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**In-House Community
Magazine**



PHILIPPINES

Financial Frauds and
the Financial Products
and Services Consumer
Protection Act



Q&A

Getting to know Sesto Vecchi
of Russin & Vecchi, Vietnam



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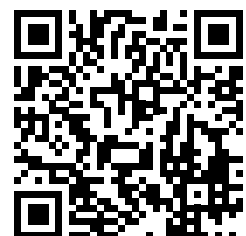


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Financial Frauds and the Financial Products and Services Consumer Protection Act

BY APRIL JANE S. SILLADA, ASSOCIATE, ACCRALAW



The Philippines had its fair share of financial fraud scandals. Only recently, in December 2021, one of the largest banks in the Philippines was hit by a cyber fraud attack by hackers who illegally transferred funds from the accounts of more than seven hundred of its clients. In 2019, an investment scam tricked around five million people to make “donations” with a promise of “blessings” equivalent to 30% of their donations to be paid out every month and for life.

These recent challenges faced by Filipino financial consumers were the motivation behind the recently passed Financial Products and Services Consumer Protection Act (Republic Act No. 11765).

Through this law, aggrieved financial consumers are now provided with what promises to be a faster way to recover their money. Instead of immediately resorting to the filing of a civil case in court and waiting for months to get a decision, they may now file an action with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) or the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The law has given the BSP and the SEC the authority to adjudicate actions arising from or in connection with financial transactions that are purely civil in nature, and the claim

or relief prayed for by the financial consumer is solely for payment or reimbursement of a sum of money not exceeding the amount of ten million pesos (P10,000,000.00). Recovery of the financial consumers’ money is also made faster by the fact that the decision of the BSP or the SEC has been declared by law to be final and executory, and the BSP or the SEC may order the payment or reimbursement of the money subject of the action.

There are also other remedies that an aggrieved financial consumer may avail of prior to adjudication by the BSP or SEC. He may avail of the consumer assistance mechanism required by law to be established by the financial service provider. This mechanism must provide free assistance to financial consumers on financial transaction concerns, including the handling of complaints, inquiries, and requests.

Financial consumers who are unsatisfied with the financial service provider’s handling of their complaints, inquiries, and requests may elevate their concerns to the financial regulator (BSP, SEC, Insurance Commission (IC), and the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)). In turn, financial regulators are required by law to provide an efficient and effective consumer redress or complaints

handling mechanism such as mediation, conciliation or other modes of alternative dispute resolution to address conflict or dissatisfaction from financial consumers arising from financial products or services.

Moreover, through the passage of this law, financial consumers are now better protected against the imposition of excessive, iniquitous, or unconscionable interest rates. Banks and other financial institutions were generally free to determine the rate of interest they could impose on their borrowers, and it usually takes a court pronouncement for a usurious interest rate to be struck down as unconscionable. Under this law, however, financial regulators are now authorised to determine the reasonableness of interest, charges, or fees which a financial service provider may demand, collect, or receive for any service or product offered to a financial consumer.

This law also imposes additional duties and responsibilities on financial service providers. They are now obliged to, among others, make sure that their clients will not have a hard time meeting their obligations. Under the law, financial service providers should have written procedures for determining whether a particular financial product or service is suitable and affordable for their clients. The amount and the terms of the offered financial product or service should allow the clients to meet their obligations with a low probability of serious hardship, thus preventing over-indebtedness.

This law also obliges financial service providers to adopt a cooling-off policy, under which financial consumers cannot be pressured to immediately make a decision regarding a particular financial product or service, and thus allow the client to consider the costs and risks and to fully evaluate all the terms of the financial product or service. Should the client

decide during the cooling-off period that he wants to cancel or return the contract, he must be allowed to do so without penalty.

Finally, prior to the passage of this law, perpetrators of investment fraud, such as the founders of Ponzi schemes, were criminally charged with violation of the Securities Regulation Code. Now, the crime of “investment fraud” has itself been defined and made unlawful. Under this law, investment fraud is defined as any form of deceptive solicitation of investments from the public. This includes Ponzi schemes and such other schemes involving the promise or offer of profits or returns which are sourced from the investments or contributions made by the investors themselves, boiling room operations, and the offering or selling of investment schemes to the public without a licence or permit from the SEC. This law provides for criminal and administrative sanctions against persons found responsible for investment fraud.

All these measures were designed to reinforce the people’s confidence in the financial market and foster the stability of the Philippine financial system.

This article is for informational and educational purposes only. It is not offered and does not constitute legal advice or legal opinion. It first appeared in Business World, a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.



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Worthy of Mention: A recent judgment clarifies rules on disclosure of documents "mentioned" in witness statements

BY JEREMY LIGHTFOOT, PARTNER, CAREY OLSEN
YI YANG, SENIOR PARALEGAL, CAREY OLSEN

The rules on disclosure and inspection of documents in litigation are complex and often leave much room for debate. This is particularly true in the contentious area of unintended compulsory disclosure caused by a passing reference in a witness statement. The consequences of mentioning a document in evidence has long been a trap for the unwary, sometimes leading to crucial additional, unintended, disclosure.

Recently, a judgment handed down by the English High Court cast further light on what documents may be subject to disclosure for the sake of being "mentioned" in the witness statement. The Court's interpretation of the relevant procedural rules provides more certainty for legal practitioners and their clients alike as to the scope of disclosure and should serve as strong persuasive precedent in the offshore jurisdictions where broadly analogous procedural rules tend to apply.

In *Hoegh & Anor v Taylor Wessing Llp & Anor*¹, a defendant sought an order for the production of a document/documents mentioned in four paragraphs of a witness statement in support of the claimant. The relevant rules required disclosure of a mentioned document, and included the proviso that a 'document is mentioned where it is referred to, cited in whole or in part or there is a direct allusion to it.'

The document(s) sought was regarding a review that the claimants instructed PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) to undertake in around March 2021, and the ground for disclosure was based on the fact that the witness statement made a direct allusion to it.

In interpreting what constitutes "direct allusion", the Court reviewed and relied on previous case law, including the English Court of Appeal's rulings in *Dubai Bank* and *Rubin*. In particular, the judgment provides a comprehensive review of the tests as developed by the Courts in the interpretation of the rules.

¹ [2022] EWHC 856 (Ch)

KEY LESSONS FROM PREVIOUS AUTHORITIES

Three key lessons were drawn from previous authorities.

First, the class issue. The Court of Appeal in *Dubai Bank Limited v Galadari*² acknowledged the correctness of the decision in *Smith v Harris*³ to hold that the reference could be to an individual document or a class of documents:

*"a compendious reference to a class of documents, as opposed to a reference to individual documents, is well capable of falling within the rule, providing that it is indeed a reference."*⁴

Secondly, inferences that a document exists are not sufficient. The Court of Appeal in *Dubai Bank* rejected the application for the production of certain bank accounts referred to in the affidavit on the basis that, although a bank account would usually be evidenced by documents, it was not itself a document. In particular, the applicant's counsel's submission that if there is reference to a transaction which, on the balance of probabilities, will have been effected by a document that must involve a reference to the document, is rejected:

*"In our judgment, a mere opinion that on the balance of probabilities, a transaction referred to in a pleading or affidavit must have been effected by a document, does not give the court jurisdiction to make an order under R.S.C., Ord. 24, r. 10, unless the pleading or affidavit makes direct allusion to the document or class of documents in question."*⁵

Thirdly, reference to the effect of a document rather than its contents is also not sufficient for disclosure. In *Rubin v Expanadable Ltd*⁶, the Court of Appeal made a distinction between the reference to the effects and contents of a document and held that only the latter could result in disclosure.

*"It appears therefore that a reference to a conveyance, guarantee, mandate or mortgage ... would be a reference to a document as would reference to the contents of such documents: but that the mere reference to the effect of some transaction or document, such as to say that a property was conveyed or that somebody had guaranteed a loan would not be sufficient."*⁷

The Court concluded that the reference in a witness statement of "he wrote to me" was "not a mere reference to a transaction otherwise to be inferred as effected by a document, as in 'he conveyed' or 'he guaranteed' but is a direct allusion to the act of making the document itself. It is the same as saying 'he wrote a writing'."⁸

THE APPLICATION IN HOEGH V TAYLOR WESSING

The references made in the witness statement in *Hoegh v Taylor Wessing* were as follows:

- (i) "PwC were instructed to undertake a review of the Applicants' tax affairs";
- (ii) "it was initially anticipated that the bulk of the Review had already been substantively completed by the Respondents";
- (iii) "since their instruction in relation to the Review";

² [1990] 1 WLR 731

³ (1883) 48 L.T. 869

⁴ 738C, as per Slade LJ

⁵ 739H, as per Slade LJ

⁶ [2008] EWCA Civ 59

⁷ paragraphs 19-20, as per Rix LJ

⁸ paragraph 25 Rix LJ

(iv) "the consequences of the original negligence, some of which were only revealed by PwC's Review".

The Court accepted that it is likely that the review undertaken by PwC would result in documents being generated; however, as a matter simply of language the review was a process, which probably generated documents, but it was not itself a document or a collection of documents or even a compendious reference to a class of documents nor did it "comprise of" documents. The Court opined that as a process, the ambit of such documents as the PwC review may have generated is likely to be rather more diffuse than the process of a transaction such as a property being conveyed, somebody guaranteeing a loan, somebody filing an appeal or the transactions referred to in the *Rudd* case. It further rejected the submission that references to "advice" or to "findings" constitute direct allusions to any documents that necessarily exist or to the contents of any such documents.

The judge also considered a recent case that seems to depart from the Court of Appeal's decisions. In *Scipharm v Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust*⁹, the following reference was made in the witness statement: "Our solicitors spoke to Margaret Beveridge, ... the business development manager of the defendant... Mrs Beveridge was able to confirm a number of matters and provide information some of which was pleaded in the particulars of claim. Mrs Beveridge confirmed to our solicitor that ..." The Judge in *Scipharm* accepted that absent any other explanation, the inference must be that the statement made in the witness statement refers to an attendance note or similar and therefore its production was ordered.

Although Deputy Master McQuail in *Hoegh v Taylor Wessing* is of the opinion that the reference made to the attendance notes in the witness statement in the *Scipharm* case was no more than references by inference, the Court considered this case as one not justifying a departure from the Court of Appeal's rulings in *Dubai* and *Rubin*.

The decision in *Hoegh v Taylor Wessing* provides more certainty for the interpretation of relevant procedural rules regarding disclosure of documents mentioned in the witness statements. It also serves as further guidance for both lawyers and their clients in the manner in which references shall be made in the witness statements to avoid inadvertent disclosure of documents. There does, however, remain the need for considerable caution when referring to any documents in witness evidence, however obliquely.

This article provides general guidance and is not legal advice; specific advice should be taken on the application in any particular situation.

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Jeremy Lightfoot is the head of Carey Olsen's litigation team in Hong Kong. He focuses on commercial and corporate litigation, insolvency and restructuring under the laws of Bermuda, the BVI and the Cayman Islands.



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Yi has a wide range of experience assisting in cross-border commercial litigation, including shareholder disputes, derivative actions, contentious insolvency and appraisal actions involving offshore companies.

¹ [2022] EWHC 856 (Ch)

NEWS

Baker McKenzie Adds Asia Pacific Tax and Trade Principal Economist

Chris Newman takes on a new role as Principal Economist of Baker McKenzie's Asia Pacific Tax and Trade practice.

Joining from global financial service firm, VISA, and bringing more than 25 years of transfer pricing (TP) experience to the firm, Chris will lead and develop the TP practice in Asia, and train the next generation of specialists to strengthen the firm's service offering.

"I'm very excited to be given this opportunity to deepen and grow Baker McKenzie's TP practice in this region, having spent half of my career in Asia Pacific," said Chris.

