



HERBERT
SMITH
FREEHILLS



ERNST MÜLLER

SENIOR ASSOCIATE

[Johannesburg](#)

Ernst is an ESG and Natural Resources Law specialist based in Johannesburg.

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BACKGROUND

Ernst holds Bachelor of Science (Environmental Sciences)(Cum Laude) and Bachelor of Science Honours (Environmental Management and Analysis)(Cum Laude) degrees from the University of Pretoria, a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Cape Town and a certificate in Advanced Administrative Law (Cum laude) from the University of the Witwatersrand. He is currently enrolled for a Master of Laws (by dissertation) degree with the University of the Witwatersrand where his research focusses on the intersection between Global Administrative and International Human Rights Law.

KEY SERVICES

[Climate Change](#)
[Crisis Prevention and Management](#)

KEY SECTORS

[Energy](#)
[Renewables](#)

EXPERIENCE

Ernst is a "Natural Scientist turned Regulatory Lawyer".

Owing to his background in Environmental Sciences, his practice tends to focus on the laws that govern the exploitation of natural resources. Axiomatically, he also has a passion for sustainable development and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) related matters. In light of this, he is well versed in environmental, mineral and petroleum, labour, administrative and constitutional, as well as general commercial law.

In addition to advising clients on the law, Ernst represent them in negotiations, transactional work, judicial review proceedings, international arbitrations, and high court litigation.

Ernst's clients include governments, local communities and multinational organisations. The latter include entities that are listed on the Johannesburg, London, New York, Singapore and Indian Stock Exchanges and which have operations in various Sub-Saharan African jurisdictions.

Ernst's experience includes advising:

- the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as international legal advisor on the Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources' mineral law reform project
- a confidential pharmaceutical company on negotiations with the African Union member states regarding its COVID-19 vaccine
- a globally diversified natural resources company on disputes with the Government of Zambia including developing facilitating an international advocacy strategy which includes engagements with various governments, international non-governmental organizations and international financial institutions
- Norilsk Nickel Mauritius and Norilsk Nickel Africa (Proprietary) Limited on the sale of NNM's interest in the Nkomati Joint Venture to BCL (Proprietary) Limited in Botswana and the disputes which have subsequently stemmed from the transaction including appeal proceedings under section 96 of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 and judicial review proceedings
- a multinational mining company of the indigenous customs and laws of the Bakgatla Community in the North West Province of South Africa and the consequences of the Baloyi Commission of inquiry report