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Helping Zimbabwe's lawyers face globalisation

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Possible forms of cooperation with foreign law firms

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Why cooperate?



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For foreign law firms

- provide services they cannot, or do not want to, provide – e.g. to support investment, debt financing, infrastructure projects, as part of regional advice (e.g. to a client wanting to do something with SADC and needing advice on all SADC members) etc
- in order to advertise to clients they have a pan-regional offering

For Zimbabwe law firms

- access to new clients/branding
- economies of scale/sharing back office
- sharing of experience/technology transfer

Forms of cooperation



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Individual lawyers

- Employment of a foreign lawyer/by a foreign lawyer
- Partnership with foreign lawyers

Law firms

- Marketing cooperations (e.g referral networks ie. Lex Mundi, best friends)
- Law Firm Networks and Alliances (e.g. DLA Piper/ENSafrica networks)
- Partial integration models (joint ventures, *vereins* etc)
- Full mergers

Regulatory issues



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- Which foreign lawyers? (e.g. WTO list versus approved list etc)
- To do what? (e.g. full/limited licences)
- What kind of structures? (e.g. partnership, limited liability, ABS etc)
- Approval processes
- How to maintain regulatory oversight and to what level? – regulatory/disciplinary recognition agreements with home country bars?
- Insurance/social security/compensation fund contributions
- Fees
- Code of Conduct application and challenges e.g. names of firms
- Mix of domestic regulation and international rules (e.g. WTO, trade agreements)

World Trade Organisation



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- The General Agreement On Trade In Services (GATS) covers trade in legal services
- Zimbabwe has been a member of the WTO since 5 March 1995
- No commitments on legal services (like most African countries)
- IBA GATS handbook
- IBA resolutions

Models (1)



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IBA resolution on transfer of skills:

- 'WHEREAS the extent and the modalities of Skills Transfer in cross-border legal services by Foreign Lawyers in a given Host Jurisdiction necessarily depend, inter alia, on the extent to which Foreign Lawyers in such Host Jurisdiction are permitted to practice law and to associate with Local Lawyers;
- WHEREAS a regime permitting the association of Foreign Lawyers with Local Lawyers likely provides the most efficient and effective means of Skills Transfer by permitting Local Lawyers to work with more experienced Foreign Lawyers within the same firm, thus enabling them to gain practical experience and substantive knowledge in a way that would otherwise be impermissible due to the risk of breach of confidentiality'

Models (2)



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IBA resolution on transfer of skills (contd.)

- '(B) A Foreign Lawyer who is permitted to practice through an establishment in a Host Jurisdiction in association with Local Lawyers may be required, in the course of his/ her practice, to provide, directly or indirectly, individual training and mentoring in relevant legal skills and disciplines, as well as supervised work experience, to Local Lawyers with whom the Foreign Lawyer practices in such association.'

Models (3)



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EU lawyers' establishment directive (98/5/EC), Article 11

- '(3) The host Member State shall take the measures necessary to permit joint practice also between:
 - (a) several lawyers from different Member States practising under their home-country professional titles;
 - (b) one or more lawyers covered by point (a) and one or more lawyers from the host Member State.

The manner in which such lawyers practice jointly in the host Member State shall be governed by the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of that State.'

Next steps



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- IBA handbook in preparation to guide bars through the problems
- What are your views?
- Thank you!