"This post-pandemic landscape presents a number of new challenges from when I started my TP career, but I am looking forward to working with our clients, who are facing increasingly sophisticated rules and controversies. This is indeed an exciting time for me to re-join private practice, especially in a firm with a well-developed Asian Tax practice, such as Baker McKenzie," he added.

Adeline Wong, practice leader for tax and trade in Asia, said: "We are very pleased to be welcoming Chris to the firm and the practice. Chris will be returning to the Asia Pacific market, bringing with him substantive understanding of on-the-ground concerns, as he transitions from in-house to private

practice. His past experience of having worked closely with tax authorities from multiple Asian jurisdictions, which are as challenging as they are diverse, will make him a great addition to strengthen our bench of TP specialists."

Dentons LuatViet Combination Launches in Vietnam



Dentons has launched its combination with leading Vietnamese law firm LuatViet, which has more than 40 legal professionals serving clients from offices in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. The announcement of the launch was initially made in October 2021.

Dentons LuatViet's launch in Vietnam marks a milestone for a longstanding partnership between the two firms, positioning the combined firm to serve clients in a key emerging economy of the ASEAN region.

"LuatViet and Dentons share the vision of leading the way for differentiated client service in ASEAN. Our clients now benefit from service by lawyers with essential knowledge

NEWS

of the local market, while also having access to an unrivalled global talent pool,” Tran Duy Canh, Managing Partner of Dentons LuatViet, said.

Elliott Portnoy, Global CEO of Dentons, added, “We are pleased to launch Dentons LuatViet and to welcome our talented new colleagues in Vietnam. Vietnam is a priority market for many of our clients, and the combined firm builds on years of significant collaboration to connect clients to leading talent in the ASEAN region and around the globe.”

“We are committed to combining with firms like LuatViet, which have the talent, the knowledge and the confidence to help our clients navigate constant, accelerated change,” said Joe Andrew, Global Chairman of Dentons.

Norton Rose Appoints its New EMEA Co-head of Financial Restructuring and Insolvency



Norton Rose Fulbright has appointed Dr. Sylwia Maria Bea as its new EMEA co-head of financial restructuring and insolvency. A restructuring and insolvency partner based in the firm’s Frankfurt office, Sylwia will join the current EMEA

co-head, London-based James Stonebridge, in overseeing the firm’s practice in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, working closely with the other regions across the global firm.

Sylwia has significant experience advising the management, shareholders, insolvency administrators, investors and creditors of distressed companies on insolvency proceedings, as well as on in- and out-of-court restructuring measures, including the distressed sale of Dradura Group to FMC and a number of StaRUG-proceedings.

Sylwia is also the co-founder and member of the management board of ‘Distressed Ladies – Women in Restructuring e.V.’, an established network of women in the insolvency and restructuring market, which supports members with their professional development, and seeks to promote young talent.

“I am thrilled to have been given this opportunity to co-lead Norton Rose Fulbright’s EMEA financial restructuring and insolvency practice. It has been a busy period for our practice across the region and, in these uncertain times, we are anticipating things to be even busier. I look forward to working with the team to further support our clients in the coming months and years,” Sylwia said.

Reed Smith Launches Global Environmental Sustainability Plan 2024

Reed Smith launched its Global Environmental Sustainability Plan 2024 on 18 May 2022.

With measurable and transparent targets, the plan underpins the firm’s continuing commitment to evolving its operations and behaviours to drive lasting environmental sustainability within the firm, its communities and the legal industry.

NEWS

The plan has an initial two-year focus; the firm will announce a revised set of targets and timelines as the initial milestones are achieved. Through this sustained global effort, the firm will build on previous environmental, social and governance (ESG) efforts to reduce its carbon footprint and operate in a more sustainable fashion.

The plan is focused on reducing the firm's carbon footprint by 20% and making all products used across the firm's global operations recyclable or reusable by 2024. The firm will appoint two sustainability partners and two sustainability champions to drive the progress of the firm's sustainability goals as well as establish a 'Green Team' with representation from all its offices to ensure it achieves its sustainability goals throughout the firm.

"We have a responsibility to act sustainably in support of our communities around the world. The firm's sustainability plan reflects the shared commitment of our people to this endeavour. Our plan takes a holistic approach and establishes specific and measurable targets that will lead to impactful and tangible results. Our initial targets are an important first step on our journey to achieve sustainability," said Nick Bagiatis, Reed Smith's Chief Operating Officer.

To recognise and reward the pursuit of sustainability, Reed Smith enhanced its billable-hours policy to include work on sustainability projects. Effective 1 June, 25 hours of sustainability-related leadership, advocacy, training and development will count towards

the firm's existing 140 hours of billable credit each year for non-billable work.



This enhancement of the billable-hours policy builds on the firm's commitment to provide its lawyers and other timekeepers with wide-ranging development opportunities. Timekeepers may devote up to 140 hours of non-billable work toward billable credit each calendar year. These non-billable hours can be used for pro bono legal service, innovation projects (up to 50 hours) and diversity-related projects (up to 50 hours). In addition, associates can perform up to 50 hours of "development in action" that provides substantive on-the-job training that is not billed to a client.

"The expansion of the billable-hours policy to include sustainability projects is another enhancement of our Associate Life initiative, which enables our attorneys to work on issues of critical importance while building leadership skills and expanding their skill sets. These experiences will further support their legal and professional development and yield key advances in support of sustainability," said Casey Ryan, the firm's global head of personnel.

MOVES



Nishimura & Asahi has added **Alexander Woody** as partner, effective 16 June 2022. Woody was a partner and an associate at the Tokyo office of White & Case for over 20 years. He advises

clients on energy and natural resources project investments, development and financing. He has over 20 years' experience in Japan, with a focus on cross-border LNG investments, tolling, and purchase agreements and transportation arrangements. Woody has worked extensively with arbitration specialists to provide strategic advice and assist clients to resolve disputes arising during the course of these long-term projects. He has also advised clients on solar, battery and wind power investments, as well as early stage hydrogen projects.



Ashurst has expanded its corporate transaction practice with the addition of **Yan Yuan** as a partner in Shanghai. Yan joins from Clifford Chance, having worked in its New York and

China offices since 2007. He advises private equity and corporate clients on complex cross-border M&A transactions, including minority/growth capital investments, joint ventures and control acquisitions across a wide range of industries, with a geographic focus on China, Southeast Asia, Europe, and North and South Americas. Yan is qualified in New York.



Allen & Gledhill has added **Phuong Tran** as a partner in Vietnam, effective 1 June 2022. He has 14 years of experience in cross-border and

domestic transactions. His areas of practice include banking and finance, capital markets, corporate and commercial, international arbitration and M&A.

Prior to joining the firm, Tran was the deputy head of legal of MASAN Group and before that he was a partner in the Singapore office of a YKVN. He graduated from the Ho Chi Minh City University of Law, and obtained a Master of Laws degree from TLBU Graduate School of Laws. Tran is fluent in both English and Vietnamese.



Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas has added **Lomesh Kiran**

Nidumuri as a partner in its disputes practice. To be based out of the Bengaluru office, he will lead the disputes practice for

South India, and also augment the firm's international arbitration practice. Nidumuri joins from IndusLaw in Bengaluru where he was also the head of their dispute resolution practice.

He has close to two decades of experience in advising clients in all types of civil and business/commercial disputes, cross border disputes, and domestic and international arbitrations. In many disputes, he has acted as a lead counsel conducting trial and arguments before courts and arbitral tribunals. Over the years, he has also acted for clients on a variety of matters relating to shareholder disputes, technology-related disputes, oppression and mismanagement, projects and construction, restructuring and corporate insolvency, actions against governmental bodies, intellectual property rights (particularly in relation to trademarks,

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copyright, domain name disputes and trade secret disputes), employment matters, tenders and white-collar crimes. He obtained his degree in law from Campus Law Centre, Delhi University in 2004, and Masters in Law from New York University School of Law in 2008.



Phoenix Legal has added **Gaurav Dudeja** as a partner. He joins from the law firm King Stubb & Kasiva. An experienced disputes and litigation lawyer, Dudeja

is adept at handling a variety of commercial disputes, particularly in the areas of electricity, engineering, building and construction, mining, international law and financial services. He regularly advises and represents large corporates, like Adani Power, Lanco Group, BSES and Rajasthan Discoms, in regulatory disputes in the power sector, including issues on tariff (generation, transmission and distribution), compensatory tariff, termination of PPAs, writs before the Supreme Court to fix non-confiscatory tariff, start-up power and generic tariff orders passed to promote non-conventional power. Dudeja also advises companies in various matters emanating from building and construction contracts, and has also handled a range of matters from infrastructure contract disputes, regulatory litigation, disputes relating to management trusts, proceedings under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, mineral concessions (including mining leases for coal and iron), recovery proceedings, proceedings seeking specific performance, partition suits, writs challenging the constitutionality of statutes/rules, partnership/JVs, environment matters

and disputes before the Railway Claim Tribunal. He is a member of the governing body of the Society of Construction Law.



AHP has welcomed **Ari Juliano Gema**, who rejoined the firm as partner in the IP and entertainment practice on April 11, 2022. Most recently, Gema was Senior Advisor to the

Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy for Bureaucracy Reform and Regulation in 2020. He was also previously the Deputy Chairman for Intellectual Property Facilitation and Regulation in the Indonesian Agency for Creative Economy/BEKRAF from 2015 to 2019. During his tenure in the government, he was actively involved in the discussion and drafting of several laws and regulations related to intellectual property, tourism and creative economy. He led the formulation and discussion of the Law No. 24 of 2019 on Creative Economy and its implementing regulations. Gema carried out many initiatives to eradicate piracy, including establishing or leading a task force to handle intellectual property rights infringements of creative economic products, with a focus on infringements in the music, film and publishing industries, during his tenure at BEKRAF and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. He also initiated the development of the Biima application (BEKRAF's intellectual property rights mobile app), which is the first mobile application in Indonesia that contains information on intellectual property rights. Biima was launched by BEKRAF Chairman, Triawan Munaf, on 24 February 2016.

DEALS

Allen & Gledhill has acted as transaction counsel to the **Housing and Development Board** on the issue of S\$900 million (US\$650m) fixed rate notes due 2025, under its S\$32 billion (US\$23b) multicurrency medium term note programme. Partners **Margaret Chin, Fabian Tan** and **Sunit Chhabra** led the firm's team in the transaction.

AZB & Partners is advising **Voltas** on its acquisition of 40 percent equity stake in a joint venture for setting up an inverter compressor manufacturing facility in India, formed with Highly International (Hong Kong), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Shanghai Highly (Group). Partners **Bahram Vakil** and **Qais Jamal** are leading the firm's team in the transaction, which was valued at Rs2.5 billion (US\$32m) and is yet to be completed.

Baker McKenzie has advised **Orient Capital (Hong Kong)** as the sole financial adviser, and **Orient Securities (Hong Kong)**, a joint stock company incorporated in China and carrying on business in Hong Kong as "DFZQ", as the sole global coordinator, sole book-runner and sole lead manager on DFZQ's H share rights issue. DFZQ offers comprehensive one-stop professional integrated financial services. The aggregate net proceeds raised under the A+H share rights issue amounted to approximately Rmb12.6 billion (US\$1.9b). Partner **Christina Lee** led the firm's team in the transaction.

Clifford Chance has advised **Mitsui & Co** on its acquisition of a 28.6 percent minority stake in Rol-Ryż, a leading European pulses and rice distributor and a subsidiary of

Italian rice company Euricom. Through this investment, Mitsui will accelerate the use of its global trading functions and business infrastructure relating to a wide range of food resources and products, expand sales routes throughout Europe and Asia, and contribute to the improvement of dietary lifestyles globally. Partners **Natsuko Sugihara** (Tokyo) and **Wojciech Polz** (Warsaw) led the firm's team in the transaction.

Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas and **Norton Rose Fulbright** have advised **Chubu Electric Power**, through its wholly-owned subsidiary, on a share subscription agreement to acquire 25.1 percent stake in OMC Power. Chubu will be utilising its comprehensive insight in power transmission and distribution for the improvement of the generation facilities. As part of the transaction, Chubu would acquire the stake in OMC Power via subscription to equity shares and Series C CCPS. The deal was signed on May 31, 2022, and is subject to anti-trust filings (EU and China) and lender consents. Partners **Sangita John** and **Manan Mehta** led the firm's team in the transaction, which was valued at approximately US\$39 million. Norton Rose Fulbright acted as international counsel to Chubu.

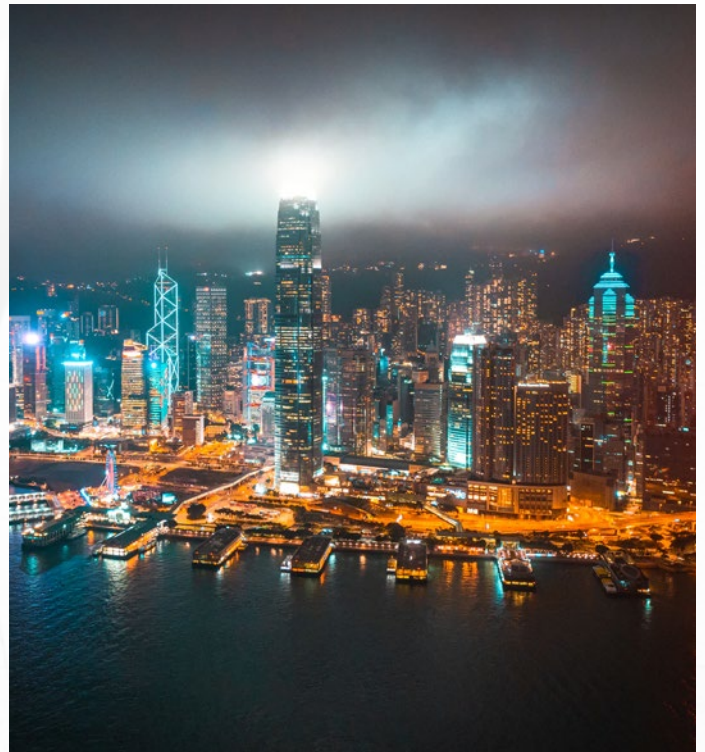
Khaitan & Co has advised a **consortium of 16 lenders** led by **State Bank of India** on the resolution/settlement of the Rs135 billion (US\$1.73b) outstanding debt liability extended by the lenders to Suzlon Energy, Suzlon Generators, Suzlon Global Services, Suzlon Gujarat Wind Park and Suzlon Power Infrastructure. The settlement was implemented by the Suzlon group by

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obtaining fresh fund-based facilities and non-fund-based facilities from REC and Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency, and allotment of equity shares to the lenders against the existing optionally convertible debentures and compulsorily convertible preference shares held by the lenders. The other lenders comprised Axis Bank, Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra, Union Bank (erstwhile Corporation Bank), Central Bank of India, ICICI Bank, IDBI Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Punjab National Bank, Yes Bank, Life Insurance Corporation of India, Saraswat Co-operative Bank, Export Import Bank of India and Power Finance Corporation. Senior partner **Haigreve Khaitan** and partner **Kumar Saurabh Singh**, supported by capital market partner **Aditya Cheriyan** and **Oishik Bagchi**, led the firm's team in the transaction which was completed and was announced on 24 May 2022. **Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas** also advised on the deal.

JSA has advised **A91** on its Series D investment in Vellvette Lifestyle. Doing business as 'Sugar' Cosmetics, Vellvette Lifestyle operates as a well-positioned online cosmetics company at the intersection of two major trends – a fast-growing beauty industry and rapidly increasing online penetration. Manufactured in state-of-the-art facilities across Germany, Italy, India, USA and Korea, the brand offers its bestselling products across various categories, such as Lips, Eyes, Face and Nails, to the global market. Partner **Probir Roy Chowdhury** led the firm's team in the transaction, which was valued at US\$50 million.

Khaitan & Co has also advised **Mr Aakash Chaudhry**, as lead investor, on his approximately Rs300 million (US\$3.8m) investment on the US\$5 million Series A funding round of Sequelone Solutions (aka HONO, an Indian human resource technology start-up). The deal structure involved primary and secondary transactions. Partner **Bharat Anand** led the firm's team in the transaction, which was completed on April 25, 2022.



Mayer Brown has represented the **West Kowloon Cultural District Authority** (WKCD), as borrower, on its inaugural HK\$4 billion (US\$510m) syndicated sustainability-linked loan (SLL) facilities. WKCD is a statutory body established by the Hong Kong government to develop the West Kowloon Cultural District, a 40-hectare land dedicated

DEALS

for arts and cultural venues. The SLL, which consists of term and revolving credit facilities, is the first of its kind among statutory bodies and arts and cultural institutions in Hong Kong. Under the terms of the SLL, WKCD will receive a tiered discount rate on the interest margin throughout the loan tenure, if it achieves pre-determined ESG targets. Hong Kong banking and finance partner **Francis Chen**, supported by Hong Kong partner **Alvin Yeung**, led the firm's team in the transaction.

O'Melveny has advised **Global Infrastructure Solutions Inc** (GISI) on a strategic merger to bring Asia-based professional engineering consultancy J Roger Preston Holdings (JRP) into the GISI group of companies. GISI is the largest privately-owned construction manager in the commercial building, industrial and healthcare markets, and a leading project/construction manager in the environmental and public infrastructure sectors. The company generates annual revenues in excess of US\$8.8 billion. Established in Hong Kong in 1962, JRP is a leading design and consulting firm with a renowned reputation in mechanical, electrical and building services engineering in Asia, with offices in Hong Kong, China, Macau, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam. Hong Kong managing partner **Nima Amini** led the firm's team in the transaction, which was announced on May 23, 2022 as having been completed.

Rajah & Tann Singapore has successfully concluded the sale of the Tuaspring Power Plant to a subsidiary of YTL Power International. The conclusion of the sale is a

highlight for the firm as the team was faced with many challenges, including complexities posed by the de-coupling of what had been constructed as a single integrated desalination and power plant project. The power plant was sold for S\$270 million (US\$195m) in cash. Partners **Tan Chuan Thye, SC** and **Shemane Chan**, supported by partners **Sandy Foo, Benjamin Tay, Wilson Zhu** and **Loh Yong Hui**, led the firm's team in the transaction.

R&T Asia (Thailand) has acted for **Krung Thai Bank** on a US\$130 million committed credit facility agreement, whereby Krung Thai Bank will provide financial support to SCG-Dow Group, a JV chemicals group of companies. Partner **Piroon Saengpakdee** led the firm's team in the transaction.

Shearman & Sterling has advised **Osaka Gas** and its US subsidiary **Osaka Gas USA** (OGUSA) on the agreement with US-based renewable project developer Oriden to jointly develop a portfolio of more than 700 MWdc (600 MWac) of utility-scale solar and storage projects throughout certain US markets. This follows OGUSA's acquisition of the 15.7 MWdc Brighter Future Solar Farm project in North Carolina from Oriden, in partnership with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Group. OGUSA focuses on power generation, shale gas development, natural gas liquefaction at Freeport LNG, and future energy development/innovation. Tokyo M&A partner **Karl Pires** led the firm's team in the transaction.

S&R Associates has represented **United Parcel Service** (UPS), the global leader in

DEALS



logistics, on the creation of a joint venture in India with InterGlobe Enterprises, an Indian travel and hospitality conglomerate. The joint venture will provide logistics services and solutions in India under the brand MOVIN. Partners **Rajat Sethi** and **Dhruv Nath** led the firm's team in the transaction, along with **King & Spalding**, led by partners **Rahul Patel** and **John Hyman**.

Wong & Partners and **Baker McKenzie** have advised **Petronas Chemicals Group** on the acquisition of Perstorp. Partner **Munir Abdul Aziz** of Wong & Partners and Baker McKenzie partners **Anders Fast** (Stockholm) and **Susannah Davies** (London) led their respective firm's team in the transaction, which was valued at R\$10.5 billion (US\$2.4b).

A full list of latest deals can
be viewed online on
www.inhousecommunity.com

Getting to know Sesto Vecchi of Russin & Vecchi, Vietnam

Insights into the evolving landscape of Vietnam from an American lawyer who calls the country his home

WHILE ORIGINALLY QUALIFIED IN THE USA, YOU HAVE OVER 35 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WORKING IN VIETNAM. CAN YOU PLEASE WALK US THROUGH YOUR JOURNEY TO ASIA AND SOME CAREER HIGHLIGHTS FROM YOUR YEARS WORKING ON THE CONTINENT?

I came to Asia and Vietnam in 1964 as a Lieutenant in the US Navy. When my Navy service ended, I remained in Vietnam for nearly 10 years until the end of the war. I was already a lawyer and I, along with several other Americans, started a law firm with several offices. I practiced in our Saigon office until 1975 when the war ended. Our clients in Vietnam were Vietnamese, American, French and other foreign companies. There were individuals as well. Everything we did had an overlay involving the war. To be sure, it was an exciting time.

I married Camille Cam Van. By then I felt very comfortable in Asia, and I knew I would remain.

I lived and practiced law with our firm in Thailand and in New York during the next 15



years. I returned to Vietnam and reopened our office in the early 1990s. We have grown with the country, and I believe that we have been able to contribute to its growth.

There are now many more complex financings, larger sums are involved, and there are more investments into companies that provide energy, healthcare, education. Vietnamese companies have begun to list abroad.

AS A NAMED PARTNER OF RUSSIN & VECCHI, RECOGNISED AS A TOP LAW FIRM IN VIETNAM, YOU WILL HAVE SEEN THE PRACTICE, PARTICULARLY YOUR AREAS OF FOCUS IN FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT AND CORPORATE LAW, EVOLVE OVER THE YEARS. CAN YOU PLEASE SHARE SOME OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS?

The practice has moved away from setting up companies and new investments. Now, many Industrial Parks provide basic legal services – company formation, licensing, etc. We now focus on operating issues and on more sophisticated issues: M&As, financings, foreign listings, fintech, renewable energy, environmental issues, issues of market domination, corruption issues, data privacy, etc.

There are now many more complex financings, larger sums are involved, and there are more investments into companies that provide energy, healthcare, education. Vietnamese companies have begun to list abroad.

The attitude of government is also changing away from one of control and restriction to one that is more cooperative and enabling.

PLEASE CAN YOU ALSO PROVIDE US SOME INSIGHTS INTO THE PROFESSIONAL LEGAL ENVIRONMENT IN VIETNAM AND IN WHAT WAYS YOU PERCEIVE THIS LANDSCAPE TO BE CHANGING?

Some Vietnamese lawyers have foreign law degrees. Many have solid foreign language skills. Some have even worked abroad. On the other hand, there are foreign lawyers who have in-depth knowledge of Vietnamese laws and are well versed in the legal practice culture in Vietnam. All of this has added to a more professional and competitive legal environment. Of course, the client benefits.

WHAT ABOUT THE LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT OF VIETNAM (WHICH IS, OF COURSE, VERY DIFFERENT TO THE ONE IN WHICH YOU WERE ORIGINALLY TRAINED) – IS IT EASY TO NAVIGATE?

Skill in drafting laws, decrees and the like has considerably improved, making the language of the law easier to interpret. The Official Gazette of laws is published not only in Vietnamese but also in English. There is an active, robust practice by the government and the National Assembly to publish laws in draft form and to invite public comment before putting them into final form. But there also remains the conscious practice of making laws purposely vague in order to give Government broad powers of interpretation and enforcement.

There are other issues. There is an historical, deep-rooted perception that when government is involved, many acts must be “enabled” or that permissions are necessary or that hard copy filings are necessary. These habits are hard to break, but much progress has been made. Much information is now online [eg, new policies (including drafts of legal documents) are published on the Government’s and Ministries’ websites, and more and more the

permission of a clerk in an office has yielded to a simple filing – more frequently online than in person. This is part of an intensive effort by government to enable larger swaths of e-government.

