A winning combination

How Eversheds Sutherland’s new global capability is helping to drive business in the Middle East.

This year, the combination of Eversheds and Sutherland, Ashill & Brennan was a major milestone in the firm’s history. The Wall Street Journal called it ‘the largest law firm merger of the year’.

Now operating from 66 offices across 32 countries, including six offices in the US, Eversheds Sutherland is fast on its way to becoming a legal super-brand. Since the combination on 1 February 2017, new offices have opened up in Dusseldorf, Moscow, St Petersburg and Luxembourg and this year Eversheds Sutherland also merged with a Singaporean firm.

As a combined force, the business is finding its way onto more global panels than it did previously.

“We are already seeing signs of how this combination is helping us in the region because the US is a significant piece of the global jigsaw,” says Tawfiq Tabbaa, deputy managing partner for Eversheds Sutherland in the Middle East. “Multi-national clients in the Middle East often require law firms with a US capability and vice versa. The combination has put us in a strong position to service both.”

GROWTH AND QUALITY

The Middle East is Eversheds Sutherland’s most dynamic and fastest growing region, with revenue growth of 40 per cent in 2016-17. Comprising seven offices across five countries, and 158 staff including 19 partners the firm is still very much focused on growth. A lot of this growth has been fuelled by M&A activity.

We have seen significant successes across our Middle East offices. Our Corporate and M&A team has grown exponentially over the last couple of years and is now handling major international cross-border deals of the highest magnitude and complexity, including advising Samena Capital and du on their investment into Anghami - the leading online music streaming company operating in the region. We worked on the innovative Falcon Ma’an renewable energy project which significantly increases...
Jordan’s renewable energy contribution and have since worked on 10 out of the 12 Jordan Round 1 Solar projects. Through our offices in Abu Dhabi, Beijing and London, we advised China National Petroleum Corporation on its USD1.77 billion investment in a major oil & gas onshore concession project in Abu Dhabi. We are currently working on 6 IPOs across our offices.

These types of high profile projects have seen the Middle East team scoop a number of awards including Visionary Firm of the Year 2016 and 2017 at the Asia MENA Counsel In-House Community Awards, Project Finance Deal of the Year at IFLR’s Middle East Awards 2016 and Banking and Finance Team of the Year at The Oath Awards 2016.

CULTURE
It’s not all about delivering award-winning work, though. It’s the way that you do it that can set you apart from your competitors. Eversheds Sutherland is a Times Newspaper Top 50 Employer For Women in the UK and 41 per cent of staff – and 22 per cent of partners - are women in the Middle East, ratios which will improve further as the business actively looks to recruit women into its Saudi Arabia team.

“We are committed to making Eversheds Sutherland a great company to work with and for,” explains Nasser Ali Khasawneh, managing partner for the Middle East. “That extends from our diversity policy right through to our approach to Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR). Participation in CSR in our Middle East offices is actively encouraged. This mirrors the work of our colleagues across the world in putting something back to the communities in which we work.”

THE FUTURE’S BRIGHT
With 3 years to go until Expo 2020, there are lots of exciting things on the horizon for the firm and the region. The fast pace of developing technology is something we are actively embracing. We recently held a Technology, Media and Telecoms (TMT) thought leadership dinner with the Association of Corporate Counsel Middle East - discussing legal and market implications of Disruptive Technology – including Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality, and the Internet of Things. We were joined by guest speaker Mike Yeh, Assistant General Counsel – Corporate, External & Legal Affairs for Middle East & Africa, Microsoft, whose keynote session focused on “Navigating the Next Industrial Revolution”.

Colleagues from a wide variety of sectors attended, including financial institutions, technology companies, multi-national manufacturers and logistic companies, which shows that companies across all sectors now regard technology as a critical element of their business strategy and success.

“Our new global capability will really complement our regional strategy,” says Nasser Ali Khasawneh. “By focusing on a number of key sectors including TMT, Consumer, Energy & Infrastructure and Financial Institutions, we aim to provide specialist legal advice in these key areas of business in our region.”

Tawfiq Tabbaa, deputy managing partner - Middle East