

IFLR Middle East Awards 2021

On October 13 2021, IFLR will present its IFLR Middle East Awards 2021, recognising the most legally innovative deals from across the region, and the firms and lawyers behind them. You are invited to put forward nominations on behalf of your firm.

These awards cover the period July 1 2020 to June 30 2021. All deals must have closed in this period to be considered. The deadline for nominations is July 8 2021.

We may have sent the awards invitation to more than one contact at your firm. Please coordinate the responses from your firm. If you are not the appropriate contact, please tell us immediately.

Nominations

IFLR's team of journalists will undertake research using a variety of sources, *including* submissions made earlier in the year to IFLR1000. However, direct award entries of deals, teams, firms and individuals by law firms and in-house teams are a vital part of the process. IFLR will also consult private practice lawyers and in-house counsel. Final decisions will be made by IFLR and are entirely independent.

The award categories and details of how to make entries are listed below. You are invited to make nominations 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:

All nomination forms must be uploaded [HERE](#) by **July 8 2021**. For any queries, including extension requests, please contact Editor for Awards Research Sophie Astles (sophie.astles@euromoneyplc.com)

Yours sincerely,
Sophie Astles
Editor, Awards Research
Euromoney PLC

Submission criteria

- IFLR only covers **international deals** – all work must be cross-border, except for the Domestic deal of the year category
- 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 below and on the submission form
- If you are only going to submit in a handful of categories, you are strongly recommended to submit for 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. We only require a **brief explanation** of why the deal was innovative, so it is possible to be efficient and concise with submissions
- Rather than submit multiple documents, you will notice that the **submissions forms are multi-purpose** – please use the attachments as templates for all your entries

Deals of the year

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 the period mentioned above. Complete one [Deal of the year form](#) for each deal entry. We suggest putting forward no more than three deals for each category. Firms can nominate in any or all the following categories:

- 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

Note: we will endeavour to produce shortlists across all these categories but will retain some flexibility to adapt to the strength of entries and other limitations, such as confidentiality.

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

For all categories except the Domestic deal of the year category, deals must be cross-border:

- Capital markets transactions: securities must have been sold to investors outside the issuer or originator's home jurisdiction. Ideally 20% or more should have been allocated internationally
- M&A: the buyer and target must be in a different jurisdiction, with the target located in the Middle East or Egypt
- Project financing: financings must be carried out on an international basis, with the project itself located in the Middle East or Egypt. Please note that hydrocarbon projects will no longer be considered.

Domestic deals do not need to be cross-border but must fall within the corporate finance categories: debt or equity capital markets, M&A, project finance or restructuring.

Team of the year

These apply to a firm's entire practice group, rather than a specific team within it, and will consider work completed across the entire region. Firms can enter any or all the categories listed below. Complete one [Team of the year form](#) for each category, using the deals appendix to tell us about the deals your firm has worked on to justify your nomination. If a deal has already been entered 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
- Project finance team of the year
- Restructuring team of the year

Pro bono firm of the year

Judges will look at the pro bono projects that were driven by or had significant involvement from Middle East-based teams. Judges will consider the work the lawyers did, the commitment and impact of the project and aspects to the project that show an innovative approach to pro bono, whether by using legal tools or expertise or in another way. Projects must have had significant milestones between July 1 2020 and June 30 2021.

National firm of the year

National firm awards will be given to a firm based solely on its best track record in providing local law advice on the most innovative deals closed between July 1 2020 and June 30 2021. This includes banking and finance, capital markets, M&A, private equity, projects and restructuring. Law firms must have a registered office in the relevant jurisdiction. We recommend listing no more than six deals per form on top of any deal of the year nominations, or ten deals if there are no deal of the year nominations.

Complete one [National firm of the year form](#) for each jurisdiction you are nominating your firm in. Use the deals appendix to tell us about the deals your firm has worked on that support its nomination. If a deal has already been entered as a Deal of the year, please 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

*Awarding of Iraq will be dependent on quality of nominations

[Rising star law firm](#)

Rising star law firm of the year will be given to a law firm established **after January 1 2016** for its role providing local law advice on the most innovative deals covered in the award categories.