DO CLIENTS IN VIETNAM HAVE A PREFERENCE WHEN IT COMES TO INSTRUCTING LOCAL OR INTERNATIONAL LAW FIRMS, OR LOCAL VERSUS FOREIGN TRAINED LAWYERS?

Vietnamese law firms still handle most work for state-owned enterprises, local banks, and larger Vietnamese companies, but there is more room for foreign firms to participate as matters often involve foreign law or foreign counter-parties (eg, sanctions, offshore listings, project financing, fund raising, M&A, offshore arbitration and even onshore arbitration, etc). Foreign firms largely serve foreign-invested companies, but several big local firms have become prominent providers to foreign invested firms. In addition, more Vietnamese corporations go abroad to invest and access to foreign expertise is important. The government has a history of being supportive of foreign law firms.



With his wife Camille Cam Van, 2017



Riding at Christa's farm

AS LARGESCALE DIGITAL ADVANCES ARE MADE AROUND THE WORLD, WHAT DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS REGARD HAVE YOU WITNESSED IN YOUR OWN WORK IN VIETNAM AND ARE THERE ANY ADVANCES THAT YOU PREDICT FOR THE NEAR FUTURE?

There is progress in the system of local filings, with the process being more automated and efficient. More filings are permitted online [for example, incorporation (or amendment) may be conducted online on the National Business Registration Portal]. More services are available online, without the need for a clerk to intervene (for example, filings of certain investment reports are now online) and more processing is automated thereby reducing the need for physical contact with a bureaucracy. More public data is now available online and easily accessible, eg, corporate filings, security interests, intellectual properties, court judgements, land planning, etc.

The deep use of technology in legal practice in Vietnam still appears distant. Large international firms do have advanced tools that help with their internal processes. While the tech

waves have not yet really reached the legal profession, it is expected that legal tech applications, such as e-contract, which are developing in other jurisdictions and some forms of due diligence investigation will eventually come to Vietnam.

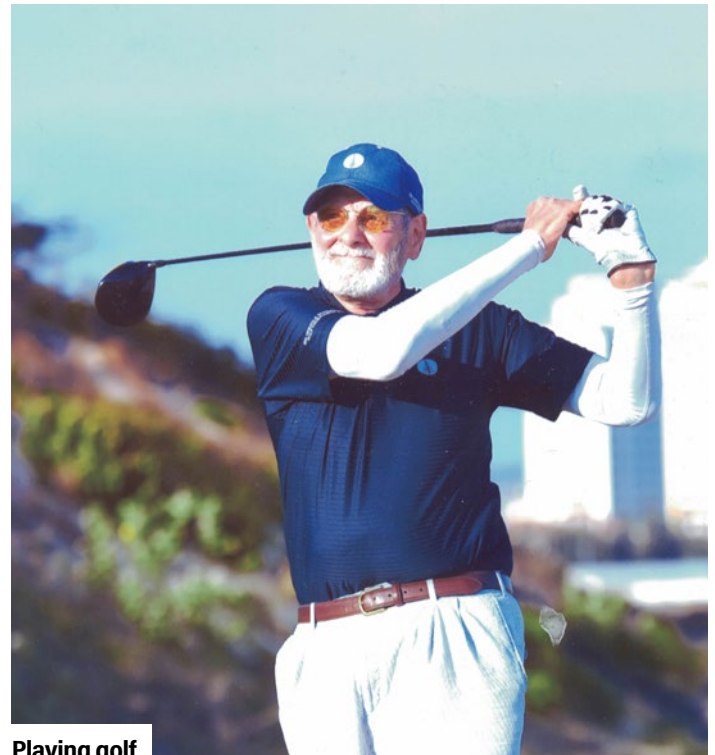
TAKING A STEP BACK FROM LAW, WHAT ARE YOUR GENERAL THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF VIETNAM AS A COUNTRY AND ITS ROLE IN THE WIDER ASIAN REGION?

Vietnam has moved dramatically to develop since its war with the US ended some 50 years ago. Vietnam is focused internally on improving standards of living, deepening the application of technology, moving toward clean energy, developing agriculture, and learning from the West and from its neighbors.

It has begun to accelerate investment abroad in modest but significant ways. It benefits from a talented diaspora – the children and grandchildren of refugees who left at the end of the war – and which it now welcomes back.

Its principle foreign affairs preoccupation – as it has been for centuries – is to manage its relationship with China with which it shares a 1000km border and on which it relies as an important market. It has had an active and turbulent relationship for over 1000 years.

I believe that Vietnam will continue to focus internally on its development and modernisation. It is a sharp observer of developments around it, and it is very good at learning from others. In that sense, I do not see Vietnam as seeking a political leadership role in Asia except to protect its key interests. I believe it will continue to develop, stay focused internally, learning from what others do, and adapting what it learns to Vietnam.



Playing golf

FINALLY, WHEN YOU AREN'T TO BE FOUND HARD AT WORK, WHAT ARE SOME INTERESTS KEEPING YOU BUSY OUTSIDE OF THE LEGAL INDUSTRY?

Our children and grandchildren live in the US, but my wife and I have “inherited” a 5-year-old “grandchild” who has lived with us since birth. Having a resident “grandchild” with whom we are fully engaged every day, is an unexpected and incredibly positive experience for both my wife and me. I am part of her homework, swimming lessons, and we share her daily fantasies...all unexpected and exciting!

I read a lot – both fiction and nonfiction. I like history and historical analysis. I read science and biology, and I’m a great fan of children’s stories. I’m open to a broad variety of books.

I also took up golf relatively late, but I enjoy it a lot and play about once a week. There are always things to learn, relearn, adjust, perfect – and to practice.



In-House Insights from Penny Koo of AIA

*Winning words from IHC's
In-House Counsel of the Year, 2021*

CAN YOU PLEASE GIVE US A SNAPSHOT OF YOUR CAREER JOURNEY THUS FAR?

This will be my 10th year with AIA, the largest independent publicly-listed Pan Asian insurance group.

Like many general counsel, I started my legal career in private practice. My main specialisation was in mergers and acquisitions (M&A). I've advised on transactions ranging from take-overs of SGX-listed companies to offshore investments by PRC state-owned enterprises in the course of my career in practice.

A key turning point in my career was when I moved to Hong Kong in 2012 for my first in-house role. This was with AIA Group's joint venture with Discovery Group, the largest insurer in South Africa. We were one of the first insurers in Asia to venture into the health and wellness space – the start of a strategic shift into helping our customers not only protect well, but live well. My portfolio was also a unique blend of business and legal, as I was both Head of Partnerships Development and General Counsel. That subsequently led to a different role within the AIA Group Legal team, and finally to my current General Counsel role with AIA Singapore.





WITH OVER 5 YEARS UNDER THE BELT AS GENERAL COUNSEL OF AIA SINGAPORE, WHAT HAS THE TERM “GC” COME TO MEAN TO YOU?

“General” means this role is a generalist one. Besides in-depth specialist legal knowledge in your organisation’s primary business activities, the GC must also have the ability to spot issues across a broad domain of laws that may also affect the business - from employment, to competition, tax, IP, etc.

Beyond the law, for the General Counsel to be an effective and valued member of the Management team, he/she will also need a slew of other skills – from enterprise thought leadership, to cross-functional collaboration, project management, talent attraction/development/retention, etc. The ability to foresee business and regulatory challenges, opining not just on what the law is today but also what the law ought to be, and forming recommendations on all the grey areas in between are all critical skillsets.

Which is why the “T-Shaped Lawyer”, a concept created by Peter Connor of Alternatively Legal, resonates strongly with me. This is the model I espouse for my team. In a nutshell, Peter’s definition of a T-Shaped professional is someone who has deep domain expertise in one discipline, together with various competencies, skills and knowledge from other areas. This facilitates cross-functional collaboration with other specialists across other disciplines to innovate for the organisation as a whole. This is a critical success factor. Beyond strong technical expertise, all in-house counsel should also gear up on various other competencies and skills to effectively facilitate business and pre-empt stumbling blocks (legal or otherwise). This could mean, for a data protection counsel as an example, taking up courses on Big Data, data analytics and digital marketing strategies. Knowing data privacy

laws inside and out is not enough; one’s value and effectiveness as in-house counsel is in finding solutions for the business within the regulatory framework. To do so, he/she must have a nuanced understanding on how their business products are designed and sold, how the purchase data is used to prompt new or repeat sales, and a general understanding of how the marketplace is evolving.

... a T-Shaped professional is someone who has deep domain expertise in one discipline, together with various competencies, skills and knowledge from other areas. This facilitates cross-functional collaboration with other specialists across other disciplines to innovate for the organisation as a whole.

The “Counsel” aspect of the GC role, to me, means being an ‘advisor’ to the Management team and the business, in all aspects of the word, rather than a technical ‘lawyer’. This means I weigh in not just on legal or regulatory issues, but also on our overall strategic direction, risk culture and risk management framework and corporate governance. I believe it is also appropriate and expected for the GC to step up as the ‘moral compass’ for the CEO and enterprise, as needed, given our ethics training and legal profession code of conduct.

AS AIA’S YOUNGEST EXCO MEMBER, YOU BRING A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE. FROM YOUR VIEWPOINT, WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP LOOK LIKE?

At the time of my appointment, not only was I the youngest EXCO member, I also inherited a team of senior lawyers who were all more experienced in Singapore insurance matters



Masks on: Penny with her Team

than I was. I knew I had to quickly establish credibility and strong relationships not just with my Management peers, but also my team. Gaining stakeholders' trust doesn't come automatically with authority or title.

I would call my leadership style – 'peer leadership'. The complete opposite of the traditional rank-and-file approach. My role isn't to give or dictate answers and solutions. Rather, I encourage the team to collaboratively challenge each other (myself included!) so that "the best idea wins".

I believe you get the best out of people when they are trusted, valued and heard. So I seek to marry my counsel's passions with the enterprise and team purpose, and empower them to use their judgment to perform their roles and responsibilities. This is far easier said than done, and involves both hard and heart-work! It starts with ensuring I have the right talent – strong counsel who take immense pride in what they do. From there, I seek to understand their motivations and passions, and connecting this back to the Legal function's and AIA's r'aison

d'etre. Lastly, empowering and supporting them so that we optimise our operating rhythm to support the business effectively.

LAW IS SAID TO BE A TEACHING AND LEARNING PROFESSION - WE DON'T GO AT IT ALONE. HAS MENTORSHIP PLAYED A MEANINGFUL PART IN YOUR CAREER AND, IF SO, CAN YOU SHARE SOME EXPERIENCES IN THIS REGARD?

I have benefitted immensely from various mentors – both formal and informal. Being part of AIA's structured mentorship programme helped me to develop a working style aligned with our leadership essentials and culture, and grow my professional network across the Group.

Informally, I have had the privilege and honour of working with and learning from many talented, driven and experienced senior executives. The AIA-Discovery JV CFO, my line manager, taught me the importance of effective communication. We tend to assume that lawyers, given our training and advocacy skills, communicate well, compellingly. This



Masks off: Penny with her Team

works if you are speaking the same lingo as your audience, and your audience is open to your message. This gentleman gave some advice that still sticks – he said no one would want to eat dry wholewheat toast, even though it is obviously good for us. If you add a touch of honey or jam, however, then you won't be able to stop the flies from swarming in. While it was obviously a joke he cracked to lighten the mood then, it was a bit of an a-ha moment for me. No matter how technically accurate and robust advice is, it serves no one if it is not understood or easy-to-digest or accept. This doesn't mean sugar-coating or being a 'yes-man' to the business. Rather, the best chance of sound advice actually being taken is when that advice is punchy and compelling.

