him as an invaluable asset in matters of IP, corporate and regulatory compliance, tax advisory, contracts, business registration, employment and immigration, ADR, as well as civil litigation handling. He serves a multi-dimensional client base on matters both domestic and cross-border – tackling issues that require coordination between the firm's professional expertise in both business consultancy and advisory services. Moreover, the firm's experts are instrumental in rendering high-level representation in cases of brand prosecution, protection and registration.

In 2022–2023, Mr David was named Top IP Managing Partner by Global IP Directory, with Law Exchange Associates also receiving a Tanzania-specific legal award in 2023 from Trademark Lawyer Magazine.

Tax

Mining; Energy; Telecoms



Dr Alex Thomas Nguluma

Managing Partner
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Rex Attorneys is a leading full-service law firm headquartered in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, with a branch in Zanzibar. Renowned for its deep-rooted expertise in tax law, the firm offers comprehensive legal solutions across various sectors, including mining, energy, telecoms and financial services. With a commitment to excellence, Rex Attorneys has established itself as a trusted adviser to both local and international clients navigating the complexities of Tanzanian tax regulations.

The firm traces its origins to the merger of Maajar, Rwechungura, Nguluma & Makani (Advocates) and Epitome Advocates, culminating in the formation of Rex Attorneys. In 2015, Rex Attorneys became part of ENSafrica, Africa's largest law firm, expanding its reach and resources. However, subsequent local content regulations necessitated a restructuring, leading Rex Attorneys to reestablish itself as an independent, Tanzanian-owned firm, reaffirming its commitment to serving the local market with unparalleled dedication.

Today, Rex Attorneys' tax law division is at the forefront of providing strategic tax advisory and litigation services in Tanzania. The firm offers guidance on tax compliance, structuring of transactions and representation in disputes before tax tribunals and courts. Its clientele spans various industries, reflecting the firm's versatility and in-depth understanding of sector-specific tax challenges.

Beyond client representation, Rex Attorneys contributes to the development of tax law in Tanzania through:

- **Publications & Seminars:** Sharing insights on tax law developments and best practices.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Engaging with policymakers to shape fair and effective tax legislation.
- **Professional Associations:** Active participation in legal and business communities, including the CEO Roundtable of Tanzania.

Dr Alex Thomas Nguluma

At the helm of Rex Attorneys' tax practice is Dr Alex Thomas Nguluma, the firm's Managing Partner. With more than 25 years' experience, Dr Nguluma is a distinguished advocate of the High Court of Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. His academic credentials include a PhD from the University of Warwick and the University of Dar es Salaam, an LLM, as well as an LLB from the University of Dar es Salaam. Dr Nguluma's expertise encompasses tax law, corporate law, insolvency and international contracts – and his leadership has been instrumental in positioning Rex Attorneys as a leader in tax legal services.

Meanwhile, the firm's litigation team, under Dr Nguluma's guidance, has a strong track record in resolving complex tax disputes. Rex Attorneys represents clients in negotiations with tax authorities, mediations and court proceedings, striving for favourable outcomes while maintaining compliance with Tanzanian laws.

Commercial Litigation

Civil Litigation; Arbitration; Corporate



Abdelaziz Alhanaee

Chairman
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Abdelaziz Alhanaee Advocates & Legal Consultancy advises clients on a wide variety of sectors, including setting up businesses around the UAE and drafting all necessary documentation. Our veteran lawyers and legal consultants in Dubai have successfully obtained positive results in groundbreaking cases spanning civil, administrative, M&A, capital markets, corporate structuring, commercial, regulatory advice and agreements.

We possess the necessary experience to handle complex litigation matters. Meanwhile, our attorneys have been described as formidable, focused and thoroughly prepared to take on the most complex legal disputes. Our primary focus for litigation matters – and additional challenging matters – is ensuring we provide clients with consistent, comprehensive counsel via our professional legal team before the UAE courts, and particularly before the courts in Dubai. We aim to render consistent, high-quality services for clients conducting business across the region, and our attorneys are renowned for their expertise and practical approach – ensuring the most practical, time-saving and cost-effective solutions available.