Please complete the [Rising star law firm form](#) to nominate your firm, using the deal appendix to support the nomination. Judges will focus on recent work closed during the review period, but will also consider past highlights since the firm's establishment.

[Individual awards](#)

These awards will be given to individuals that stand out in each category as having made a substantial impact on the legal landscape, sufficient to distinguish them from their peers. We welcome direct nominations. The categories are:

- Individual rising star of the year
- Managing partner of the year
- IFLR Women dealmakers hall of fame
- Lifetime achievement 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. Ideal candidates will be senior associates and must have under 15 years' post-qualification experience. Judges will consider candidates from in-house teams.

We also encourage you to include additional information such as CVs, biographies and deal lists. You can also list associates that had important roles on your key deals on the Deal of the year forms. The winner will be selected after consideration of both written nominations and research calls.

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.

We will consider innovative deals that the partner has led on or overseen, but we would also encourage you to list noteworthy developments in your firm over the past 12 months that they have presided over. The award will focus on initiatives that develop and influence legal practice in the market(s).

IFLR Women dealmakers hall of fame: this is renamed from the Women in Business Law Award. The award will be based on recent work and achievements. Judges will focus on work that breaks new ground and sets an example for women in business law in the region. Past winners of the award will not be eligible.

Lifetime achievement: Recommendations for this award can come from within your firm or further afield (private practice or regulator). The candidate must be a lawyer, and the focus is on an individual who has recently retired or is nearing retirement. Over the course of their career, the winner will have made a significant impact on market practice, in shaping standards and influencing the market legal framework, and in mentoring the next generation of lawyers. Judges will look primarily at achievements or a career that has impacted at a cross-border level.

In-house team of the year

There will be six in-house team awards:

- Investment bank in-house team
- Regional bank in-house team
- Corporate in-house team of the year
- Islamic bank of the year
- ESG in-house team of the year*
- In-house tech innovation award*

*Separate forms - please see below

In-house team(s) of the year: will go to an in-house team that has demonstrated outstanding work on legally innovative projects that closed during the research period. This category is open to in-house legal teams whose work was performed on financial transactions from both the debt and equity sides. All banks can compete for the investment bank award. The regional award is for banks headquartered in the region.

Corporate in-house team of the year: will go to an in-house team that has demonstrated outstanding work on legally innovative projects that closed during the research period. This category is open to in-house legal teams for their work on financial transactions from both the debt and equity sides. It is open to a variety of corporate financing transactions, including M&As, restructurings and more.

Islamic bank award: will go to an Islamic bank headquartered in the region and will be based on the bank's work and achievements over the research period.

Teams are invited to make nominations. Law firms can also nominate in-house teams.

ESG In-house team of the year

This will go to a bank or corporate team that has demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental, social and corporate governance over the research period. This could include internal and external initiatives, aimed at improving sustainability, diversity and making a positive social impact. The award will be based on specific initiatives with milestones in the awards review period.

In-house tech innovation award

This award will be given to the in-house team that demonstrates the ability to use a legal tech solution in a way that is pioneering, particularly creative, or utilises a new or untested legal tech product to great effect. Legal tech need not necessarily be specialist legal software, it could be a more general software package re-purposed for a legal department's use.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do you choose the winners?

The nominations provided by law firms and in-house teams are part of our decision-making process, as are any relevant IFLR1000 submissions. The internal judging panel 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 and we do not use an external panel of judges.

We find this to be the best way to retain integrity and consistency across all our awards in Europe, Africa, Asia-Pacific, the Americas and the Middle East. Our journalists apply the same analysis and methodology to each region. It is not hard to discover the true legal innovation, and the firms and deals that have 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.

Can I talk to/meet a researcher?

If you want to talk to us please contact awards editor Sophie Astles – Sophie.Astles@euromoneyplc.com

When is the deadline?

Please send us your submission by July 8 2021.

Must deals have reached final close by the end of June 2021?

Yes. All deals must have reached financial close between July 1 2020 and June 30 2021. Deals that have been announced or signed cannot be considered.

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 purpose other than IFLR editorial research.