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## Firm Overview

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### A General Overview of Afridi & Angell

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## About Afridi & Angell

### Who we are

Founded in 1975, Afridi & Angell is a full-service UAE law firm in its fifth decade at the forefront of the legal community. Our head office is located at Emirates Towers in Dubai, with other offices in Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, and the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC).

From the beginning, our hallmarks have been a commitment to quality, unsurpassed knowledge of the law and the legal environment, and crafting of innovative business solutions. Our lawyers join us from firms in leading commercial centres around the world, bringing on board world-class education, training and experience in diverse legal environments.

Unlike some other firms, Afridi & Angell has not expanded through mergers. We have instead grown organically by recruiting individual top calibre lawyers, ensuring that each new member embodies the culture of excellence established by the firm's founders. We combine the capabilities of a large firm with a dedication to client service that is increasingly rare at the elite level of our profession. The result is a unique understanding of the local legal environment that enables us to craft solutions that really work. We attract and retain clients with our dedication to practical guidance focused on their business needs supported by decades of experience in our home jurisdiction, the UAE.

Our focus today is to continue the vision of professional excellence of our founders, with an emphasis on recruitment and retention of exceptional talent. We have never sought to be the biggest, but we demand from ourselves nothing less than the best.

With little turnover among our professional staff and with a loyal client base dating back decades and engaged in multiple business activities, Afridi & Angell has grown from strength to strength through the recent economic downturn. We fully expect to be here for the next five decades and beyond. Very few firms can make either of these claims.

### Awards and Accolades

- Honourable Mention for Regional Law Firm of the Year, Banking & Finance Team of the Year, and Employment Team of the Year, The Oath Middle East Legal Awards 2018
- Highly Commended for Regional Law Firm of the Year (large practice), Legal Week's Middle East Legal Awards 2018
- Highly Commended for Regional Law Firm of the Year (small practice), Legal Week's Middle East Legal Awards 2017
- Regional Law Firm of the Year Award (small practice), The Oath Middle East Legal Awards 2016
- ASIAN-MENA COUNSEL's Deals of the Year 2014 award for the firm's work on the Damac Real Estate Development issuance on the London Stock Exchange
- Recognised as one of the top international law firms for India work, India Business Law Journal Survey 2013
- M&A category winner (amongst other firms) for advice relating to the acquisition by Mannai of Damas International matter, IFLR Middle East Awards 2012
- Structured Finance Deal of the Year 2011, Islamic Finance News (Salik One US\$800 million Wakala Syndicated Financing)

## **Our International Network**

Afridi & Angell is the exclusive member firm in the UAE of a number of the world's top legal networks and associations, most notably Lex Mundi, the world's leading network of independent law firms. As part of the Lex Mundi global network, we can provide our clients with preferred access to more than 21,000 lawyers around the world – all from a single point of contact. Individually, each Lex Mundi member firm is a leader in its local market. Collectively, Lex Mundi firms provide global legal resources with unmatched depth and breadth. Working with other Lex Mundi firms, we are able to seamlessly handle our clients' most challenging cross-border transactions and disputes.

Afridi & Angell is also the exclusive UAE member of World Services Group with more than 19,000 legal professionals in almost 400 offices spanning 100 countries globally.

## **What we do**

Afridi & Angell provides comprehensive legal advice and innovative business solutions in banking and finance; corporate and commercial law; dispute resolution; construction and real estate; employment; energy; project finance; transport; as well as doing business in the UAE and in the DIFC.

We advise local and regional clients ranging in size and sophistication from start-ups to some of the region's largest public and private companies, governments and quasi-government institutions. We work extensively with entrepreneurs and investors from the region and beyond, and have attracted numerous international clients looking for the right counsel to protect and expand their interests in the UAE.