Over the years, we have advised on complex disputes and challenges before the Court of First Instance, the Court of Appeal, as well as the Court of Cassation. The majority of our case work in this area relates to banks, insurance dispute claims, shareholder disputes, agency agreement and distribution agreement disputes, as well as commercial and civil claims. In these matters, we call upon differing ADR methods where relevant, and when our cases go to trial, we have a proven track record of success.

Abdelaziz Alhanaee

Abdelaziz Alhanaee is the Chairman of Abdelaziz Alhanaee Advocates & Legal Consultancy, which was established in Dubai at the end of 2012. In his role as a practising Emirati lawyer, Mr Alhanaee represents clients before all levels of the courts, across all jurisdictions within the UAE. His in-demand expertise has seen him previously hold such prominent positions as Partner and Head of Litigation in one of the UAE's largest Law firms, as well as the Ministry of Interior for seven years.

Specialising in arbitration and litigation for civil, commercial, construction, contracting and property-related disputes – as well as labour cases – Mr Alhanaee is further adept at criminal cases, such as breach of trust, fraud and all other financial crimes. Notably, he is a registered arbitrator with the Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC) and has acted in more than 10 international and local arbitration cases under the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and DIAC rules as a sole arbitrator, co-arbitrator or arbitration counsel. He is a London International Bar Association member, and was named "Commercial Litigation Lawyer of the Year – UAE" by Leaders in Law.

Intellectual Property

Arbitration; Commercial Litigation



Ishraga Abutaha

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Abutaha Intellectual Property is a prominent IP company providing protection, enforcement and commercialisation of IP rights in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA), Europe and the US. As one of the leading IP companies in the UAE, the firm provides a comprehensive portfolio of services, including: trademark: registration, opposition, cancellation, renewal and enforcement; patent: drafting, prosecution and litigation, focusing on complex technical innovations; copyright: protection of creative works, including software, music, digital content and literary works; IP litigation and dispute resolution: representation before local and regional courts, arbitral tribunals and administrative bodies for IP disputes; as well as trade secrets and licensing: extending to the protection of business innovations through trade secrets, licence agreements and franchising arrangements.

With more than 25 years' IP specialisation, Founder and Managing Director Ishraga Abutaha has built a reputable career affording counsel to multinational corporations, regional businesses and government entities on complex IP matters. Ms Abutaha's services go beyond advisory – also spanning landmark IP litigation and arbitration, wherein she has played a key role in setting precedents in the region. Her key contributions include serving for 15 years as a court-appointed expert, providing technical and legal expertise in landmark IP cases. In addition, she has successfully developed more than 25 judicial principles aligning regional IP law with international best practices, such as trademark and patent disputes. She has acted as an arbitrator and mediator in IP disputes, helping clients achieve fair and enforceable solutions. Meanwhile, her professional affiliations include: member – AIPPI UAE; member – INTA; registered arbitrator – WIPO Arbitration Center; as well as associate member – DIAC.

Ms Abutaha noted: "I distinguish myself from my peers by prioritising long-term relationships with clients, and I take the time to fully understand their unique needs. My strengths include an ability to simplify complex legal issues and sharp attention to detail – combined with my strong commitment to deliver results quickly and efficiently. Typical clients comprise businesses and startups, as well as international and local clients who are seeking expert guidance in navigating complex challenges. Recent trends I have observed relate to digital copyright enforcement, such as music rights in digital media, which present their own specific complexities. With the rise of streaming sites and online content sharing, music copyright and royalty enforcement has been further complicated by piracy, lack of licensing regimes and jurisdictional problems. However, we continually seek solutions, and as such, we recently assisted a major international record label in successfully enforcing digital copyright in the MENA region."

Litigation

Arbitration; Commercial



Habib Alla Mohamed El Hadi

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Habib Alla Mohamed El Hadi is a Partner in BSA's litigation practice, based in the firm's Abu Dhabi office.

Practising in the UAE since 2000, he specialises in several types of litigation, including civil, criminal, commercial, arbitration and international commercial arbitration.

Mr Alhadi focuses his practice on a diverse set of industries, including banking and finance, insurance and re-insurance, construction and real estate, international trade, oil and gas, contract drafting, company incorporation, transport and maritime, techniques of negotiation, international contracts, Sharia law and personal status cases (Muslim and Non-Muslim).

