

# Go Far Together (GFT)

Our network of relationship firms across Africa



*“If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together” (an African proverb).*

## Overview

We work across Africa, from our global offices, via our Go Far Together (GFT) relationship firm network, which enables us to build on our successful local relationships with top tier law firms on the continent, ensuring our clients receive the best legal counsel, wherever they do business.

This GFT network includes the most reputable firms from across the African continent, to ensure consistency, quality and a comprehensive legal service to our clients. We work regularly with these local lawyers, many for several years, so we know them, and they know us, very well. This means we are confident in recommending them to our clients, and our close collaboration guarantees the delivery of quick, efficient and high-quality work, in keeping with our internationally recognised standard. As a result, we have worked in over 45 African countries and have good contacts in every country on the continent.

GFT is an internal, non-market facing proposition only, where details of those we work with are not made public on any of our external sites. The emphasis is on building strong relationships, rather than establishing any formal partnership structure/alliance or setting up offices in each country.

The Hogan Lovells Africa team includes a senior lawyer, Alison Diarra, who is dedicated to overseeing the development of our GFT relationships and managing quality control in the work they do with us. Alison is bi-lingual (French and English), lived in Mali for 18 years, and acts as the main point of contact for our relationship firms in Africa. She liaises with them regularly on client matters and requests, so has an in-depth understanding of their specialisms, skills and responsiveness. Although based in London, she works closely with our Africa team globally to co-ordinate responses from each of the countries and ensure their deliverables meet the set requirements. This ensures timely deliverables and quality control.

# GFT Programme

In 2017, we established our GFT programme to make the network more than a list of law firms we work with. The programme brings together experienced lawyers, fosters a community for sharing referrals, knowledge and expertise, and develops mutually beneficial relationships. We also assist with capacity building wherever possible. We do all this in the following ways:

- **Joint pitching and co-counsel initiative:** If a law firm brings us a deal, we will ensure that they have an equal seat at the table for the transaction, so the amount of work carried out by them is maximized as much as possible.
- **BD opportunities:** We proactively seek to identify and target potential clients together; and work to produce relevant thought leadership. For example, our “A Local Perspective” initiative - joint articles authored by an associate from HL and another from a GFT firm, developing networks and skills to improve collaboration.
- **GFT Symposium:** In-person workshops for senior partners from GFT firms, focusing on “The business of law”, and virtual **GFT discussion groups** via Zoom call to share knowledge and on-the-ground information.
- **Training:** Online training courses and bespoke training sessions, either in person or via webinar, for associates from our GFT firms.
- **Networking:** Attending and organising events across Africa and inviting GFT contacts to events in our HL offices. We have also established an Africa Future Leaders Group – a network of African young professionals to connect, network, share ideas and experiences – in which we involve associates from our GFT firms.
- **Secondments:** We offer secondments to our London office for lawyers from GFT firms that we work closely with, allowing them to spend up to three months with our teams and gain a better understanding of the international aspects of deals. Where we have worked with a GFT firm on a major transaction we have also seconded an associate to sit in our office, but their billings continue to accrue to their local law firm. We plan to extend this secondment programme to other HL offices.

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