Many of our lawyers are recognized as leaders in their fields in international legal and business publications and are regular contributors to and co-authors of authoritative legal guides. These include our long-standing authorship of articles and chapter contributions for Practical Law Company's Multi-Jurisdictional Guides as well Business Law Research's Law Review and Getting the Deal Through series. Our contributions have included chapters and articles on corporate real estate, labour and employment, arbitration, dispute resolution, anti-corruption, energy regulation, banking regulation, acquisition finance and doing business in the UAE.

## **How we work with clients**

Our clients have always been and will continue to be the firm's core focus. We advise local, regional and global clients ranging in size and sophistication from start-ups, sole proprietorships, family-owned businesses, entrepreneurs and investors to some of the world's largest public and private companies, governments and quasi-government institutions. We provide informed, authoritative, practical and timely business law advice.

Our clients have always appreciated our work ethic and hands-on approach. They recognize that our staffing and resources are organized on a case by case to deliver practical solutions in the most effective manner. Additionally, our long standing clients have always taken comfort in our established practice and our focus on talent retention and succession planning where, over the years, these clients were assured of continuity and consistency of service.

## Main Areas of Practice

### Banking and Financial Services

Afridi & Angell's Banking and Finance practice is recognised as one of the strongest and most experienced in the region. Our clients include domestic and international banks, financial institutions, borrowers and investors. We regularly advise on project finance transactions, structured finance, capital markets, investment products, acquisition finance, Islamic financing, asset finance and structuring, trade, consumer and treasury products.

### Infrastructure and Project Finance

Our Infrastructure and Project Finance team sets the pace for the energy industry in the region. We have built a strong reputation for advising developers, investors, lenders and other participants in infrastructure transactions. We have successfully advised stakeholders on all aspects of infrastructure projects from inception to financing and implementation, often in challenging circumstances. Many of the projects on which the team has advised have been groundbreaking in terms of the particular type of infrastructure in question and the financing backing the project.

### Corporate and Commercial

Afridi & Angell has an impressive track record of advising clients in leading corporate transactions in the region. We pride ourselves on our innovation and ability to bring commercial acumen to a broad variety of matters in respect of our clients' inward and outward investment activities and joint ventures as well as their ongoing corporate, financial and commercial matters. We also draw together experts from across the firm in key areas impacting the corporate, commercial and retail sectors including contracting, corporate finance, technology, intellectual property, employment, financial services, consumer protection regulations, litigation and dispute resolution.

- Banking and Financial Services
- Infrastructure and Project Finance
- Corporate and Commercial
- M&A and Private Equity
- Dubai International Financial Centre
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- Real Estate
- Employment
- Dispute Resolution
- Military and Offsets
- Insurance
- Technology, Media and Telecommunications
- International Trade Controls
- Maritime, Shipping and Transport
- Venture Capital

### **M&A and Private Equity**

Our team has a vast experience in mergers and acquisitions and joint ventures, and has been involved in transactions of every size and scope in various industry sectors. We advise clients on public and private, domestic and cross-border transactions from the structuring phase through to completion. General transactional work aside, one of Afridi & Angell's key strengths is advising on technical, stand alone, legal issues. The team prides itself on its innovative, problem-solving skills which are enhanced by years of experience in the region together with its innate understanding of their clients businesses and their needs both from a regional and an international perspective.

Whether advising the bidder or the target, identifying a potential purchaser, seller or investor, or arranging for the financing of a transaction, our clients benefit from our vast network of contacts and our unfailing focus on delivering value-added tactical, business and legal advice.

We also have substantial experience in venture capital and private equity transactions, including representation of domestic and offshore investments funds (including country funds) and advisers. The firm acts for clients on a broad variety of matters in respect of their inward and outward direct investment activities and joint ventures and ongoing general corporate, financial and commercial needs.