Throughout the years, Mr Alhadi has had a successful track record of reaching settlements in favour of the firm's clients. His advice further covers pre-litigation strategic advice – to maximise the likelihood of reaching a positive outcome for disputes.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Law from the University of Khartoum – Faculty of Law – Sudan.

Litigation

Dispute Resolution; Banking & Finance; Contract



Joy-Rachel Mutemi

Partner, Head of Litigation & Dispute Resolution
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Theotis Mutemi Legal Practitioners (TMLP) is a Zambian law firm based in Lusaka. Known for delivering high-end legal and consultancy services, TMLP has cultivated a reputation for resolving complex legal challenges with precision and integrity.

TMLP's Litigation & Dispute Resolution Department is headed by Partner Joy-Rachel Mutemi, a skilled attorney with more than a decade's experience at the Zambian bar. Her expertise spans civil and criminal litigation, ADR, as well as corporate and commercial law. She is recognised for her assertiveness and efficacy in navigating complex legal challenges, earning her a place among Africa's influential female lawyers. Moreover, Ms Mutemi has played a pivotal role in shaping Zambian jurisprudence through her involvement in landmark cases, including:

- Afritech Asset Management Company Limited and Another v The Gynae Antenatal Clinic Limited & Keith Muuka (Selected Judgment No 11 of 2019)
- Stanbic Bank Zambia Limited v Jason Jack Robert Kombo and Three Others (Appeal No/001/2022)
- Samson Lee Chisulo v C & J Harvey Farms Limited (SCZ Appeal No 219/2023)
- Horwitz v Prosigns Technology and Others (2018) ZR 269

These cases have contributed to procedural law developments in Zambian courts. Meanwhile, TMLP offers a broad spectrum of legal services tailored to meet the diverse needs of its clientele:

- **Business & Corporate Litigation:** Representing clients across various industries in complex commercial disputes, the firm emphasises individualised legal strategies aligned with clients' business objectives.
- **Local & International Contracts:** With significant expertise in drafting and negotiating contracts, TMLP handles agreements related to M&A, joint ventures and cross-border transactions.
- **Banking & Financial Services:** The firm advises on regulatory compliance, amalgamations and the establishment of financial institutions, demonstrating a deep understanding of the Banking & Financial Services Act and related legislation.
- **Conveyancing:** TMLP is renowned for its efficiency in handling transactions involving commercial, residential and agricultural properties, including real estate development and property management.
- **Securities:** The firm has extensive experience in preparing and perfecting securities, such as mortgages, charges and guarantees, ensuring thorough due diligence and compliance.
- **Corporate & Advisory Services:** From company incorporation to obtaining necessary licenses and conducting due diligence reviews, TMLP provides comprehensive support for corporate clients.
- **Debt Recovery:** Employing an assertive approach, the firm has successfully recovered debts on behalf of clients, with Ms Theotis being a licensed insolvency practitioner.

A–Z INDEX

A

Abate, Mario J – Pavia e Ansaldo | Studio Legale – Italy ..... 30.
Abutaha, Ishraga – Abutaha Intellectual Property – UAE ..... 135.
Adio, Seni M – Copley Partners – Nigeria ..... 128.
Ahmad Amin, Ummahani – The Metropolitan Law Firm – Nigeria ..... 127.
Ahmed, Mostafa Mohamed – Ibrachy & Dermarkar Law Firm – Egypt ..... 118.
Al Jallal, Khaled Yousef – Miras Legal – Kuwait ..... 121.
Al Kharafi, Abdullah – Miras Legal – Kuwait ..... 120.
Alhanaee, Abdelaziz – Abdelaziz Alhanaee Advocates & Legal Consultancy – UAE ..... 134.
Aliyev, Nihad– HGNS COUNSELOR Law Firm – Azerbaijan ..... 79.
Alla Mohamed El Hadi, Habib – BSA Law – UAE ..... 136.
Alvez de Araújo, Camila da Mota Pacheco – Araújo e Policastro Advogados – Brazil ..... 53.
Amani, Yves Constant – YAC & Partners – Republic of Guinea ..... 129.
Amin, Ummahani Ahmad – The Metropolitan Law Firm – Nigeria ..... 127.
Antoneli, Dr Osvaldo Gianotti – Reale Advogados Associados – Brazil ..... 50.
Araújo, Camila da Mota Pacheco Alvez de – Araújo e Policastro Advogados – Brazil ..... 53.
Arias V, Mario A – Arias, Abrego, Lopez & Noriega – Panama ..... 62.
Asamura, Masahiro – ASAMURA IP P.C. – Japan ..... 95.
Awwal Yunusa, Mohammed – The Metropolitan Law Firm – Nigeria ..... 127.

