

# HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS STRENGTHENS AFRICA OFFERING WITH NEW OFFICE IN JOHANNESBURG

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News

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Herbert Smith Freehills today announces that it will be significantly strengthening its Africa practice with the launch of an office in Johannesburg, South Africa, alongside the hire of two leading South African partners. Brigette Baillie is a highly respected energy and infrastructure finance lawyer and Peter Leon is one of the top twenty mining lawyers in the world.

Peter and Brigette will be joined in Johannesburg by a number of high-quality partners from the Africa practice including Ed Baring, Head of the firm's Banking & Finance practice in Moscow; Bertrand Montembault, Head of the Paris Energy & Infrastructure practice; and Yann Alix, a dual English and French qualified senior associate. The combined strength of the Johannesburg partners will enable the firm to provide a pan-African offering, including francophone Africa, and they will be fully integrated with the firm's Africa specialists located across the international platform.

Commenting on the opening, Mark Rigotti, Joint CEO said:

*"Africa is a core feature of our global strategy. With clients from across our international network looking at the tremendous growth opportunities, the opening of an office in Johannesburg is an important step in how we provide a pan-African offering. This is an exciting milestone for the firm which underlines our commitment to provide an end-to-end service for leading global businesses."*

Both leaders within their respective fields domestically and internationally, Brigette and Peter join from South African firm Webber Wentzel, where Brigette was head of the Energy & Infrastructure Sector Group, and Peter head of Mining Regulation.

Brigette has exceptional experience in non-recourse and limited-recourse financing, project structuring and corporate and equity finance and she is named as a leading lawyer in South Africa by Chambers Global. Joining as Co-Chair of the Africa Practice, Peter's areas of expertise include mineral and petroleum regulation in developing countries, black economic empowerment and indigenisation law, international investment law, prevention and crisis management as well as financial services regulation.

Over the past 30 years, Herbert Smith Freehills has established a leading position in Africa, with one of the largest teams of common and civil law lawyers dedicated to Africa work, acting on matters in over 50 of Africa's 54 countries. Consistently ranked in the top tier by Chambers and Legal 500, the firm has more ranked lawyers for Projects & Energy Africa in Chambers Global than any other firm and operates across a large number of sectors including Energy, Mining, TMT, Banks, Consumer & Retail and Financial Buyers.

The Johannesburg office will open shortly and will be looking to expand the team with additional high-quality and talented South African lawyers.

Stéphane Brabant, Co-Chair of the Africa Practice added:

*"I am delighted that Peter will join me as worldwide Co-Chair of the Africa practice. We shall act together not only providing technical legal advice for our clients but also and more widely as 'trusted advisors' especially for the prevention and management of crisis situations that our clients might face in Africa.*

*"Our ability to deal with legal questions concerning civil law as well as common law combined with our expertise in a number of different sectors of activities are a solid basis for a unique platform to service clients across Africa. We look forward to supporting from Johannesburg our South-African clients in their expansion plans and as well all African and international investors into the continent, including francophone Africa."*

Commenting on his appointment, Peter Leon said:

*"Herbert Smith Freehills is a tremendously well respected global law firm that already has a significant presence across the continent. I am proud to join the firm and very much look forward to working with Brigette and my new colleagues to further entrench our leadership in the region."*

## **Herbert Smith Freehills**

Operating from over 23 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. We provide 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 energy, natural resources, infrastructure and financial services. [www.herbertsmithfreehills.com](http://www.herbertsmithfreehills.com)

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## **MEDIA CONTACT**

For further information on this news article, please contact:

**ANNA WARD, GLOBAL HEAD OF  
EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

LONDON

Tel: +44 20 7466 3119

Email: [anna.ward@hsf.com](mailto:anna.ward@hsf.com)

**KELLY MURRAY, EXTERNAL  
COMMUNICATIONS LEAD**

SYDNEY

Tel: +61 2 9322 4472

Email: [kelly.murray@hsf.com](mailto:kelly.murray@hsf.com)

**SALLY GREIG, HEAD OF  
COMMUNICATIONS, ASIA**

HONG KONG

Tel: +852 21014624

Email: [sally.greig@hsf.com](mailto:sally.greig@hsf.com)