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Our Firm

We help our clients manage legal complexity and unlock opportunity in Africa.

We have an enviable track record of providing legal services to the highest professional standards in Africa. We work for clients across numerous African jurisdictions on corporate, finance, competition, taxation, employment, technology and dispute resolution matters.

With eight offices in six African countries and over 400 specialist lawyers, we draw on our unique knowledge of the business and socio-political environment to advise clients on a wide range of legal issues.

Everywhere we work, we offer clients a service that uniquely blends expertise in the law, knowledge of the local market, and an understanding of their businesses. Our aim is to assist clients to achieve their objectives as smoothly and efficiently as possible while minimising the legal and regulatory risks.

Our clients include domestic and foreign corporates, multinationals, funds and financial institutions, across almost all sectors of the economy, as well as state-owned enterprises and governments.

Our expertise is frequently recognised by independent research organisations. Most recently, our Kenyan practice won the 2022 Chambers Africa Award for Law Firm of the Year in Kenya. In 2022, Bowmans won six IFLR Africa Awards including overall M&A Team of The Year; Jurisdictional Firm of the Year: South Africa; Loans Firm of the Year: South Africa; M&A Firm of the Year: South Africa; and Project Finance Firm of the Year: South Africa. We also advised on the deal named M&A Deal of the Year. At the 2022 Africa Legal Awards, we won four practice awards including Banking and Finance Team of the Year; Capital Markets Team of the Year; Tax Team of the Year and Transportation and Infrastructure Team of the Year.

In the 2021 DealMakers Africa Awards we ranked first in East Africa for both deal value and deal flow and also advised on the deals named East Africa Deal of the Year and East Africa Private Equity Deal of the Year. In the 2021 DealMakers Awards we placed first by deal flow and second by deal value in the Unlisted M&A Transactions category; first by deal flow and third by deal value in the BEE Deals category; third and fourth by value and flow respectively in the Listed Company M&A Transactions category; and fourth by deal value and deal flow in the General Corporate Finance category.

On the global front, Bowmans has long-standing and excellent relationships with a range of international law firms with whom we often work on Africa-focused client mandates. We are also a member firm of Lex Mundi, a global association of more than 160 independent law firms in all the major centres across the globe. Lex Mundi gives us the ability to connect our clients with the best law firms in each of the countries represented.

Our Presence in Africa

Recognising the size and enormous diversity of Africa, our approach to providing legal services across the continent is intended to offer on-the-ground advice in the countries that matter for our clients. Our presence in Africa is always evolving to meet the changes that are shaping the future of this vast continent.

Currently, we have our own offices in six African countries: Kenya (Nairobi), Mauritius (Moka), South Africa (Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg), Tanzania (Dar es Salaam), Uganda (Kampala) and Zambia (Lusaka).

We work closely with our Bowmans Alliance firms in Ethiopia (Aman & Partners LLP) and Nigeria (Udo Uduma & Belo-Osagie). These are two of the leading corporate and commercial law firms in their jurisdictions.

We have a special relationship with a competent practitioner in Mozambique. We also have a non-exclusive co-operation agreement with French international law firm Gide Loyrette Nouel that provides our clients access to assistance in francophone west and north Africa. The arrangement provides complementary access for Gide’s clients and lawyers to markets in central, southern and eastern Africa.

We ensure that, whenever our clients need legal advice in other parts of Africa, we can assist them by tapping into our comprehensive database of contacts of the best firms and practitioners across the continent.
Our Construction Practice

We are proud to be one of the most recognised full service construction teams in the sector in Africa.

We assist clients throughout the project life cycle of complex infrastructure and construction projects. This includes all stages of development and delivery and extends to financing and disputes under all forms of construction contracts.

We have a thorough understanding of various international standard forms of contract, including FIDIC, the NEC and the JBCC, along with a wealth of experience that cuts across multiple specialist sectors including energy, manufacturing, mining, real estate, transport, telecoms and utilities.

Our disputes expertise extends from mediation, arbitration and litigation to negotiating and structuring major settlement agreements which often deal with interconnected and complex commercial and regulatory issues.