B

Bakayoko, Liliana – Liliana Bakayoko INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS LAW FIRM – France ..... 20.
Baker, Paul – International Economics Consulting Ltd – Mauritius ..... 122.
Batoca, Dr Andre – RSA LP – Portugal ..... 40.
Bekturganov, Madiyar – Zan Hub LLP – Kazakhstan ..... 96.
Bird, Michelle – Patron Law – England ..... 13.
Blanck-Dap, Martine – LPA Law – France ..... 19.
Bustamante-Brambila, Gabriel – Bustamante + Freyre – Mexico ..... 61.

C

Cariglia, Bob – Rizolve Partners Inc. – Canada ..... 58.
Carletide, Claude – Chantler Kent Investments – England ..... 16.
Carlson ESQ, Mary Joyce – Mary Joyce Carlson ESQ – Washington DC, US ..... 72.
Casey, Jérôme – CASEY Avocats – France ..... 17.
Chee Keong, Low – IPMAN Global Intellect Sdn Bhd – Malaysia ..... 99.
Cheng, Linda – Lexcel Partners IP Firm – Taiwan ..... 110.
Constant Amani, Yves – YAC & Partners – Republic of Guinea ..... 129.
Cruz, Gáston Fernández – Estudio Fernández & Vargas Abogados S.A.C. – Peru ..... 63.
Cummings, Stephen – Rizolve Partners Inc. – Canada ..... 57.

D

Dathorne-Bayrd, Ronaele – PwC East Caribbean – Barbados ..... 49.
David, Patric – Law Exchange Associates – Tanzania ..... 132.
Dinari, Mohamed Fouzi – Proximo Expertise – Morocco ..... 123.
Dreyfus, Nathalie – Dreyfus Law Firm – France ..... 22.
Du, Candice – Llinks Law Firm – China ..... 85.
Dwi Prasetyo, Agus – ADP Counsellors at Law – Indonesia ..... 90.

E

El Hadi, Habib Alla Mohamed – BSA Law – UAE ..... 136.

F

Fernández Cruz, Gáston – Estudio Fernández & Vargas Abogados S.A.C. – Peru ..... 63.
Ferrari, Dr Eduardo Reale – Reale Advogados Associados – Brazil ..... 51.
Fouzi Dinari, Mohamed – Proximo Expertise – Morocco ..... 123.

G

Galbraith KC, Alan – Shortland Chambers – New Zealand ..... 100.
Gay, Darrell S – ARENTFOX SCHIFF LLP – New York, US ..... 70.
Geofroy, François de – HFW – France ..... 18., 21.
George, Robert John D – Professor Robert John D George – UK ..... 44.
Germann, Stewart – Stewart Germann Law Office – New Zealand ..... 101.
Gianotti Antoneli, Dr Osvaldo – Reale Advogados Associados – Brazil ..... 50.
Gonesh, Aroon – Gonesh Advocatuur – Netherlands ..... 38.
Gordon, Merridy – Gordon & Barry Lawyers Pty Ltd – Australia ..... 76.

H

Hadi, Habib Alla Mohamed El – BSA Law – UAE ..... 136.
Hatano, Keisuke – Anderson Mōri & Tomotsune – Japan ..... 94.
Hechanova, Editha R – Hechanova Bugay Vilchez & Andaya-Racadio, Lawyers – Philippines ..... 107.
Hepp, Sebastian – Zürcher Rechtsanwälte AG – Switzerland ..... 42.
Hernández-Aguiar, Carlos – Invicta Legal – Costa Rica ..... 59.

A–Z INDEX

H

Hertwig, Prof Dr Stefan – CBH Rechtsanwälte PartG mbB – Germany ..... 27.
Hokumura Reis, Marcos – Reis, Souza, Takeishi & Arsuffi Advogados – Brazil ..... 54.
Holland, Victoria – RIAA Barker Gillette (UK) LLP – England ..... 11.
Holzinger, Dr Raphael – Grant Thornton Austria – Austria ..... 8.
Hyung-Chan, Ko – Kwon, Park & Rhee – South Korea ..... 108.

