

# IFLR

## IFLR Americas Awards 2021

On May 20 2020, IFLR will present its annual IFLR Americas Awards, celebrating the most innovative deals of 2020 and the firms and teams that worked on them. The winners and runners-up will also be presented in IFLR magazine's summer edition.

To ensure that your firm is aware of our request to submit, we may have sent the guidelines and forms to more than one person. Please coordinate the responses from your firm. If you are not the appropriate person, or would prefer us to contact someone else, please tell us immediately to ensure your firm is not omitted. All forms and criteria will also be available at [www.iflr.com](http://www.iflr.com)

### Nominations

In choosing the shortlist and winners, IFLR's team of journalists will conduct detailed research using a variety of sources. Submission forms are a vital part of this research and the best way to highlight your work. We will also consult private practice lawyers, in-house counsel and financing specialists at investment banks. Final decisions will be made by IFLR and are entirely independent.

The Americas Awards cover the US, Canada, Mexico, Central America and South America.

The award categories and details of how to submit are listed below. You are invited to make separate submissions for as many of these categories as you wish.

*Client contacts supplied as part of submissions will not be used for any purposes other than editorial research and will be contacted without reference to the firm supplying the details.*

### Deadlines

All nomination forms must be uploaded [HERE](#) by **January 22 2021**.

Please contact our research team if you have any special circumstances that require an extension for any specific nominations. Please direct all queries about the research to [james.wilson@legalmediagroup.com](mailto:james.wilson@legalmediagroup.com).

### Submission criteria:

- IFLR only covers **international deals** – all must be cross-border
- IFLR rewards **legal innovation** and nothing else, we are not interested in how big, high-profile, or quick the deal was
- Firms win team of the year categories **for working on the most innovative deals**, nothing else; the size of the firm and its volume of work are not relevant
- Some team categories have their own criteria which are stated on the submission form and below
- If you are going to submit in only a handful of categories, you are strongly recommended to submit in the Deal of the Year categories
- We recommend **only submitting three deals per category** – it is unlikely more than that stand a chance of being shortlisted (also, we only require a **brief explanation** of why the deal was innovative, it is therefore possible to be very efficient and concise with submissions)
- Rather than send lots of forms, you will notice that the **documents attached are multi-purpose** – please use the attachments as templates for all your submissions.

Yours sincerely,

James Wilson  
IFLR

## AWARD CATEGORIES AND CRITERIA

### **Deal of the Year (form)**

The Deal of the Year awards are for the deals themselves. All law firms with a direct role (big or small) on a transaction will be credited on a deal. All deals must satisfy the cross-border requirements and must have closed in 2020.

The **cross-border element** is satisfied as follows:

- Capital markets (debt and equity-linked, equity, structured finance & securitisation, and high yield): approximately 20% or more of the securities must have been sold to investors outside the home market of the issuer or originator. The deal must have been structured in mind to attract an international market.
- Loans: at least one lender must be headquartered in a different country to the borrower.
- M&A and private equity: buyer and target must be headquartered in different jurisdictions.
- Project financing: must be carried out on an international basis (on the lender or sponsor-side)
- Restructuring: must involve creditors outside the country of the company in question.

The **Americas component** is satisfied as follows:

- Capital markets (debt and equity-linked, equity, structured finance & securitisation, and high yield): the issuer must be headquartered in the Americas. The exception is IPOs, which can include foreign issuers listing on an exchange in the Americas and Americas-headquartered issuers listing on a foreign exchange.
- Loans: the borrower must be headquartered in the Americas.
- M&A and private equity: the target must be headquartered in the Americas.
- Restructuring: the entity must be headquartered in the Americas OR the key venue of the restructuring must take place in the Americas.
- Project finance: the project must be located in the Americas.

Complete one Americas Deal of the Year form to nominate each deal. We suggest you put forward no more than three deals for each category. Firms can nominate in any or all the nine categories listed.

- Debt and equity-linked
- Equity
- High yield
- Loan
- M&A
- Private equity
- Project finance
- Restructuring
- Structured finance & securitisation

ALL FIRMS MUST ALSO NOMINATE ONE DEAL ON WHICH THEY DID NOT ADVISE IN EACH CATEGORY THEY SUBMIT.