‘One source described the service as “utterly excellent,” adding: “Their knowledge on the subject matter has been exceptional.”’ - Chambers and Partners, 2018

Through our footprint in Africa and our strong relationships with firms on the ground in other key jurisdictions, we are well placed to provide cross-border advice spanning the full range of legal services to clients doing business in this sector.

Our specialist construction and engineering lawyers serve clients ranging from major contractors to promoters, leading developers, funders, purchasers, tenants and occupiers among others.

Our Specialised Services

We advise/act for clients on:

• Applicable legislation across the African continent.
• The entire spectrum of construction and engineering law and the related regulatory environment.
• Various standard forms of contracts, including FIDIC, the NEC and the JBCC.
• Construction aspects of financing agreements, purchase agreements, PPP project agreements and agreements for lease.
• Operation and maintenance and facilities management agreements on completed projects.
• Construction and engineering disputes including mediation, arbitration and litigation.

Clients appreciate the support they receive from Bowmans, describing us as ‘very responsive and proactive’ - Chambers and Partners, 2017
Our Signature Matters

Some of our recent work includes advising:

- A confidential client in defending a claim referred to arbitration relating to the construction of a sub-station in Zimbabwe.
- A confidential client in the development of a cancer hospital. We drafted the construction agreement (adopting the Agreement and Conditions of Contract for Building Works published by the Joint Building Council, Kenya (the JBC Contract)) to suit the project; as well as service agreements for the project managers, the architect, the engineer and the quantity surveyor.
- AECOM, on a variety of matters, including the post-merger integrations of legacy companies Davis Langdon and BKS into the AECOM group in South Africa.
- Civicon Engineering Africa on its civil works contracts with Tullow Oil and Schlumberger and in its negotiations with Lake Turkana Wind Power Ltd in providing civil works services (Kenya).
- Development Bank of Southern Africa on the application of procurement legislation, regulations and standards, the Construction Regulations, the Built Environment regulations, the Constitution, PFMA and MFMA and related intergovernmental framework legislation for the design of an appropriate contractual framework for its Infrastructure Development Division (South Africa).
- An equity sponsor and off-taker on the procurement strategy for the construction of a greenfields glass manufacturing plant, as well as the EPC, O&M, feedstock supply and foodstuff offtake tender and contract documentation (South Africa).
- An equity sponsor and off-taker on the procurement strategy for the construction of a greenfields cans manufacturing plant, as well as the EPC, O&M, feedstock supply and foodstuff offtake tender and contract documentation (South Africa).
- The Bombela Concession Company and the Gauteng Provincial Government on one of the largest commercial settlements in the history of the country’s construction industry (South Africa).
- Centum Investment Company Ltd on consultancy contracts for construction projects in Runda Estate (Kenya) and in the Garuga Peninsula (Uganda).
- Eskom, as owner, on all construction related aspects of the Ingula Pumped Storage Scheme Power Station (South Africa).
- LSG SkyChefs on the development and construction of the second inflight catering kitchen at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (Kenya).
- Gigawatt as owner/developer of the construction of the 100MW gas fired power station (Mozambique).
- Group Five as a lead member of the Muntonia PPP Consortium which in 2015 successfully reached financial close for the City Of Tshwane Metropolitan office accommodation public private partnership (South Africa).
- Hass Consult, one of Kenya’s leading real estate agents and developers, on various construction law related matters on their residential and commercial properties, including the construction and development of Le Mac, a state-of-the-art, 22-storey tower geared to be the tallest mixed-used tower in the country.
- IFC and the Ministry of Health on a feasibility study for the construction of four regional cancer centres across Kenya on a PPP basis.
- Intex Construction on an EPC and O&M aspects of a Kenyan roads PPP project.
- Kalangala Infrastructure Services Project (KIS), where we advised an international developer based in the UK on a project involving transport, water and energy infrastructure (Uganda).
- Koba Africa on the tax and legal aspects and drafting of all transaction documents including sale and purchase agreements for the land; FIDIC Yellow for the design and supply of the data centre; FIDIC Red for the main civil works (not directly linked to data centre), various consultancy contracts, contracts with data centre customers such as cloud based service providers one of whom is listed on the NASDAQ and S&P 500 and regulatory approvals with the Communications Authority (Kenya).
- Old Mutual Property Africa Ltd on its USD 63 million investment in the Two Rivers Shopping Mall under development in Nairobi, the largest mall in East and Central Africa. The due diligence on this transaction was largely on construction matters as the investment was being made while the construction of the Two Rivers Shopping Mall was ongoing (Kenya).
- On FIDIC Yellow Book contracts for the “Avana” development in Nairobi comprising a 10 floor residential building of 80 apartments and four penthouses (Kenya).
- Palabora Mining Company on their Lift II brownfield copper mining expansion project in Palabora (South Africa).
- Tatu City Ltd in a KES 14 billion contract dispute filed by Ongata Works Ltd (Kenya).
- Transnet Freight Rail, in defending a number of claims referred to adjudication and arbitration by a contractor relating to the maintenance of the rail network (South Africa).
- UAP Holdings Ltd on various construction and consultancy contracts in relation to the ongoing construction of UAP Tower in Upper Hill, Nairobi (Kenya).
- WBHO in respect of a national road project in Swaziland.
- White Arkitekter AB on a construction contract and related agreements in relation to the construction of a Leadership Centre for the College of Insurance in Nairobi (Kenya).
- Xstrata Coal on the establishment of its Tweefontein mining operations, including the drafting of all EPC, mining and contractor agreements, construction agreements, supply agreements and general service agreements for its operations (South Africa).

