



IFLR Middle East Awards 2019

On October 16, 2019, *International Financial Law Review* (IFLR) will present its annual Middle East Awards in Dubai, celebrating the most innovative legal deals of 2018/19 and the firms that completed them. The winners and runners-up will also be presented in the November issue of the magazine. This letter is to invite you to put forward submissions on behalf of your firm, and to explain how this should be done.

Please note that to save overlaps between people at the same firm, we may have only sent the awards guidelines to you. We would like you to coordinate the responses from your firm. If you are not the appropriate person, or would prefer us to contact other people, please tell us immediately to ensure that your firm is not omitted.

Submissions

IFLR's team of journalists will undertake detailed research from a variety of sources. Submissions from firms are a vital part of this research. However, IFLR will also be consulting both private practice lawyers, in-house counsel and financing specialists at investment banks. Final decisions will be made by IFLR, and are entirely independent.

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.

Contact names 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

Please send your submissions to james.wilson@legalmediagroup.com by **June 30 2019**.

If you have any queries, please contact me at james.wilson@legalmediagroup.com or on + 44 (0) 1326 212 451.

Please remember:

- With the exception of the Domestic deal of the year category, IFLR only covers **international deals** with a cross-border element.
- IFLR rewards **legal innovation**. We are not interested in how high value, high-profile or quick the deal was.
- Firms win team of the year categories **for their roles on the most innovative deals**, nothing else.
- We **recommend** submitting **a maximum of 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 EXPLAINED ****

Deals of the year

For all categories except the domestic only deal of the year category, deals must be international. For capital markets transactions, this means more than 20% of the securities must have been sold to investors outside the home market of the issuer or originator. M&A deals must involve a cross-border element and the target must be located in the Middle East. Project financings must be carried out on an international basis.

Complete one of the [Deal of the year award](#) forms to nominate each deal. We suggest you put forward no more than three deals for each category, although you can include more if you wish. Firms can nominate in any or all of the categories listed.

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

- Debt and equity-linked deal of the year
- Domestic deal of the year
- Equity deal of the year
- M&A deal of the year
- Project finance deal of the year
- Restructuring deal of the year

Team of the year

These awards apply to a firm's entire practice group rather than a specific team within it. Firms can nominate themselves in any or all of the categories listed. Complete one of the [Team of the year award](#) forms for each category, using the deals appendix to tell us about the deals your firm 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.

- Debt and equity-linked team of the year
- Equity team of the year
- M&A team of the year
- Pro bono team of the year
- Project finance team of the year
- Restructuring team of the year

National team awards

National team awards will be given to the firm with the best track record in 2018/2019 giving local-law advice on the most innovative international finance deals from the country in question. This includes debt, equity and equity-linked deals, M&A, project finance, and restructurings. (Awarding of the Iraq firm of the year award is subject to submissions received.)

Complete one of the [National team award](#) forms for each country 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 its nomination. If a deal has already been submitted as a deal of the year, just refer to that briefly on the national form.

Law firm of the year for:

- Bahrain
- Egypt
- Iraq
- Jordan
- Kuwait

- Lebanon
- Oman
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- UAE

Rising star law firms

Rising star law firm of the year will be given to a law firm established **after January 1 2014** for its roles providing local law advice on the most innovative international finance deals covered in the award categories.

Please complete the [Rising star law firm](#) form to nominate your firm, and please use the deals appendix to justify its nomination.

Individual awards

These awards will be given to the individuals that stand out in each category as having made a significant impact on the legal landscape in the region through their innovative approach, sufficient to distinguish them from their peers. We welcome nominations and have provided an [Individual awards](#) form. We will also be conducting our own internal research.

- Individual rising star of the year
- Managing partner of the year
- IFLR Women in Business Law award

Rising star: this award will recognise four individual rising stars. Two of the winners will come from international law firms (law firms with their main headquarters outside the region) and two from independent national firms. The winners will be either associates or senior associates with no more than 10 years' post qualification experience.

To nominate an associate, senior or otherwise, from your firm for this award, we request that you please list associates that had significant roles relating to the practice areas we cover in each deal you nominate. We also encourage you to include additional information such as CVs, biographies and deal lists. Please refer to the [Individual awards](#) form.

The winner will be selected after consideration of both the information requested above and subsequent research calls with market participants in the region.

Managing partner: the winner of the managing partner award will be a managing partner of a domestic firm or the Middle East operations of an international firm.

Please refer to the [Individual awards](#) form to nominate a managing partner. We will consider innovative deals that the partner has led on or overseen but we would also encourage you to list worthy developments in your firm over the past 12 months that they have overseen. The award will focus on initiatives that develop and influence legal practice in the market(s).

Woman in business law: the winner of the Woman in business law award will be based on recent work and achievements. We will focus on anything that breaks new ground and sets an example for women in business law.

In-house team of the year and Islamic bank of the year

The In-house team of the year award will be given to the in-house legal team a banks, based on its role in innovative deals closed between July 1 2018 and June 30 2019.

The Islamic bank award will go to a purely Islamic bank and will be based on the bank's work over the research period and innovative achievements.

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 (0) 1326 212 451 to arrange an interview.

When is the deadline?

Please send us your submission by June 30 2019.

Must deals have reached final close by the end of June 2019?

Yes. All deals must have reached financial close between July 1 2018 and June 30 2019.

How many people have you contacted at my firm?

We have usually only approached 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 the success of a deal or firm in IFLR's surveys or awards. The IFLR legal 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.

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