THE TOPIC WE WISH COULD BE SPOKEN OF IN THE PAST TENSE, BUT IS STILL ALL TOO PRESENT - COVID-19: WHAT CHALLENGES AND/OR OPPORTUNITIES HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED IN THE FACE OF THIS PANDEMIC OR ANTICIPATE STILL TO COME?

COVID-19 posed immediate and urgent challenges to our business, since life insurance is still traditionally sold face-to-face

in Asia. The legal team was thrust into the forefront of navigating a slew of new laws and regulations passed by the Singapore government that affected almost all aspects of our business, including having to find quick solutions to facilitate non-face-to-face insurance sales while most staff were working remotely.

While stressful, the pandemic also provided numerous opportunities for legal to take the lead in suggesting business solutions – including introducing our fully digital in-house contract approval platform, that fortuitously had been in the planning just prior to the pandemic.

THE DIFFICULTIES PRESENTED BY THE PANDEMIC HAVE HIGHLIGHTED CRACKS ACROSS SECTORS AND ACCELERATED INNOVATION TO FILL THESE. IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, HAS THIS PROVED TRUE IN THE LEGAL FUNCTION?

With the slew of legaltech offerings in the market now, it is tempting to start shopping for a technology platform to facilitate our work. Technology solutions, however, are not cheap and involve significant enterprise effort to implement. It also requires buy-in from business end-users. For legal departments at early stages of their innovation journey – first consider if processes can be simplified or removed altogether. Large conglomerates, in particular, have inherited various governance requirements and processes that may once have been necessary but are no longer relevant or fit-for-purpose. Business models evolve, as does enterprise risk tolerances. It is incumbent upon the gatekeepers to regularly revisit their review and approval processes. Do a risk assessment: what risk was that control or process trying to mitigate against? Does that risk still exist, or is it still outside the enterprise risk appetite? If yes, then is there a simpler way to mitigate against that risk? If no, then should that control



Team bonding session

or process be removed? Legal innovation isn't just about technology, but optimising the way lawyers operate.

THE ROLE OF A LAWYER CAN BE A DEMANDING ONE, MADE ALL THE MORE CHALLENGING IN A POSITION OF AUTHORITY. WHAT TOOLS DO YOU EMPLOY TO KEEP AFLOAT IN THESE TRYING CONDITIONS?

I'm sure you've all heard the story of the professor and his "rock, pebbles and sand" experiment with his students.

Be clear which are the rocks, pebbles and sand in your life – prioritise. Fill up your life's jar with your rocks, and then the pebbles and sand can follow. Even if it seems the jar is already full once filled with rocks, you'll find pebbles

and sand can still fit in. But if you put sand into the jar first, there won't be any room for the rocks or the pebbles. The same can be applied to our lives – both professional and personal! If you spend all your time and energy sweating the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are truly important.

I don't profess to get it right all the time - there are almost always competing priorities. When it comes to tough calls, I ask myself, "If I died tomorrow, would this still be the right decision for today?" That usually sets me on the right track.

IS THERE ANY ADVICE YOU WISH TO GIVE YOUNG ASPIRING IN-HOUSE COUNSEL?

Moving in-house from private practice will require a fundamental mindset shift, and many adaptations to your working style. At a firm, you are a fee-earner, and the advice and opinions you churn generate revenue. They are an end in and of themselves. Once in-house, you will no longer be a revenue-generating function on your own. Your advice and opinions are ultimately to enable your business colleagues to make informed decisions, so that they can generate revenue while avoiding the no-go zones. They are a means to an end, so always have that end in sight with every line of advice you write.

Stay curious, and humble. Listen more than you speak. There is something to learn from everyone, even if it is just what not to do! Empower yourself for success by identifying who or what your enablers are and building a strong network around you for support.

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**In-House Community
Counsel of the Year, 2021**

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Winners

44

**Commended External
Counsel**

**THE
IN-HOUSE
COMMUNITY**



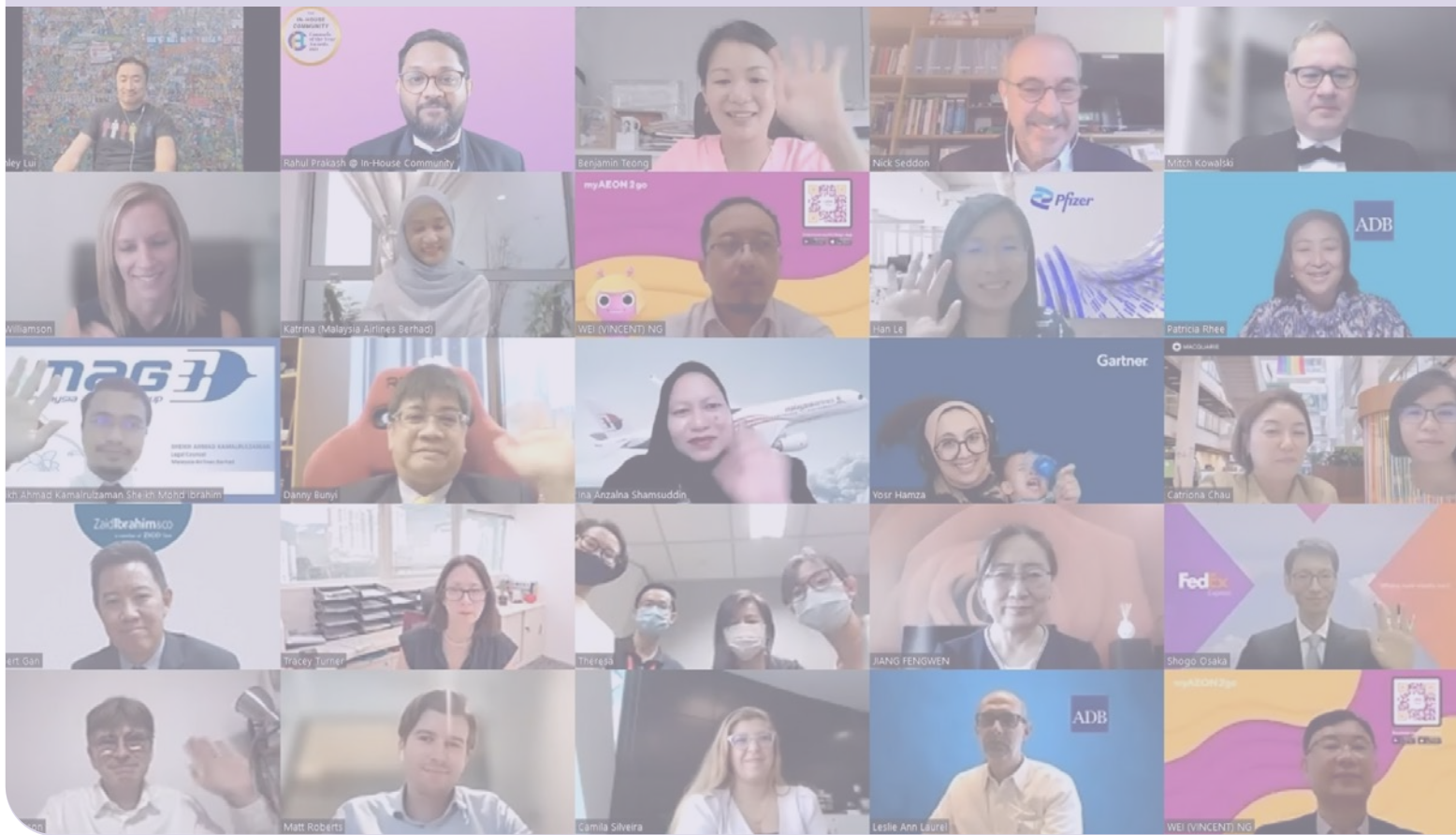
**In-House
Counsel of
the Year**

2021

In-House Community Counsel of the Year, 2021

Taking pause to recognise and celebrate our award-winning in-house teams in Asia, Middle East and South Africa as they continue to inspire, despite all odds

BY CAITLIN VAN RENSBURG, EDITOR, IHC MAGAZINE



In our write up of the In-House Community Counsel of the Year Awards, 2020, we envisioned that in “2021 we [would] come to look at the activities of individual lawyers and also departments during and post-crisis”. Little did we anticipate the pervasive disruptive force that COVID-19 would be, being very much still part and parcel of the present. Be that as it may, on 15 June 2022 – better late than never – we had the great pleasure of welcoming our community back to the In-House Community Counsel of the Year Awards, to recognise the standout efforts in-house teams and counsel made in 2021, with special mention given to external counsel that, too, left a mark. As has come to be the “new normal” given the prevailing pandemic, our In-House Community team arranged for this year’s awards ceremony to be conducted over Zoom. This allowed us to have in attendance 90+ representatives of both in-house and private practice from several jurisdictions, including Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, UAE, Australia, South Korea, India, UK, South Africa, and Canada – a truly global event, albeit remote! We thank all of you that took the time

to participate in this awards process, to recognise the hard work of our community, to celebrate their successes, and to take inspiration from their winning visions.

The online awards were hosted by In-House Community publisher, Rahul Prakash, joined by speakers Tim Gilkison, who founded In-House Community in 1998 and who is currently the business development manager at Praxonomy (a cloud-based secure board portal); Nick Seddon, director of Seddon and Co and former Asia Managing Partner of Eversheds Sutherland and DLA Piper; Fengwen Jiang, a legal force with 25 years of in-house legal experience at top Fortune 500 US and EU companies, as well as private practice and legal tech experience; and, finally, Mitch Kowalski, a globally-recognised thought leader on the changing legal services ecosystem, having both in-house and private practice experience, and the author of two



CATHERINE DANNAOUI OF HANDSON HONG KONG



DAE SAGONG OF YOON & YANG

Shortlisted In-House Counsel

Alex Liam, YTL PowerSeraya
Anton Radchenko, AAL Group
Carina Wessels, Alexander Forbes Group
Carl Watson, Arcadis Asia
Chungjin Chung, KOGAS
Dingxian Wang, State Grid Overseas Investment
Divya Kumat, Datamatics Global Services Limited
Hak Kim Michael Ting, Manulife (International)
Hazmi Hisyam, Novartis Asia Pacific Pharmaceuticals
Iryna Kovalchuk, Zakher Marine International
Leslie Zhang, United Energy Group
Michelle Hung, COSCO SHIPPING Ports
Nazih El-Hajj Chehade, Abu Dhabi Healthcare Services
Navrita Kaur, Omesti Berhad
Penny Koo, AIA Singapore
Yuwen Hong, China National Aviation Fuel Logistics



DANNY BUNYI OF DIVINA LAW



DINGXIAN WANG OF STATE GRID OVERSEAS INVESTMENT



JIANG FENGWEN

critically acclaimed books on the area. Mitch spoke at our very first Legal Inno'Tech Forum in Hong Kong and it was great to have him back with us.



GILBERT GAN OF ZICO LAW

We received a record 160 nominations and submissions for the In-House Community awards

from which 51 teams were short-listed for various In-House Industry Award categories (from aviation and banking, to healthcare and TMT; with judges considering how teams fared in terms of their dedication, innovation, efficiency & value, integration, encouragement & improvement, CSR and diversity), In-House Best Practice Team Awards, as well as IHC Teams of the Year. Many law firms and other legal service providers made equally impres-

sive submissions for our judges to consider in both the non-law firm and law firm categories of the Visionary Client Services Award. For the main award of the event, being the In-House Counsel of the Year, 2021, we had 19 exceptional candidates shortlisted.

We also took the opportunity to honour select external counsel or private practice lawyers who have navigated the choppy seas of uncertainty that the pandemic brought together with our in-house teams. We took note of

the number of votes received, but perhaps more importantly, we took cognisance of the testimonials we received from in-house counsel that made these individuals stand out as trusted, recommended and commended external counsel by the in-house community.

The unenviable task of picking winners from these submissions landed on the desks of our esteemed panel of judges which included Fengwen Jiang, Mitch Kowalski, Nick Seddon, Clinton Swan, Yosr Hamzah and Carina Wessels. They truly had their work cut out for them given the impressive level of this year's candidates. We tip our hats to each of you and, once again, extend our thanks.