### **Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC)**

Our DIFC practice is acknowledged as a market leader. We have a dedicated team which advises on all aspects relating to the DIFC including the set-up and operation of funds, financial institutions and companies in the DIFC. We advise on the authorisation of activities in the DIFC, regulatory approval from the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA), the operation of and participation on NASDAQ Dubai and all regulatory compliance issues. We have represented clients in relation to investigations by the DFSA and advised in relation to enforcement action taken by the DFSA. Our team leads the field in advising parties during DFSA investigations and where necessary, negotiating settlements on their behalf. Our practice was instructed by the first authorised firm to be fined by the DFSA and has since gone on to advise in connection with the majority of all DFSA investigations resulting in a public outcome.

### **Financial Services Regulation**

Our Financial Services Regulation practice has emerged as one of the most highly regarded in the UAE. In a world of increasing financial regulation we help navigate clients through those regulations and offer advice on meeting compliance obligations with practical and robust solutions. We also advise in connection with investigations and enforcement actions. We advise all stakeholders across the full spectrum of financial services sectors in the UAE and the region. We deal with regulators and financial authorities and this enables us to provide current advice on the interpretation and application of local and regional regulatory requirements.

### **Real Estate**

Our real estate team's in-depth understanding of the legal and business environments in the UAE and the region, combined with its strong relationships with government authorities, enables it to provide commercially astute and trusted advice to clients. The team regularly represents master developers, sub-developers, property owners, architects, engineers, contractors and government entities in all stages of the real estate and construction processes. The team has a wealth of experience in advising on purchase and sale transactions, hotel management structuring and transactions, leasing, jointly owned property strategies and documentation, and related court cases and arbitrations.

Afridi & Angell successfully led a lawyer's group consisting of real estate partners from major law firms with offices in the UAE in negotiating with the Dubai government to establish the legal opinion precedent to be used with respect to the newly introduced jointly owned property law's mandatory regulatory filing requirements of Jointly Owned Property Declarations. This was a first in Dubai - setting the market standard.

### **Employment**

Our Employment team, which advises on non-contentious and contentious employment matters, is highly regarded. We are recognised for our commercial, practical and workable advice in respect of all commercial aspects of the employer/employee relationship.

Our lawyers work with local and international companies to ensure compliance with UAE and DIFC labour and immigration laws. We assist clients in reviewing existing and drafting new employment contracts for all levels of staff, senior management and directors. We also assist clients in the review and drafting of employee handbooks, advise them on compensation and incentive schemes, as well as enforcement of non-compete clauses.

We have extensive experience in negotiating settlements and coordinate closely with our Dispute Resolution team should a matter proceed to court or arbitration.

### **Dispute Resolution**

Our dispute resolution team is recognised as one of the strongest in the UAE. Its in-depth knowledge of the law and court procedure, commercial approach and ability to offer workable solutions is valued by clients. We represent clients in civil and criminal matters with a number of our lawyers having advocacy rights to appear before the DIFC Court. In the local courts, our team assists and coordinates litigations with local advocates to develop strategies, evaluate facts and formulate legal positions for clients in the enforcement of awards and judgments. We built very close working relationships with UAE advocates which enables us to instruct the right advocate for the job and in supervising the case.

We also represent clients in international and ad hoc arbitrations. Such cases have involved concessions, constructions contracts, contractual payment claims, banking matters, commercial agencies, partner disputes, foreign currency, futures trading and other investment matters.

The highly regarded litigator, Mr. Chakradaran, is Former Sri Lanka Representative of the ICC-International Court of Arbitration in Paris. He is also Former Chairman of the Board of Directors of the DIFC Arbitration Centre LLC.

### **Technology, Media and Telecommunications (TMT)**

The firm has extensive experience in all aspects of corporate and commercial law as it pertains to the TMT industry and provides an integrated and comprehensive legal offering to companies in the industry. We advise on all aspects relating to e-commerce including electronic contracting, software development and licensing agreements, rights in data, consumer privacy, secure transaction processing, digital signatures, encryption and export control, domain name issues, linking and framing, liability for online content, e-mail-related issues, criminal liability and jurisdictional issues. The firm has developed a practical understanding of the legal issues faced by TMT companies and the industry, and has been successful in devising workable strategies for domestic and foreign investors in these areas. In the process, our lawyers have developed close and professional working relationships with the regulatory agencies concerned. In the course of our advice to TMT and other companies, our lawyers provide comprehensive advice on a wide range intellectual property matters, including intellectual property rights, patents, trademarks, copyrights, know-how and other matters, including technology transfers and preparation and registration of trademarks and patents.