‘Very knowledgeable and well-recognised lawyers…They are very good lawyers who are attentive to the needs of clients. Their work is excellent.’
- Chambers and Partners, 2016
Africa Legal Awards 2022
Bowmans won four practice awards including Banking and Finance Team of the Year; Capital Markets Team of the Year; Tax Team of the Year and Transportation and Infrastructure Team of the Year.

Chambers Africa Awards 2022
Bowmans’ Kenyan practice was named Kenya Law Firm of the Year and chairman and senior partner, Ezra Davids, was named South Africa Lawyer of the Year.

DealMakers Africa Awards 2021
Bowmans was DealMakers top dealmaker in East Africa for 2021 by number of M&A transactions worked on. The firm had more than 26% market share and advised on the deal named Deal of the Year.

DealMakers South Africa Awards 2021
Bowmans placed first by deal flow and second by deal value in the Unlisted M&A Transactions category; and first by deal flow and third by deal value in the BEE Deals category.

IFLR Africa Awards 2022
Bowmans received a total of six awards including overall M&A Team of the Year; Jurisdictional Firm of the Year; South Africa; Loans Firm of the Year; South Africa; M&A Firm of the Year; South Africa; and Project Finance Firm of the Year; South Africa. The firm also advised on the deal named M&A Deal of the Year.

Accolades

Band 1
Kenya
Banking & Finance
Corporate/M&A
FinTech Legal
Intellectual Property
Projects & Energy
Real Estate

South Africa
Capital Markets: Debt
Capital Markets: Equity
M&A
Project Development: Mining

Tier 1
Kenya
Banking & Finance M&A
Project Development: Mining

South Africa
Capital Markets: Debt
Capital Markets: Equity
M&A
Project Development: Energy/Power

Uganda
Financial & Corporate
Project Development

Band 2
Africa Wide
TMT
Kenya
Employment
Private Wealth Law

South Africa
Administrative & Public Law
Banking & Finance
Dispute Resolution
FinTech Legal
Media & Broadcasting
Restructuring/Insolvency

Tier 2
Kenya
Project Development: Energy/Power
Project Development: Infrastructure

South Africa
Banking
Project Development: Infrastructure
Project Development: Mining
Project Finance

Tanzania
General Business Law

Uganda
General Business Law

Other Notable
Zambia
Financial & Corporate
Project Development

Recognised Lawyers

74
41
31
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