From the submissions it was clear that most in-house counsel have continued to deal with unprecedented instability, risks and, in several cases, loss over the past 18 months since we met last at these awards. We are reminded of the African proverb: "Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors". This year, we celebrated those lawyers and legal teams who went above and beyond the call of duty to continue to rise to these challenging times and to steer their organisations onto smoother waters.

PANDEMIC AID

In keeping with this nautical theme, this past period has brought another saying into sharp focus: "No man is an island" – we are all part of a larger, interdependent community. This year we were heartened to receive many submissions detailing work that transcended the boardroom, creating a positive impact for those on the frontline or otherwise facing difficulties as a result of the pandemic.

The team at Aeon and Co (joint winners in the Retail & Healthcare category), managed to obtain over US\$ 2million in rental rebates from landlords to curb difficulties faced by

lessees during COVID-19. The team at Lazada Group, meanwhile, worked on providing priority access to healthcare workers. We also acknowledge the hard work of 3M Asia Pacific during this time. The legal team investigated a staggering 14,200+ reports globally of suspected fraud and price gouging of 3M products, including PPE and respirators of use during the pandemic. We give special mention to the decision of 3M to donate monetary benefits derived from these investigations to COVID-19 related non-profit organisations, which no doubt our judges took note of too.

The hotel and hospitality industry was one severely hit by the lockdown measures globally. We recognise the team at Marriott International for rising to the challenge of these unprecedented times through facilitating over 100 new hotel management and franchise projects during the pandemic and working on over 1,000 operational matters/enquiries a year from other departments and properties, winning them the award in the Travel & Leisure category.

Perhaps the most significant happening globally in the period between our last awards and now could be said to be the development and global rollout of COVID-19 vaccines. These technologies, some new, some old, have paved the way out of the pandemic for us. Many of our award winners played vital roles in these efforts and were rightly recognised by our judges for their efforts.

The legal team at Asian Development Bank helped to establish a new budget support modality, called the COVID-19 Pandemic Response Option (CPRO) and provided support for the establishment of a new US\$9 billion vaccine facility. The team also worked on the establishment of the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX), to assist client

countries procure and deliver effective and safe COVID-19 vaccines. If that wasn't enough, the team at Asian Development Bank

also organised a successful virtual fundraising event, raising almost PHP330,000 for the communities in Philippines affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. To this we raise our glasses, and award them joint winners of our Corporate Social Responsibility Award.

The legal heads at Pfizer (Vietnam), too, aided in vaccine roll-out by helping to bring the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to Vietnam, which proved to be

timely given the quick spread of the virus in the country in 2021 after having managed to remarkably hold the pandemic at bay all throughout 2020. The team at FedEx

Express, meanwhile, worked hard to ensure that FedEx would have all the necessary approvals to transport vaccines across AMEA, including the use of SenseAware (a temperature monitoring/tracking device) to track temperature

conditions of cold chain shipments, with cold chain management being one

of the trickiest elements to the successful rollout of the groundbreaking new mRNA vaccines.



HAN LE FROM PFIZER



JESSADA SAWATDIPONG OF CHANDLER MHM LIMITED



MELANIE SZE OF MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL



MICHAEL YAU OF EVERSHEDS SUTHERLAND



MITCH KOWALSKI



NICK SEDDON



RAHUL PRAKASH, IN-HOUSE COMMUNITY



ROSSANA CHU OF LC LAWYERS

INNOVATION

We recognised in 2020 that much innovation in the legal sphere was dominated by those technologies and ideas that helped buoy the legal profession and the businesses it serves in the turbulent waters of the pandemic. This remains ever as true today and many of our submissions impressed us with the innovative solutions our community have embraced to meet the challenges they have been presented with head on. We are sure that these solutions, many of which have been necessitated

by crisis, will serve to strengthen the profession in the years ahead as we move to a more digital future.

Navrita Kaur of Omesti Berhad in Malaysia is one such innovator who saw her team transition to a fully virtual environment in record time at the start of the pandemic – despite only just returning from maternity leave herself! We also recognise her passion for equal rights and women’s rights and her advocacy which saw important changes being made to Group policies, such as improved maternity leave and equalising of benefits – indeed, innovation is not always digital!

This year we also recognise the team at Accenture for their implementation of several tech tools, including ALICE, an AI powered contract exploration tool created by and for Accenture Legal which leverages big data analytics and machine learning technologies to provide targeted intelligent searching of their contract data base. The team at Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines created The Legal Hub for internal collaboration and communication with business partners while also training a whopping 9,110 associates in data privacy. The Lazada Group is commended on their implementation of a regulatory watch bot with an automated alert system to inform on regulatory updates on consumer protection laws to cybersecurity regulations in the region. We also recognise the legal team at A.S. Watson Group by awarding them the prize for Innovation – Asia, for their work in developing eLearning modules in-house, a virtual board meeting tool, a supplier/ compliance screening and due diligence tool, and a customer journey review tool (to name only a few here).

In the fields of banking and insurance, we take note of the innovations of the ICICI bank team in implementing the Contract Automation System and ChatBot FAQ, together with several Online Dispute Resolution initiatives started by the team. Malayan Banking (Maybank), meanwhile, worked with the Group’s Virtual Banking team to launch the first ever digital SME financing powered by artificial intelligence and the first Syariah-compliant e-wallet, as well as the ‘Sama Lokal’ e-commerce platform. AIA Singapore rightfully impressed us in their partnering with GovTech and Kofax, which made AIA the first insurer in Singapore to provide customers with enhanced government-supported user

verification capabilities – the “Sign with SingPass” feature.

In putting client experience first, our Visionary Law Firm of the Year winner, L&L Partners, developed a new CRM system which connects the firm with clients to allow swifter communication. Clients now have real time visibility of the progress on their specific matters. We were further impressed by their offer of lower rates to clients which are in the nascent stage of development (i.e. start-ups). They have also given emphasis and strategic focus to start-ups in the field of sustainable living, green energy and manufacturing under the Make in India initiative. The team at Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc also went above and beyond for their stockholders, ensuring that annual stockholders’ meetings for Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc and Aboitiz Power Corporation for the years 2020 and 2021 could be conducted online and be internally managed from start to finish, resulting in their enterprise being one of the few publicly-listed companies in the Philippines that were able to successfully conduct such meetings remotely, ensuring the voices of stockholders would continue to be given prominence.

WORDS FROM OUR WINNERS

The IHC Team of the Year, 2021 - Middle East justly went to Accenture which, in addition to the innovate work above, also developed Accenture Access and Legal Volunteering Programmes which create opportunities for the team to participate in mentoring, teaching and volunteering in the region. In accepting this award on behalf of the team, Liz Williamson credited hard work and determination for the win, noting that she thinks it is their “*diversity and innovative mindset that has maintained*

[the] team’s momentum over the last 2 years to really bring value.“

The IHC Team of the Year – Asia winners, Coca Cola Philippines, found favour with our judges not just for their innovative approach to business but for their work in shaping a workplace that is inclusive for all. In the preceding period they developed “Comics”, a shorthand for Communication on Ethics, which are delivered every month and include topics such as bullying in the workplace and Safe Spaces. Indicative of this move to inclusion, notably half of the legal leadership team are women, with a third of all lawyers belonging to the LGBT+ group. On accepting the award, Terence Fernando said: “*Any team award really depends on the dedication and professionalism of its members. So, to all my lawyers, paralegals and support staff, a big thank you to you all.*”

From an impressive shortlist of worthy competition, our judges picked



SHOGO OSAKA OF FEDEX EXPRESS



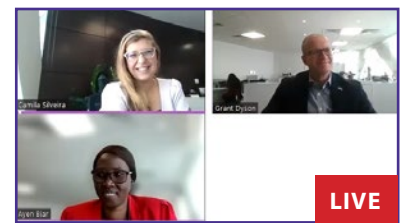
STANLEY LUI OF T I FLUID SYSTEMS



TEAM FROM ACCENTURE



TEAM FROM ADB



TEAM FROM ETIHAD RAIL



TEAM FROM MALAYSIA AIRLINES



TEAM FROM MAYBANK



TEAM FROM RGE



TERENCE FERNANDO - COCA-COLA BEVERAGES PHILIPPINES



TIM GILKISON OF PRAXONOMY AND FOUNDER OF IN-HOUSE COMMUNITY



TRACY TURNER OF A.S. WATSON GROUP



YOSR HAMZA OF GARTNER

Penny Koo, AIA Singapore, as this year’s In-House Counsel of the Year. Penny sits on the Operational Risk Committee, Data Governance Committee, and Agency Misconduct Appeal Board. She is also the chief architect behind AIA’s first Women’s Network – “Where Empowered Women Empower Women”. On accepting this award, Penny acknowledged and gave thanks to her team:

“First of all, it is a great honour and privilege. I am really heartened that the AIA Singapore legal team has also won the Insurance Award and been shortlisted for some of the other categories. A huge thanks to the team. I don’t say this enough, but I try to – I am immensely grateful to all of you. I have such a unique, talented team. It is so diverse and all of you take such pride in everything that you do, consistently and collaboratively. Thank you, this is really dedicated to the team.”

You can hear more from Penny in this month’s In-House Insights feature.

THE IN-HOUSE COMMUNITY Awards of the Year 2021

In-House Community Visionary Non-Law Firm of the Year

- Lawcadia is a cloud-based platform that helps legal teams and their law firms use for management, legal intake and triage, and project management.
- Powered by Lawcadia’s technology, the Research Manager streamlines the information collection, assessment and reporting process of potential regulatory issues to one online platform, allowing financial services institutions to ensure defensible, timely and cost-effective compliance with the new regimes and regimes with increased obligations.
- New Client Collaboration Workspace, law firms can also communicate and project manage seamlessly with their clients by sharing files, completed documents, status updates, messages and beautiful Gantt charts.

Lawcadia

Scan the QR code to watch the awards ceremony.
Or go to <https://youtu.be/2aWluClnPSk>

HANDSON HONG KONG

A stark takeaway from the pandemic and the isolation it brought with it, is that we are better and stronger together. As we build back, we recognise the importance of community and of lending a helping hand to those who need it most. We were grateful to once again this year be partnering with HandsOn Hong Kong, who were in fact present at the very first awards of the In-House Community, coming full circle. HandsOn Hong Kong is a charitable organisation with the mission of “empowering everyone in Hong Kong to volunteer”. They run 200 programs a month, supporting more than 100 grassroots charities and providing upwards of 16,000 volunteer opportunities! Catherine Dannaoui, Deputy Executive Director of HandsOn Hong Kong, joined us to introduce her organisation and kindly announce a further tranche of winning participants in our awards. She shared just a few of the many programs making up their monthly agenda for volunteers – including providing care packages to the elderly with chronic illness and from low-income families; virtual homework help and confidence building for children with learning challenges (a particularly vulnerable group of children during the pandemic given school closures); and ongoing caring phone calls to lonely elderly, demonstrating that even the smallest acts of kindness can be hugely felt. In 2021, HandsOn Hong Kong supported 82,000 people through 3,300 community programs. A donation to this charitable hub for volunteers and NGO partners was made possible through participation in our awards.



HandsOn
HONG KONG

A WORD OF THANKS

A huge thank you and congratulations to all the winners and those shortlisted for the In-House Community Counsel of the Year Awards, 2021, for your submissions and for your attendance. Without all of you we would not be able to empower the role of the in-house counsel as is our aim at In-House Community.

Winners of the IHC Counsel of the Year Awards, 2021



Penny Koo,
AIA Singapore

- Launched a fully digital in-house contract review and approval platform.
- On-boarded electronic signature.
- Penny sits on Operational Risk Committee, Data Governance Committee, and Agency Misconduct Appeal Board.
- Chief architect behind AIA's first Women's Network – "Where Empowered Women Empower Women".