### **Category definitions:**

- Debt and equity-linked: corporate/sovereign debt and equity-linked capital markets issuances (bonds, hybrid, convertibles), whether onshore or offshore, including liability management exercises, tender offers and exchanges.
- High yield: same as above but limited to sub-investment grade issuers.
- Equity: equity securities, typically taking the form of IPOs, private placements, PIPEs or rights issues. At least 20% of the securities should have been sold to investors outside the home market of the issuer or originator.
- Loan: all manner of corporate credit facilities, including bilateral/club/syndicated loans, leveraged loans, acquisition financing, revolving credit facilities, asset financing etc.
- Structured finance and securitisation: asset-backed securities (e.g. securities issued by banks with non-performing loans or mortgages being the underlying assets). Covered bonds are an example of debt securities backed by cash flows from mortgages or loans.

- M&A and private equity: M&A includes public and private transactions as well as joint-ventures. The private equity category is for private equity transactions and secondaries deals, but does not include fund-raising rounds.
- Project finance: includes the financing of infrastructure, industrial, energy and natural resource and public service projects (including PPPs). The category can include hybrid financings, but the primary purpose of the financing must be a specific project. Financings of new hydrocarbon projects will no longer be shortlisted in the awards.
- **Restructuring:** includes the restructuring or wind-down of a corporate entity.

**During research, we will be exploring ways to recognise innovative work that is leading the way for how ESG (environmental, social, governance) values can be incorporated into corporate finance.**

### **Team of the Year (form)**

The team awards will go to the most innovative team of the year over the review period. The awards apply to a firm's entire pan-Americas practice area group, rather than a specific team within it. Firms can nominate themselves in any or all the categories. Complete one of the Americas Team of the Year form for each category, using the deals appendix to tell us about the deals your team has worked on that justify its nomination. If a deal has already been submitted as a deal of the year, just refer to that briefly on the team form.

We allow space on the submission form for a brief summary of any other factors that may support a nomination for 'innovative team'. The focus should be exclusively on innovation and will only be considered where a decision based on transactions alone is too close to make conclusively.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Debt and equity-linked team of the year | • Private equity team of the year                      |
| • Equity team of the year                 | • Project finance team of the year                     |
| • High yield team of the year*            | • Restructuring team of the year                       |
| • Loan team of the year*                  | • Structured finance & securitisation team of the year |
| • M&A team of the year                    |  |

\* These awards are subject to the quality and quantity of submissions received.

### **Team of the Year: unique team categories (form)**

The two unique team category awards are:

- Financial services regulatory team of the year
- CFIUS team of the year

**Financial services regulatory team of the year:** this award is based on a team's role and impact on innovative projects in areas including: designing systems, programmes, tools or tech for regulatory compliance; significant financial regulatory support on a specific cases or transactions; and influencing the development of policy, framework, and regulation

Judges will focus on innovative work that breaks new ground, sets new precedents, establishes a new benchmark in the market or shifts the regulatory/policy setting. The judges will also consider specific team developments that took place during the review period that enhance a team's capacity of cutting-edge work.

**CFIUS team of the year:** this team award will be subject to the quality and quantity of submissions received. The award will go to the team that had the most impressive record over the review period on innovative CFIUS work that set new precedents or broke new ground. The award will reflect a team's work on matters of exceptional complexity with unique considerations.

The judges will also consider specific team developments that took place during the review period that enhance a team's capacity of cutting-edge work in this field.

### **National Law Firm of the Year (form)**

The national firm award will be given to the most innovative national law firm of 2020. The award will be based on a firm's record giving local law advice on the most innovative cross-border deals across all award practice areas. The award will be based on firms' roles and impact on innovative deals.

Shortlists for national law firm of the year awards will be published.

Complete one National Firm of the Year form. Only brief reference needs to be made to any work submitted under Deal of the Year or Team of the Year forms.

Candidate firms must have an office in the relevant jurisdiction and must have provided local law advice on any cited transactions. We will award national law firm of the year for:

- Argentina
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- Central America (excluding Panama)
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Mexico
- Nicaragua
- Peru
- Panama
- Uruguay

*Note: Awarding of the Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Uruguay firm of the year award is subject to quantity and quality of submissions received.*

### **National Law Firm: Team of the Year (form)**

These national law firm practice area-specific awards will be presented to the team that had the best record in providing local law advice on the most innovative cross-border deals in the three designated areas:

- **Banking and finance:** based primarily on roles in loan transactions and project financings.
- **Capital markets:** based primarily on debt and equity-linked, equity, high-yield and structured finance and securitisation.
- **Corporate:** based primarily on M&A and private equity transactions.

