



Law Society of Zimbabwe

Helping Zimbabwe's lawyers face globalisation

Alison Hook

International Sub-Contracting – working with International Lawyers

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Introduction



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- What do we mean by international sub-contracting?
- What sort of work might be available to lawyer/law firm from Zimbabwe?
- What international law firms/general counsel look for in a local partner?
- What are the barriers to getting more international work?
- And how to overcome them..

What is the potential international legal market for Zimbabwe?



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- International businesses entering (or leaving!) your market (e.g. by investment or joint venturing etc with local businesses)
- Venture capital investments (e.g Spear capital in Dendairy)
- Government fund raising in international capital markets
- Participation in international development funded projects focused on infrastructure (e.g. World Bank, IFC, AfDB – some problems now but in future..)
- Regional integration opportunities (SADC wide)
- Zimbabwean businesses with outward looking ambitions (fastjet, esaja.com)

Potential international work for Zimbabwe lawyers



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When?: Arising out of revived economic interest in country's long term growth potential

Who from?: African funds/investors/brands/entrepreneurs; Foreign VCFs; Multilateral and bilateral donors; foreign businesses; referral law firms

What?: Local elements involved in power, transport, utilities and road infrastructure and mining projects, local (and regional) legal advice for investors (nb. not just on usual corporate matters but environmental, land use/land title issues, employment, risk assessment and mitigation, country of origin compliance checks (e.g. BA, FCPA etc), local due diligence

What international partners want from their local counsel



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- Evidence of experience or involvement in similar previous projects
- Sectoral knowledge, where necessary
- Good service (information flows, prompt action, follow through)
- Transparent billing (not necessarily cheapest)
- Thoughtful value added (thinking round the problem at hand not just answering the questions)
- Local (and regional) insight

The crumbs of the cake problem



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Common complaint – “too much of the work goes to foreign lawyers and we just get the crumbs from the table”.

Why is this?

- Some international money tied to particular advisors – foreign lawyer is unavoidable but you might be able to get a higher proportion of the work if you improve their margins.
- Procurement procedures – access to tenders
- Frustrating tendency to prefer the foreign option
- General counsel want a simpler life – may manage their interests in countries where they don't have big interests through a single law firm.

How to get more of the cake in future?



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1. Prepare your firm – think about service delivery, confidentiality etc and how you can improve efficiency in this area.
2. Develop your networks within the region and in business more generally (e.g. Half FDI in EAC from Kenya)
3. Develop your profile and get known outside Zimbabwe - some work goes to foreign lawyers because they (and their track records) can be found online (websites, directories etc).
4. Develop your expertise – Get to know the law, issues, people and businesses in key economic areas.
5. Develop your messages – the services you are selling to potential foreign clients are different to your domestic services

Success for a law firm today requires internal management, sales and marketing not only expertise in the law.