IN-HOUSE INDUSTRY AWARDS

Aviation

Malaysia Airlines

- Digitalisation of the workflow under six months.
- Completing restructuring within a record four and a half months.

Banking - Middle East

First Abu Dhabi Bank

- Completed acquisition of Bank Audi.
- Carved out 'Magnati' from existing payments business.

Banking - Asia

Malayan Banking (Maybank)

- Establishment of legal portal.
- First PHP-linked loaned for Maybank Singapore.
- First MBFI Reverse Repo with a corporate bond – The Team assisted with the first GMRA with Hong Kong CP.

Conglomerate

3M Asia Pacific

- Investigated +14,200 reports globally of suspected fraud, and price gouging of 3M products (PPEs, Respirators, etc.) with monetary benefits to be donated to COVID-19 related non-profit organisations.

Energy & Natural Resources - South Africa

AFGRI Group

- Successful restructuring of baking facilities under challenging operational environment (riots and civil unrest, change of Group CEO, new shareholder acquiring control).

Energy & Natural Resources - Asia

RGE

- US\$750M first sustainability-linked syndicated loan for palm business Apical Group.
- CA\$1b acquisition of Pacific Canbriam Energy, Canada.

Financial Services - ex-banking

Asian Development Bank

- Helped established a new budget support modality called the COVID-19 Pandemic Response Option (CPRO).
- Provided support for the establishment of the new \$9 billion vaccine facility.

FMCG - Middle East

Mondelez

- Created at zero cost to company a MENAP Control & Compliance Resource Centre which houses all of Mondelez's key compliance policies.
- Trained over 500 Mondelez employees.

Insurance

AIA Singapore

- Partnered with GovTech and Kofax, making AIA the first insurer in Singapore to provide customers with enhanced government-supported user verification capabilities – “Sign with SingPass” feature.

Life Science & Pharma - Middle East

Abu Dhabi Healthcare Services

- Established the first contract department in the region.
- Membership of the internal investigation committee and grievance committee.

Life Science & Pharma - Asia

Pfizer (Vietnam)

- Helped bring Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to Vietnam.
- Initiated a new contract review process.

Manufacturing & Engineering

Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines

- Created The Legal Hub for internal collaboration and communication with business partners.
- Training of 9,110 associates in Data Privacy.

Property, Infrastructure &

Logistics - Middle East

Etihad Rail

- Secured land rights across the UAE, as well as critical No Objection Certificates (a total of 4561 NOCs were successfully negotiated during 2020) across the entire 1200 km project site.

Property, Infrastructure & Logistics - Asia

FedEx Express

- Strategic alliance with Delhivery.
- Ensuring that FedEx has the necessary regulatory approvals to transport vaccines across AMEA, including the use of SenseAware (a temperature monitoring/tracking device) to track temperature conditions of cold chain shipments.

Retail & Healthcare

A S Watson Group (Joint winner)

- Middle East franchise agreement signed in four weeks.
- Ensuring the company can accept government consumption vouchers on mobile checkout devices.
- ASW legal team’s suite of eLegal tools to manage its sizeable portfolio across our different markets.

Retail & Healthcare

Aeon Co. (Joint winner)

- Managed to obtain over US\$ 2M rental rebate from landlords to curb difficulties faced during COVID-19.
- Worked on launching of MYAEON2GO online shopping platform.

Technology, Media & Telecoms - Middle East

Accenture

- Acquisition of Appspro in Saudi Arabia.
- Avanade, an Accenture and Microsoft joint venture, begins UAE operations.
- Implementation of several tech tools, including ALICE, an AI powered contract exploration tool created by and for Accenture Legal.

Technology, Media & Telecoms - Asia

Lazada Group

- Implementation of a regulatory watch bot with an automated alert system to inform on regulatory updates on consumer protection laws to cybersecurity regulations in the region.
- Worked on providing priority access to healthcare workers.

Travel & Leisure

Marriott International

- Facilitated over 100 new hotel management and franchise projects during the pandemic.
- Worked on over 1,000 operational matters/enquiries a year from other departments and properties.

IN-HOUSE BEST PRACTICE TEAMS AWARDS

Change Management - Middle East Eagle Hills Properties

- Handled an increased number of FIDIC-related pre-litigation, litigation, and arbitration processes (all triggered by COVID-19 and implying EOT, claim of additional costs, etc.) within the UAE, Serbia, and Morocco. Completed one of the company's biggest M&A transactions while facing an unforeseen departure of number of key legal personnel.

Change Management - Asia Herbalife International

- Listing of the business as 'essential service' during the pandemic restrictions to allow for deliveries.
- Supported the great "pivot" which included providing legal analyses and risk assessments for rapidly created business models, advising on return to office measures and vaccine mandates and supporting the shift from live to virtual events.

Corporate Social Responsibility Asian Development Bank (Joint winner)

- Helped establish specialised "green benches" in Bhutan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Philippines.
- Organized a virtual fundraising event to raise almost PHP330,000 for the communities in Philippines affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Established Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX), to assist client countries procure and deliver effective and safe COVID-19 vaccines.

Corporate Social Responsibility Lazada Group (Joint winner)

- Lazada became the first ecommerce platform to collaborate with the Indonesian Ministry of Cooperatives and SME to launch the "Kakak Asuh" (which translates to "foster brother") Program ("KAU Program").
- Providing priority access to healthcare workers.
- Providing depressed sectors and workers with alternative revenue channels.

Compliance

Ping An Insurance (Joint winner)

- Compliance of up to seven groups of companies listed across Hong Kong, PRC and US, dealing with 3 sets of listing rules and the laws of over 25 jurisdictions in which the company operates or have investments in.
- A Ping An entity is licensed to pioneer virtual banking and contributed to the development of the Fintech market with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority.

Compliance

TI Fluid Systems (Joint winner)

- 'COOmpLiance' videos on Force Majeure and Hospitality Practices to engage and educate front-line commercial teams.
- Providing compliance training insights to other in-house counsel teams via online events.

Diversity - Middle East

Gartner

- Co-established & Co-leading Gartner's legal DEI Advisory Council, which is a voluntary council intended to provide a platform to help develop & infuse best practices within our legal team that ensure alignment to Gartner's DEI strategy.
- Co-leading 'Mosaic at Gartner' (celebrating underrepresented racial, ethnic and multi-cultural identities) within the company's ERG initiatives.

Diversity - Asia

FedEx Express

- Legal department chairs DE&I group at the organisation. The two Legal leaders, SVP Legal & General Counsel International AMEA and VP Legal, Regulatory & Human Resources, are the Chairs of the FedEx AMEA DE&I Councils.
- Implementation of diversity talent acquisition, incorporate periodic gender equity pay reviews, lactation rooms for nursing mothers at facilities and have increased paternity leave benefits for male employees in a number of locations.

Innovation - Middle East

Accenture

- ALICE is an AI powered Contract Exploration tool created by and for Accenture Legal which leverages big data analytics and machine learning technologies to provide targeted intelligent searching of contract data base.
- ThinkFit tool for the Legal team to assist in closing sales deals. It is a one stop shop for direct access to offering-based guidance, fit for purpose contract templates and access to Legal Subject Matter Experts globally.
- Implementation of contracting tools such as ManageMyDeal (MMD), Legal Connection, Get Support and Ask COBE (Code of Business Ethics), reduced response times to strategic questions and enabled a better understanding of global contracting trends provided cost savings tactics enabled contract signature in minutes, rather than days, while customising contracts in accordance with local requirements.

Innovation - Asia

A.S. Watson Group

- eLearning modules developed in house, Privacy assessment, compliance and inventory within centralised online tool, e-signature, Virtual board meeting tool, Document automation/self-serve, Legal Portal, Supplier/compliance screening and due diligence tool, Customer journey review tool, Contract and matter management lifecycle and workflow system.
- 'Virtual market tours' of stores and teams facilitating learning innovation between teams.

Integration - Middle East

Mondelez

- Enhancement of the Artwork Review Process: Ways of working between the MENAP Legal team and the Marketing department on the review process required for current and new product packaging. This review is critical to ensuring both consumer protection and compliance with local law.
- Contract Standardisation & Simplification: The standardisation and simplification of contracts used by the Sales department.
- Procurement Capabilities Building: Enhancing the Procurement team's capabilities with respect to contract reviews.

- Communication and Awareness Building: Providing easily accessible and digestible material to the wider MENAP business on key legal issues.

Integration - Asia

A. S. Watson Group (Joint Winner)

- Weekly management meeting, monthly business updates with each business unit, budget meetings and strategic reviews, as well as all country head engagement initiatives determining
- the strategic direction of the company.
- The Group General Counsel advises the board of directors and investment committee, and participates in group-wide initiatives by ensuring legal team participation in committees such as the CSR Committee, Think Digital Committee, Group Data Protection Steering Committee, Data Privacy Champions Network, Digital Marketing Champions Network.

Integration - Asia

Malayan Banking (Maybank)

- Legal has centralised its department to grow it according to business unit needs rather than geographic needs.
- Working with the Group's Virtual Banking team to launch first ever digital SME financing powered by artificial intelligence and the first Syariah-compliant e-wallet, as well as 'Sama Lokal' e-commerce platform.
- Establishment of an online legal portal which aims to create greater accessibility between legal department and the different arms of the group.

Technology Integration - Middle East

Accenture

- Implementation of contracting tools such as ManageMyDeal (MMD), Legal Connection, Get Support and Ask COBE (Code of Business Ethics).
- Implementation of tech tools such as, ALICE, ThinkFit, Accenture Translate.

Technology Integration - Asia**ICICI Bank**

- Implementation of Contract Automation System, ChatBot FAQ, Litigation management, Digital Document Management.
- Several Online Dispute Resolution initiatives started by the team.

Transactional - South Africa**AFGRI Group**

- Due to severe liquidity constraints and a challenging operating environment, the Group had to restructure all its existing banking facilities in the amount of ZAR2.5 billion.
- The restructure required intense negotiations by the Team with 11 lenders, represented by various legal counsel over a period of 18 months.
- The restructure resulted in the reduction of the number of lenders from 11 to 4, the exiting of 7 lenders and the conversion of short-term debt to long term secured debt, ensuring a sustainable capital structure for the Group.

Transactional - Asia**Li Auto (Joint winner)**

- SuperONE Project is a Hong Kong listing project and, under legal team's lead, Li Auto has achieved a "Dual Primary Listing" on HKEX.

Transactional - Asia**MTR Corporation (Joint winner)**

- The award of Shenzhen Metro Line 13 PPP Project in August 2020, and operations and maintenance concession for the Mälartåg train service.
- The opening of Hong Kong's Tuen Ma Line, Shenzhen Metro Line 4 North Extension, Hangzhou.
- Metro Line 5, Hangzhou Metro Line 1 Phase 3 (Airport Extension) and the Middle Section of Beijing Line Metro Line 16.

Small Team - Asia**State Grid Overseas Investment Limited**

- Acquisition of 49% equity of Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC), a "One Belt One Road" project.
- Acquisition of 100% equity stake in the Chilean power utility company Chilquinta Energía S.A. from the US seller Sempra Energy (NYSE: SRE).
- Takeover of the listed Chilean electricity distribution operator CGE.
- The three-member legal compliance and risk management team worked on issuance of senior corporate bonds, provision of M&A funds to group subsidiaries, bank facilities, fixed income financial securities investment, and more.

Small Team - South Africa**AFGRI Group Holding**

- The Team now consists of 2 legal advisors and the General Counsel.
- Restructure of Group's banking facilities.
- Unbundling of Retail Joint Venture.
- The disposal of Nedan.
- The disposal of AFGRI Zambia to Tata.
- USD 50 million Bridge Facility.
- Change in the Group CEO, Group CFO, several board members and a controlling shareholder.
- The Team provided induction training to new Board members.