I

Ibrahim, Mohamed – Ibrachy & Dermarkar Law Firm – Egypt ..... 117.
Ilunga, Benoit Tshibangu – TI&A SCA, LAW FIRM I CABINET D'AVOCATS – Democratic Republic of the Congo ..... 116.
Iraqi, Ghiyta – I&I Law Firm – Morocco ..... 125.

J

Jagadeesan, Savitha Kesav – Kochhar & Co. – India ..... 87.
Jallal, Khaled Yousef Al – Miras Legal – Kuwait ..... 121.
Jarkina-Toča, Dr Iur Viktorija – RockBridge Legal ZAB SIA – Latvia ..... 33.
Jebara, Imad – Boast.ai – US ..... 64.
John D George, Robert – Professor Robert John D George – UK ..... 44.
Joy P Quicho, Elita – Siguion Reyna, Montecillo & Ongsiako – Philippines ..... 105.
Joyce Carlson ESQ, Mary – Mary Joyce Carlson ESQ – Washington DC, US ..... 72.

K

Kamuzora, Francis – BOWMANS TANZANIA LIMITED – Tanzania ..... 131.
Kempster, Sarajane – RBC Trust Company (International) Limited – Jersey ..... 31.
Keong, Low Chee – IPMAN Global Intellect Sdn Bhd – Malaysia ..... 99.
Kesav Jagadeesan, Savitha – Kochhar & Co. – India ..... 87.
Kharafi, Abdullah Al – Miras Legal – Kuwait ..... 120.
Kotey, Audrey Naa Dei – AudreyGrey – Ghana ..... 119.
Krauskopf, Patrick L – AGON Partners Legal Ltd. – Switzerland ..... 41.

L

Lafrouji, Reda – Lafrouji Avocats – Morocco ..... 124.
Leong, Yan – Foo Leong Tan & Chan, Advocates & Solicitors – Malaysia ..... 97., 98.
Lin, Po-Cheng (Harvey) – Primordial Law Firm – Taiwan ..... 111.
Linares Rodríguez, César J – LMV | Central Law – Dominican Republic ..... 60.
Liu, Yingzi – Beijing Hylands Law Firm – China ..... 82., 83., 84.
Loggia, Joseph – Buxbaum, Loggia & Associates, Inc. – California, US ..... 66.
Longstaff, Tom – KP Law – England ..... 14.

M

Manalaysay, Cesar P – Siguion Reyna, Montecillo & Ongsiako – Philippines ..... 106.
Manasse, Donald – Donald Manasse Law Offices – Monaco ..... 35., 36.
Mazouzi, Amal – Lafrouji Avocats – Morocco ..... 126.
McCourt, Gail – Royal Bank of Canada (Channel Islands) Limited – Jersey ..... 32.
Miao, Catherine – JunHe LLP – China ..... 81.
Mohamed Ahmed, Mostafa – Ibrachy & Dermarkar Law Firm – Egypt ..... 118.
Mohamed El Hadi, Habib Alla – BSA Law – UAE ..... 136.
Mulyono, DR – Mul & Co – Indonesia ..... 92.
Murray, Rebecca – Devereux Chambers – UK ..... 46.
Mutemi, Joy-Rachel – Theotis Mutemi Legal Practitioners – Zambia ..... 137.

N

Naa Dei Kotey, Audrey – AudreyGrey – Ghana ..... 119.
Nasibov, Hasan – HGNS COUNSELOR Law Firm – Azerbaijan ..... 78.
Nguluma, Dr Alex Thomas – Rex Attorneys – Tanzania ..... 133.
Nordmann, Edith – ACG International – Netherlands ..... 37., 39.

O

O'Brien, Peter – O'Brien Criminal & Civil Solicitors – Australia ..... 75.
Ollat, Constance – HFW – France ..... 18., 21.

