

Bowmans expands its borders

African law firm Bowmans is aiming to unlock more opportunities for its clients and contacts on the African continent with its expansion into Mauritius and Ethiopia.

Robert Legh, chairman and senior partner, says "This move, which is effective from 1 October 2019, is an investment in the ambitions and success of our clients across Africa. Mauritius and Ethiopia are key jurisdictions for many of our clients and our presence on the ground there will help us to better support them."

Mauritian merger

Bowmans is opening a fully-fledged office in Mauritius, having joined forces with FirmWise, a local firm that specialises in corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, banking and finance, investment funds, tax, compliance and private equity.

"This development will benefit our clients as Mauritius is increasingly positioning itself as a recognised international financial centre, and has favourable laws for foreign investors to establish their African headquarters prior to expanding further on the continent," says Legh.



Robert Legh, chairman and senior partner at Bowmans

The new office, to be known as Bowmans (Mauritius) Ltd, will be a fully integrated part of Bowmans, composed of a team of six lawyers led by managing partner Fazil Hossenkhan, who founded FirmWise and is well known as a private equity funds lawyer, and Shianee Calcutteea, a partner specialising in corporate and M&A work. Their initial focus will be on assisting private equity and other corporate clients in their Mauritius setup and on structuring their investments around Africa, as well as on banking and finance transactions.

Commenting on the decision to join Bowmans, Hossenkhan says the firm has an impressive reputation. "We are proud to become part of a recognised leader on the continent and to work alongside them on the complex, challenging legal work for which Bowmans is known. It presents a unique opportunity by which we can significantly build upon our service offering to our clients."

Ethiopian expansion

In Ethiopia, which is steadily liberalising its economy and attracting interest from investors worldwide, Bowmans has formed a formal alliance with Aman Assefa & Associates Law Office.

"Ethiopia is a vibrant and burgeoning market - it is now one of the fastest growing economies in the world, offering significant opportunities to our client base. The great advantage of this alliance from our perspective is that we will have a close tie-up and formal alliance with one of the few high-quality corporate law firms available there," says Legh. "Given the nature of the legal advisory market in Ethiopia, it makes sense, at this stage, to work closely together under a formal arrangement."

Aman Assefa, managing partner of Aman Assefa & Associates Law Office, which specialises in high-end corporate and transactional legal matters, says there are numerous benefits in working with a recognised African law firm of Bowmans' calibre. "The arrangement we have entered into with Bowmans allows both firms to remain open to adaptation in the face of an evolving market in Ethiopia. For us it signals our intention to be part of the international community offering world-class legal services in Ethiopia."

As a result of these developments, the Bowmans brand is now present in six key African countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. The firm expects that business will continue to grow in all of these markets as its clients take advantage of the growth opportunities which are available.

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