


CLIPPING MIRANDA				 Miranda & Associados Sociedade de Advogados, SP, RL
MEIO	Africa Legal			
Nº PAG.	2	DATA	12 de novembro de 2019	

Africa is Our Past and Future

Lisbon-based firm Miranda & Associados was named International Law Firm of the Year at the African Legal Awards. Bernadette Wicks spoke to managing partner Diogo Xavier da Cunha about this unprecedented success.



Over the course of the last decade, the untapped potential of Africa's legal markets has generated increasing interest from the global industry, says da Cunha.

"A number of international firms have only recently woken up to the vast opportunities that Africa affords as a key strategic market but we've been working in Africa for more than 30 years, now. And from the beginning, we knew how special it was."

The firm's combination of the highest international standards and extensive local expertise is what secured Miranda & Associados the prestigious title of 'International Law Firm of the Year' at the African Legal Awards in September.

Headquartered in Lisbon, Portugal, Miranda & Associados is the first firm based outside of South Africa or the United Kingdom to take home this coveted award.

"And we're incredibly proud of that," says Da Cunha. "We are also a relatively small firm. But we really do have a solid track record in Africa. The simple truth is that we would be nothing without the continent and we recognize that in our culture and in our values. Africa is our past and Africa is our future".


An international full-service legal practice, Miranda & Associados represents some of the world's largest multinational corporations and helps them navigate some of its most challenging emerging markets.

"To enjoy success in Africa takes effort and a culture of proximity. You need to be present and engage with the local communities," says Da Cunha. "It's difficult to achieve from afar and impossible without good people on the ground".

Miranda & Associados first started working in Angola and was the first Portuguese firm to set up a practice in Africa.

"Our founder, Agostinho Pereira de Miranda, was in-house counsel for what was then Gulf Oil (now part of Chevron) before he opened his own practice. And when we started, we were almost solely focused on oil and gas work but we grew, over time, to be more full-service with a strong sector focus".

Da Cunha describes Miranda & Associados' expansion in Africa as "relatively simple".

CLIPPING MIRANDA				 Miranda & Associados Sociedade de Advogados, SP, RL
MEIO	Africa Legal			
Nº PAG.	2	DATA	12 de novembro de 2019	

"We started expanding to markets within Africa's Portuguese-speaking world - including Guinea Bisau, Cape Verde and Mozambique. When we ran out of Portuguese speaking countries, we decided to move to jurisdictions outside of the continent's Portuguese-speaking world. We felt Francophone jurisdictions made sense and so that's where we focused our expansion. We started with Gabon and then moved on to the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Cameroon, Cote d' Ivore and, last year, Senegal," he says.

Responsiveness has always been critical for the team at Miranda & Associados.

"It still is today, in the completely new world we find ourselves in. But important too, is quality - trying always to excel and to provide a service in these jurisdictions that is on par with the service our clients are accustomed to in their own countries. That's always been our focus," explains Da Cunha.

Miranda & Associados' has a strong and diverse culture, reflected in the 23 nationalities that comprise the firm's workforce and its presence in 16 countries. This brings with it the multitude of benefits of a variety of different perspectives and allows the firm to act as an effective bridge and to build strong ties with the local communities it touches.

"It's taken time to develop this culture. We try to think it's about the values of the firm: the culture of inclusion and the fact that we try, in as much as possible, to bring people into the fold who share our values and appreciate that culture. But deep down, the glue that holds it all together, is respecting each other. And that's critical," says Da Cunha.