IHC TEAM OF THE YEAR, 2021 - ASIA

Coca-Cola Beverages, Philippines

- *Creating The LEGAL HUB - intranet-incorporated systematised platform for collaboration and communication with business partners.*
- *e-Trainings and Comics. Education on topics like anti-bribery, bullying in the workplace, and Safe Spaces, by transforming them into "Comics," a shorthand for Communications on Ethics.*
- *Comics are released every month via email, and are engaging by design, with content that's easy to digest and easy to relate to.*
- *Half of the Legal Leadership Team are women. A third of the lawyers belong to the LGBT+ group.*

IHC TEAM OF THE YEAR, 2021 - MIDDLE EAST

Accenture

- *ALICE is an AI powered Contract Exploration tool created by and for Accenture Legal.*
- *Accenture Translate to securely translate text, pictures, documents and voice.*
- *Implementation of contracting tools such as ManageMyDeal (MMD), Legal Connection, Get Support and Ask COBE (Code of Business Ethics).*
- *Collaborated on the entry of Avanade into the UAE - a joint venture between Microsoft and Accenture.*
- *Liz Williamson sits on Accenture Middle East's Inclusion & Diversity Committee and is an Employee Experience Pillar Lead.*
- *Accenture Middle East's Legal Access and Legal Volunteering Programmes create opportunities for the team to participate in mentoring, teaching and volunteering in the region.*

VISIONARY NON-LAW FIRM OF THE YEAR

Lawcadia

- *Lawcadia is a cloud-based platform that in-house legal teams and their law firms use for matter management, legal intake and triage, and legal spend management.*
- *Powered by Lawcadia's technology, the Gadens Breach Manager streamlines the information collation, assessment and reporting process of potential regulatory issues to one online platform, allowing financial services institutions to ensure defensible, timely and cost-effective compliance with the new regimes and regimes with increased obligations.*
- *New Client Collaboration Workspace, law firms can also communicate and project manage seamlessly with their clients by sharing files, completed documents, status updates, messages and beautiful Gantt charts.*

VISIONARY LAW FIRM OF THE YEAR

L&L Partners

- *Firm arranged for vaccination camps for its members.*
- *Newly developed CRM system which connects firm with client to allow swifter communication with them. Clients have real time visibility of the progress on their specific matters and they can access reports of the time spent by counsel on working on their matters.*
- *Lower rates to clients which are in the nascent stage of development i.e. Start-ups. Emphasis and strategic focus on start-ups in the field of sustainable living, green energy and manufacturing under the Make in India initiative of government.*

Commended External Counsel, 2021

CHINA

- Amy Dai (Guangying)**, Global Law Office
- Chaoying (Charles) Li**, Han Kun Law Offices
- John Yong Ren**, T&D Associates
- Laura Luo**, King & Wood Mallesons
- Zhao Ye**, Jingtian & Gongcheng
- Zhen Huang**, UGC Advocats
- Vivian Zhang**, Fangda Partners
- Yu Leimin**, King & Wood Mallesons

HONG KONG

- Alvin Ho**, Pinsent Masons
- Chris Lambert**, Robertsons
- Donovan Ferguson**, King & Wood Mallesons
- Eric Tan**, Ashurst
- Jason Webber**, Slaughter and May
- Jojo Fan**, Herbert Smith Freehills
- Sarah Berkeley**, Simmons & Simmons
- Tommy Liu**, Hogan Lovells



Michael Yau,
Eversheds Sutherland



"Michael is very well versed in trade finance matters and provides us with sound commercial advice." – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

Despite the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has presented, the award recognises the hard work and dedication of our teams and our continuous efforts throughout the year to keep our people, clients and communities thriving. Our clients continue to be the centre of what we do and we thank them for their trust.



Rossana Chu,
LC Lawyers



"Rossana provides commercially sensible advice and has solid technical skills." – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

I am very honoured to be recognised alongside the most reputable lawyers in the profession. As our firm is a member of the EY Global Network, I'd like to appreciate the collaboration opportunities and support extended by EY. Also big thanks to our clients, my colleagues and the In-House Community.

INDIA

Ajay Behl, AZB & Partners

Ashwath Rau, AZB & Partners



Haigreve Khaitan,
Khaitan & Co



"He's an astute lawyer, always to the point and provides great value." – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

Haigreve Khaitan is a Senior Partner and leads Khaitan & Co's Corporate, M&A and Private Equity practices at the Firm. He advises companies, boards of directors and financial institutions on a wide range of corporate matters, including mergers and acquisitions, private equity investments, corporate governance, corporate restructuring and other corporate and securities laws matters.

Rajiv Luthra, L&L Partners

INDONESIA

Amir Syamsudin, Amir Syamsudin & Partners

Dr. Yozua Makes, Makes & Partners

Eri Hertiawan, Assegaf Hamzah & Partners

Hafzan Taher, Soemadipradja & Taher

Iqbal Darmawan, HHP Law Firm

JAPAN

Hiroshi Uchima, Nishimura & Asahi

Masakazu Masujima, Mori
Hamada Matsumoto

MALAYSIA

Amin Abdul Majid, ZICO Law

Datin Jeyanthini Kannaperan,
Shearn Delamore & Co

Datin Seet Hooi Ping, Albar & Partners



Dato Azmi Mohd Ali,
Azmi & Associates



"Dato Azmi Mohd Ali's commitment to train and develop the younger generation of lawyers is commendable." – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

Many thanks to everyone who has nominated me for this. As the Senior Partner of Azmi & Associates, I believe we must dedicate a great deal of time and efforts to train, coach and mentor interns, trainees, young lawyers, or even law students. Committing your resources to coaching and mentoring bring positives vibes, will attract talents, demonstrate that you are a responsible lawyer, and these generate positive values. Coaching and mentoring are parts of my DNA.



Deepak Sadasivan,
Adnan Sundra & Low



"Deepak exceeds expectations, always! A formidable legal counsel with vast knowledge and expertise." – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

Deepak's experience comprises banking work such as capital market financing, security documentation, straight financing and the financing of significant infrastructure/energy projects, including water supply privatisation, IPPs and expressway construction. He is particularly experienced in structuring and documenting Islamic financing transactions inclusive of the world's first exchangeable Sukuk, Malaysia's first Islamic stapled securities, Malaysia's first municipal bonds, and the world's first Green SRI Sukuk (2018).

Elias Moubarak, Trowers & Hamlins

G. Vijay Kumar, Lee Hishamuddin Allen & Gledhill



Gilbert Gan,
Zaid Ibrahim & Co
(a member of ZICO Law)



"Gilbert is one of the best lawyers in Malaysia when it comes to M&A." – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

It's a great honour to win the vote for this commendation. My deepest gratitude to in-house counsels for their confidence and trust in me and our firm. This recognition is shared with my colleagues. It would not have been possible without their support and dedication.

John Mathew, Christopher Lee Ong

Kherk Ying Chew, Wong & Partners
(Baker McKenzie)

Wong Jin Nee, Wong Jin Nee & Teo

PHILIPPINES

Daniel Nicholas C. Darvin, VTD Law Firm



Danny Bunyi,
Divina Law



"Atty. Bunyi has a great ability to provide highly-tailored advice to our business which he understands well." – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

It is an honor and privilege to be chosen again by the In-House Community for this award. With the unwavering support of our Managing Partner, Atty. Nilo T. Divina, and valued recognition of our clients, I am humbled by this recognition.

George S.D. Aquino, ACCRALAW

Hector De Leon Jr., SyCip Salazar Hernandez & Gatmaitan



Jude Ocampo,
Ocampo & Suralvo



"Atty. Ocampo's work is meticulous and thorough - always top quality!" – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

Jude is a Philippine attorney specializing in mergers and acquisitions, corporate law, complex transactions and tax. He has an LL.M. from Harvard University where he was awarded the Landon H. Gammon Fellowship for Academic Excellence. He also earned an MBA (Finance and Supply Chain Management) from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Michael T. Macapagal, Quisumbing Torres
(Baker McKenzie)

Monalisa Dimalanta, PJS Law

Roberto Miguel Ramiro, PJS Law

SINGAPORE

Aaron Lee, Allen & Gledhill

Ik Wei Chong, Clyde & Co

Simon Goh, Rajah & Tann

Sushil Nair, Drew & Napier

Toh Kok Seng, Lee & Lee

SOUTH KOREA

Judd Lurie, Bowmans

Neil Kirby, Werksmans Attorneys

Patrick Bracher, Norton Rose Fulbright



Dae Sagong,
Yoon & Yang



"Dae Sagong is driven, reliable, responsive, and accommodating of client's needs and requests. He is well versed with both commercial and litigation matters, which is helpful in structuring complex transactions and handling pre-or post-acquisition legal issues." – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

I owe this recognition to my incredible colleagues at Yoon & Yang, our distinguished in-house clients, and the In-House Community. It is an honor and privilege to be selected amongst and by such a talented group of lawyers with whom I hope to continue to learn and grow together in the years to come.



Edward Dhong,
Yoon & Yang



"Having worked with Edward, I can say that he is an excellent operator!" – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

I extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude to my friends in the in-house community who selected me for this great award. I am truly humbled by this recognition. I will take this as a mandate to provide you with better client service that you certainly deserve. Thank you again.

Oh Ryung Lee, Bae, Kim & Lee

Sang Hoon Lee, Lee&Ko

Sang Min Lee, Kim & Chang

Sun Hee Kim, Yulchon

Yong Sang Kim, Kim & Chang

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Jessada Sawatdipong,
Chandler MHM



"Jessada's vision and focus as a lawyer is commendable - highly recommended!" – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

I am delighted and honored to have received this unique recognition from In-House Community as a Commended External Counsel. I would like to thank my clients and colleagues once again for their valuable support over the past year.

Kudun Sukhumananda, Kudun & Partners

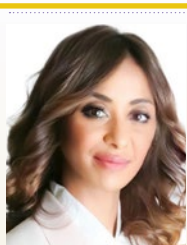
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Dina Mahdi,
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"Dina has outstanding legal skills paired with very good technical knowledge and understanding of our business." – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

Dina Mahdi heads Hadeef & Partner's Regulatory & Government Advisory Practice. She advises private and public entities on domestic and international law matters. She is highly regarded for her capabilities in handling complex regulatory matters and knowledge of international treaties and conventions.

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Bui Ngoc Hong,
LNT & Partners



"He's a very well-experienced lawyer in Vietnam with a pragmatic and commercial approach." – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

This is the fifth time I have humbly received the Commended External Counsel of the Year. It is a very remarkable honour. This recognition from the in-house counsels to me couldn't have been achieved without the valuable supports from my great Clients and my wonderful colleagues, especially during the pandemic time. Much appreciated!



Hung Q. Nguyen,
VILAF



"Hung always gives prompt and reliable solutions to client's questions." – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

I would like to thank the inhouse counsel community for voting for me to win this award for Vietnam. I also express my sincere gratitude to the associates in my team, other partners and lawyers and the firm's support staff, without whose help I would not have achieved this honour.

K. Minh Dang, YKVN

Kien Trung Trinh, Tilleke & Gibbins

Lan Phuong Nguyen, Baker McKenzie

Lê Nết, LNT & Partners

Ngoc Anh Bui, VILAF



Nguyễn Anh Tuấn,
LNT & Partners



"Tuan understands the needs of the clients, is responsive and provides sound and practical legal advice." – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

To be voted an IHC Commended External Counsel is an incredible honour and I am most grateful for the confidence our clients have placed in us. At LNT & Partners, we are committed to being a co-pilot in-house counsels could always rely on in navigating through legal uncertainty towards commercial success.



Trương Nhật Quang,
YKVN



"He is not only a good private practice lawyer but he also does a lot for the development of next generation of lawyers." – Testimonial from an In-House Counsel

YKVN has been at the forefront of virtually all significant legal developments in Vietnam in the past 25 years. Our commitment to lawyering excellence with an undisputed dedication to provide the highest level of legal expertise is our firm's DNA, along with growing the legal community in Vietnam and beyond.

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