There will be a shortlist and one winner in each of the three team categories for each of the following jurisdictions:

- Brazil
- Canada
- Central America
- Mexico
- Andean states (Estados Andinos)\*
- Southern Cone (Cono Sur) countries\*

*\*The Andean states are Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru; the Southern Cone countries are Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.*

Complete one National Law Firm-Team of the Year form for each category in which you are nominating your firm. In each case, use the deals appendix to tell us about the deals your firm has worked on that justify the nomination. If a deal has already been submitted as a deal of the year, refer to it briefly on the national form. We would recommend limiting deals to a maximum of six (excluding any deal of the year nominations).

## **Individual awards**

### **Rising Stars ([form](#))**

The awards will recognise three associate/senior associate-level lawyers from each global/international firms AND domestic firms as rising stars.

Candidates from in-house teams will also be considered.

To this end, please list associates/senior associates that had important roles in each deal of the year nomination and use the separate Individual Awards form. Additional information such as CVs, biographies and deal lists are welcome. Successful candidates must have less than 15 years post qualification experience.

### **Outstanding Achievement Award ([form](#))**

While this is largely based on research conducted throughout the year by the IFLR team, you are invited, in the Individual Awards form, to put forward candidates for consideration.

IFLR focuses on achievements in shaping the legal framework and environment, influencing legal practice and mentoring the next generation of lawyers. The focus is primarily on the candidate's impact on the cross-border landscape rather than purely national achievements.

Shortlists for individual awards will not be released and winners will be announced on the night.

### **In-house teams of the year ([form](#))**

In-house legal teams are invited to make nominations across all deal and individual categories. There are three specific awards for in-house teams:

- In-house debt team of the year: for in-house legal teams of investment banks
- In-house equity team of the year: for in-house legal teams of investment banks
- In-house corporate team: for in-house legal teams in corporate entities

The awards will be based on the role teams played on legally innovative transactions. Other developments in the team and innovative projects that impact a team's capacity for complex cross-border legal work will also be considered, as well as a team's impact within the organisation at large.

During the research, we will be exploring further categories to recognise in-house teams across the Americas.

*FAQs below...*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **How do you choose the winners?**

The nominations provided by law firms are part of our decision-making process. The editorial committee will use these, in conjunction with interviews with law firms and in-house counsel, to select the most innovative deals of the year. Ultimately the decision is that of IFLR. It is not the result of a poll.

We find this to be the best way to retain integrity and consistency across all our awards in Europe, Asia, the Americas and the Middle East. Our journalists apply the same analysis and methodology to each. It is not hard to discover the true legal innovation, and the one that has had the greatest market impact.

We find that using a judging committee or selection of clients to pick the winners makes it impossible to retain consistency and comparability across the geographies and years.

### **How do you decide what is innovative?**

When searching for innovation, IFLR looks for new legal structures, deals that overcome new regulatory hurdles and regional firsts that adapt existing technology to local regulation. The difficulty and intricacy of that innovation is assessed, as well as its likely market impact.

The role of the individual law firm on the deal is also considered in order to decide how much credit the firm should receive towards the team of the year awards and national law firm of the year awards. And advising the underwriters is better than advising the ratings agencies.

### **Can I talk to/meet a researcher?**

If you want to talk to or meet a researcher please telephone +44 1326 212451 to arrange an interview.

### **When is the deadline?**

Please send us your submission by January 22 2021.

### **Must deals have reached final close by the end of December 2020?**

Yes. All deals must have reached financial close between the start of January 2020 and the end of December 2020.

### **How many people have you contacted at my firm?**

We may have approached more than one person at each law firm. We would like you to coordinate the response from your firm. If you are not the appropriate person or would prefer us to contact

other people ourselves, please tell us immediately to ensure that your firm is not omitted.

### **How do you divide advertising and editorial?**

There is no connection between advertising and a deal or firm's success in IFLR's surveys or awards. IFLR's awards are built on editorial objectivity.

### **What will you do with information about clients?**

IFLR speaks to in-house contacts to help assess which deals are the most innovative. Our researchers will call contacts that you provide. The contacts will be used for no other purpose than IFLR editorial research.

## **IFLR**

**James Wilson, Awards Editor**

[james.wilson@legalmediagroup.com](mailto:james.wilson@legalmediagroup.com)