### **Military and Offsets**

For more than two decades, we have advised foreign defence suppliers on qualification for and negotiation and performance of contracts with regional defence and security customers. Our services include support in the negotiation and performance of offset agreements and advice on the role of consultants and intermediaries in the defence procurement process. Our clients in this sector include leading defence contractors.

### **Insurance**

Afridi & Angell has been closely involved in the setting-up of and advising the leading life insurance providers in the UAE. We advise with respect to regulatory issues facing insurance companies, brokers and agents. We regularly advise in relation to insurance claims, in particular, maritime insurance matters.

### **International Trade Controls**

We advise clients regarding UAE, US, UN and other sanctions, boycotts and controls affecting exports and transactions with certain designated countries and with regard to the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

### **Maritime, Shipping and Transport**

We pride ourselves on having one of the most established and reputable Maritime Law practices in the region. We represent and advise ship owners, protection and indemnity clubs, drydocks, freight forwarders, charterers, banks, courier companies and several international law firms in all aspects of maritime law and practice, including collision and ship financing, cargo claims, shipbuilding contracts, insurance, regulation, ports and terminals. Our practice also encompasses environmental regulations and issues relating to or affecting transportation.

### **Venture Capital**

We advise emerging companies, as well as venture capital firms and banks in relation to all aspects of securing financing for entrepreneurs and start-up companies in the information technology and biotechnology sectors. The firm's established history in the region and its sterling list of corporate clients offers an invaluable opportunity to introduce emerging companies to potential investors and vice versa. Our lawyers are well versed in advising on corporate, mergers and acquisitions and securities law, and consequently, negotiate and draft financing documentation.



## Our Lawyers

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### Partners

- Charles S Laubach
- Bashir Ahmed
- Masood K Afridi
- Haider K Afridi
- Shahram Safai
- Gregory J Mayew
- Stuart J Walker
- James Bowden
- Chatura Randeniya
- Danielle Lobo

### Senior Consultants

- C. Chakradaran
- Amjad Ali Khan

### Associates

- Adite Alope
- Imran Asghar
- Omer Bakri
- Mevan Bandara
- Rahat Dar
- Zeina Al Oraibi El Zein
- Nazim Hashim
- Kanan Kasuya
- Saurbh Kothari
- Emad Maghsoudi
- Zaid Mahomed
- Mamoun Osman
- Silvia Anna Pretorius
- Abdus Samad
- Sulakshana Senanayake
- Anna White
- Zahra Zaidi

## Offices

### Dubai

PO Box 9371  
Jumeirah Emirates Towers, Level 35  
Sheikh Zayed Road  
Dubai, UAE  
Tel: +971 4 330 3900  
Fax: +971 4 330 3800  
dubai@afриди-angell.com

### Abu Dhabi

PO Box 3961  
The Towers at the Trade Center  
West Tower, Level 12  
Abu Dhabi, UAE  
Tel: +971 2 610 1010  
Fax: +971 2 627 2905  
abudhabi@afриди-angell.com

### DIFC

PO Box 9371  
Emirates Financial Towers  
North Tower, Office N316  
Dubai, UAE  
Tel: +971 4 355 1414  
Fax: +971 4 330 1400  
dubai@afриди-angell.com

### Sharjah

PO Box 5925  
Al Baker Tower 5, Office 601  
Al Khan, Al Mamzar  
Sharjah, UAE  
Tel: +971 6 568 1062  
Fax: +971 6 568 2336  
sharjah@afриди-angell.com