A–Z INDEX

P

Paiva, Ana Lúcia Pinke Ribeiro de – Araújo e Policastro Advogados – Brazil ..... 55.
Papacleovoulou, Evi – Law Chambers Nicos Papacleovoulou LLC – Cyprus ..... 9., 10.
Patterson, Mike – PATTERSON & ASSOCIATES (PTY) LTD – South Africa ..... 130.
Pels, Gerald J – Troutman Pepper Locke LLP – Texas, US ..... 71.
Perez-Mesa Jr, Carlos D – Clay Iwamura Pulice & Nervell – Hawaii, US ..... 67.
Piccinini, Silvia – LEGAL TWELVE Avvocati Associati – Italy ..... 29.
Pinna, Paolo – HFW – France ..... 18., 21.
Prasetyo, Agus Dwi – ADP Counsellors at Law – Indonesia ..... 90.

Q

Quicho, Elita Joy P – Siguion Reyna, Montecillo & Ongsiako – Philippines ..... 105.

R

Rafton, Kate – Rafton Family Lawyers – Australia ..... 77.
Rahman, Zaki – FGE Ebrahim Hosain – Pakistan ..... 104.
Rainer, Michael – MTR Legal Rechtsanwälte – Germany ..... 24.
Reale Ferrari, Dr Eduardo – Reale Advogados Associados – Brazil ..... 51.
Reis, Marcos Hokumura – Reis, Souza, Takeishi & Arsuffi Advogados – Brazil ..... 54.
Ribeiro de Paiva, Ana Lúcia Pinke – Araújo e Policastro Advogados – Brazil ..... 55.
Rodríguez, César J Linares – LMV | Central Law – Dominican Republic ..... 60.
Rybak, Dr Christian – Greenberg Traurig Germany, LLP – Germany ..... 25.
Ryken, David – Ryken & Associates, Barristers and Solicitors – New Zealand ..... 103.

S

Sahedov, Maksat – Auditor MS – Turkmenistan ..... 113.
Sakai, Toshikazu – CastGlobalGroup – Japan ..... 93.
Sari, Chamelia – PRAWIRANEGARA Intellectual Property – Indonesia ..... 91.
Scheele, Dr Michael – Legal Alliance Rechtsanwalts GmbH – Germany ..... 26.
Solomon, Aaron – Solomon & Co., Advocates and Solicitors – India ..... 88.
Soutter, Liz – ESL Sports Law – UK ..... 45.
Spurgeon, James – Sustain Value – UK ..... 43.
Sundarji, Khushbu – Stewart Germann Law Office – New Zealand ..... 102.
Swanson, Kristofer – Charles River Associates – Illinois, US ..... 69.

T

Takacs, Donna – Rizolve Partners Inc. – Canada ..... 56.
Taylor, Joanne – Magrath Sheldrick LLP – England ..... 12.
Thomas Nguluma, Dr Alex – Rex Attorneys – Tanzania ..... 133.
Tshibangu Ilunga, Benoit – TI&A SCA, LAW FIRM I CABINET D'AVOCATS – Democratic Republic of the Congo ..... 116.
Turcan, Ivan – Crowe Turcan Mikhailenko – Moldova ..... 34.

U

Usinger, Sabine – SammlerUsinger Rechtsanwälte Partnerschaft mbB – Germany ..... 28.

V

Valenti, Thomas P – Valenti Law – Illinois, US ..... 68.
Venkatesh, Shri – SKV Law Offices – India ..... 86., 89.
Vieira, Dr Marcelo Vinicius – Reale Advogados Associados – Brazil ..... 52.
Vogeler, Dr Andreas – Vogeler Rechtsanwälte – Germany ..... 23.

W

Wang, Jolene – Lexcel Partners IP Firm – Taiwan ..... 112.
Wanigasekera, Anomi – Julius & Creasy – Sri Lanka ..... 109.
Weining, Wang – Starrise Law Firm – China ..... 80.
Whitehead, Esq; Selwyn D – LAW OFFICES OF SELWYN D. WHITEHEAD – California, US ..... 65.
Wyness, Jon – MW Trade Marks Ltd – England ..... 15.

Y

Yousef Al Jallal, Khaled – Miras Legal – Kuwait ..... 121.
Yunusa, Mohammed Awwal – The Metropolitan Law Firm – Nigeria ..... 127.

Z

Zampa, Jean-Marc – HFW – France ..... 18., 21.

WHO'S WHO ADVISER HANDBOOK

2026

Corporate INTL

