

# HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS FURTHER STRENGTHENS SOUTH AFRICA OFFERING WITH ADDITION OF ARBITRATION CAPABILITY

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Firm news

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Herbert Smith Freehills has further bolstered its rapidly growing Johannesburg office, with the addition of Disputes Director Jonathan Ripley-Evans and Associate Fiorella Noriega Del Valle.

Jonathan, who joins from Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr, has experience in both domestic and international alternative dispute resolution, in particular arbitration and mediation. He has carved out a market-leading practice across a wide range of sectors including energy, mining, tourism, hospitality, property and engineering. Jonathan is also an Arbitration Foundation of South Africa (AFSA) accredited mediator and arbitrator, sits on the board of the South African branch of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and is the vice-chair of the Young Members Group (Johannesburg ).

Fiorella joined Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr as a Candidate Attorney in 2013 and was appointed as an Associate in 2015. She was promoted to Senior Associate in 2018. She has qualified for membership of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and is a committee member of the Young Members' Group (Johannesburg ).

Herbert Smith Freehills has expanded rapidly in South Africa, after setting up its office in Johannesburg in October 2015. Highly respected energy and infrastructure finance lawyer Brigette Baillie and Peter Leon - one of the top twenty mining lawyers in the world - were first to be recruited to the firm's office. They both joined Herbert Smith Freehills from South African firm Webber Wentzel, where Brigette was head of the Energy and Infrastructure Sector Group, and Peter head of Mining Regulation.

In May 2016 the firm appointed corporate lawyer, Rudolph du Plessis, as partner in its Johannesburg office from Bowmans, where he had been a partner since 2001. The firm has also added two further market-leading lawyers - competition Partner Jean Meijer and Project Finance Consultant Bidy Faber to its offering.

Jean joined Herbert Smith Freehills from Bowmans, where she was a Partner for over 10 years and served as head and co-head of the Competition Practice. Bidy joined from Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr, where she was director (often a term used in South Africa to describe Partner) of the Finance and Banking practice.

Meanwhile, Herbert Smith Freehills Partners Ed Baring and Bertrand Montembault have also both relocated to the Johannesburg office. They were Head of the firm's Banking and Finance practice in Moscow and Head of the Paris Energy and Infrastructure practice respectively.

Ed Baring, Managing Partner of the Johannesburg office said: *"We welcome Jonathan and Fiorella to the firm and we look forward to working with them. Jonathan's breadth of experience in disputes will be a great addition to our South Africa office and the wider Africa practice, as well as our leading global network."*

Justin D'Agostino, Global Head of Herbert Smith Freehills' Disputes practice, added: *"Our Africa disputes practice is market leading. This new addition to our Johannesburg office is an exciting one and will greatly enhance our ability to offer a global service to clients."*

Commenting on his move to Herbert Smith Freehills, Jonathan added: *"Being part of a leading Global Disputes Practice is a fantastic opportunity for me. The strength and quality of the firm's global network will enable me to offer clients a comprehensive range of expertise from one point of contact."*

Our leading Africa practice has been built over 30 years and is serviced by partners from across our global network of offices, including Johannesburg. We have one of the largest teams of common and civil law lawyers dedicated to Africa work who advise across all key industry sectors, including Energy, Mining, TMT, Banks, Consumer & Retail and Financial Buyers. With experience advising in all of Africa's 54 jurisdictions, we have a thorough understanding of the continent's local and regional legal systems, business practices, local cultures and socio-political considerations, and of the issues and realities of doing business in Africa.

## **About Herbert Smith Freehills**

Operating from 27 offices across Asia Pacific, EMEA and North America, Herbert Smith Freehills is at the heart of the new global business landscape providing premium quality, full-service legal advice. The firm provides many of the world's most important organisations with access to market-leading dispute resolution, projects and transactional legal advice, combined with expertise in a number of global industry sectors, including Banks, Consumer products, Energy, Financial buyers, Infrastructure & Transport, Mining, Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare, Real estate, TMT and Manufacturing & Industrials.

## MEDIA CONTACT

For further information on this news article, please contact:

**CORINNE MCPARTLAND,  
COMMUNICATIONS LEAD**

LONDON

Tel: +44 20 7466 2057

Email: [corinne.mcpartland@hsf.com](mailto:corinne.mcpartland@hsf.com)