



# The Legal Sector in South Africa

**Eversheds Sutherland in South Africa is one of the leading full-service law firms in Southern Africa and the main business hub office in Africa. We invited the firm's Intellectual Property partner, Sara-Jane Pluke to write more about the firm's many offerings and their unwavering commitment to providing exceptional levels of client service.**

As an affiliate of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP and Eversheds Sutherland (U.S) LLP, we provide clients with the same high standard of legal experience with commitment to client service excellence. We are a progressive law firm, constantly on the lookout for better ways to provide creative and cost-effective legal and business solutions for our clients.

The South African firm was established in 2010 as Mahons Attorneys - and then became affiliated with Eversheds LLP in December 2013. In February 2017 - Eversheds LLP decided to merge with U.S law firm Sutherland Asbill & Brennan to form Eversheds Sutherland advancing the firms' shared goal of providing clients with the highest quality service consistently around the globe - united by vision, values and understanding of clients' needs.

Eversheds Sutherland provides legal advice of the highest quality whether they are

operating locally or across borders from their offices across Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the United States. Across Eversheds Sutherland, there are 2,300 lawyers with a global footprint spanning 61 offices in 29 countries. The result of this combination has put Eversheds Sutherland in the UK's top 10 and in the top 40 in U.S. and global listings.

Eversheds Sutherland in South Africa has three offices based in Johannesburg at Melrose Arch, The Campus in Bryanston, and at an office in Durban - Umhlanga. Our offices also work very closely in conjunction with Eversheds Sutherland in Mauritius.

The legal sector in South Africa faces challenges such as:

The population growth - South Africa is growing in younger and more affluent populations:

- By 2050, Africa will make up almost 24% of the world's population.
- By 2020, more than 50% of families in Africa will be middle class.

- Environmental issues impacts all of the above

The increase in innovation and rapid growth of technology:

- 138km of fibre is serviced each day
- 76% of Africans are mobile subscribers

The impact of stringent and ongoing legislation in South Africa.

There is a risk of non-compliance regarding local legislation and regulations relating to corporate governance, labour, taxes, health and safety, the environment, black economic empowerment, performance, protection of personal information and contract specific requirements.

This opens up opportunities for compliance audits. Incorporating compliance into standard processes and procedures is imperative for businesses operating in Africa.

Gaps and opportunities in the South African legal market

include technology, sustainable energy, environmental, tax, compliance and start-up business growth and with that, Intellectual Property. These are areas we are currently focusing on and ensuring that we are recruiting the right professionals at the right levels to handle these new demands in the market and we continuously strive to expand our service offering to our clients.

## **Profile of Sara-Jane Pluke - Partner, Intellectual Property**

Sara-Jane heads up our intellectual property department and her team comprises both patent, Industrial designs, copyright and trademark attorneys. Not only does she manage substantial global trademark portfolios for blue chip organisations but she also advises a variety of clients on various aspects of intellectual property, including but not limited to patents, trademarks, copyright, technical know-how, web-based mechanisms and platforms, industrial designs, plant breeders rights, brand

protection and enforcement, intellectual property portfolio management, commercial agreements, alternative dispute resolution and litigation in all these fields, including competition law.

**The legal expertise of Eversheds Sutherland in South Africa includes:**

1. Commercial services;
  - Commercial contracts
  - Anti-trust and competition law
  - Corporate transactions
  - Corporate governance, regulatory and compliance
  - Company secretarial
  - Tax
  - Mergers and acquisitions
  - Due diligence
  - Listings
2. Real estate;
3. Employment;
4. Litigation and dispute management;
5. Intellectual property;
6. Environmental law and;
7. Fiduciary services.

Our wealth of experience across a wide range of industries enables us to assist with unique challenges of business and other strategic issues that require legal insight.

**Blue-chip client base**

We have an extensive blue-chip client base of major domestic and international corporations, banks, financial institutions and state authorities.

Our approach with clients is personal, combined with the highest professional standards. Above all, we listen to our clients. Our solutions-oriented, service-led approach attracts clients faced with issues and opportunities that demand a deep understanding of business, specific industry knowledge and the ability to manage complex matters across borders.



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