

GIR 100

Introduction

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The GIR 100 is an annual guide to the world's leading cross-border investigations practices. Based on extensive research, we have selected 100 firms from around the world able to handle sophisticated cross-border government-led and internal investigations.

For corporate counsel, knowing which firm, or firms, to turn to during a crisis – sometimes at a moment's notice – is of the utmost importance. In the most extreme cases, getting the right external counsel – with experienced people in the necessary locations – can mean the difference between sinking and swimming for a company under government scrutiny.

Hence the need for a publication like the GIR 100.

Our research is essentially a vetting process: we review the data supplied to us by each firm with the aim of selecting 100 firms from around the world that we can recommend for handling corporate internal investigations and government investigations.

In preparation for the GIR 100, we asked numerous firms the same question: when pitching for work to potential clients, how do you persuade a general counsel that your firm is a better choice than your competitors?

Because of course, one can regale a potential client with a multitude of facts about the firm: the number of partners and associates at one's disposal; the ex-government enforcers with inside knowledge; the multitude of offices in far-flung locations; the in-house forensic accounting team.

These are all important – perhaps vital, especially on larger matters.

But ultimately we were told by many different firms, of all shapes and sizes, that it boils down to two things: experience and trust.

First, experience. Knowing how an investigation is supposed to work is one thing, but getting out there and actually doing it is something else.

Take witness interviews. We've heard anecdotes of how being a female lawyer can work to one's advantage when interviewing male witnesses in some jurisdictions, but has quite the opposite effect elsewhere. And should one play good cop, bad cop? Or a little of both, depending on the interviewee? What about bringing in local counsel to pick up on details and nuances in conversation that even a seasoned DC lawyer, for example, might fail to spot?

And when dealing with prosecutors, do you go, tail between your legs, with the results of a corporate internal investigation neatly packaged up, and drop it into the government's lap? Or do you go in teeth bared? Do you go in at all? And if it gets to the stage where you're negotiating a financial settlement with the government, do you follow the advice of one lawyer who said, "Whatever you do, never be the first to name a number." Or do you try to frame the debate right from the word go?

This isn't something learned at law school: this comes from hard work and experience on the ground. Has a firm carried out an investigation in country X before? Has it carried out multiple investigations there, over many years – meaning it would have substantial institutional memory when it comes to handling probes in that jurisdiction? Has that firm handled a cross-border investigation with multiple government agencies each looking for a scalp, with competing interests, conflicting laws, overlapping jurisdictions? How many such matters has it handled? Where? Which industries? What were the outcomes?

And then there's trust. The trust of the client, certainly – particularly those with whom the firm has worked for many years, perhaps in many different areas of law. Also, trust from other law firms: trust in a firm's ability to handle an investigation and to deal with the outcome of that investigation; and to work side by side with that firm positively and productively, whatever issues may arise. And, finally, trust from enforcers – an incalculable but supremely valuable asset when it comes to negotiations with government agencies.

When we were researching each of the 100 firms that appear in this publication, that's what we placed most emphasis upon: experience and trust.

We're confident that each firm appearing in this guide – whether it's a multinational law firm with an army of investigations specialists, or a regional firm whose lawyers know the local legal terrain inside out – has substantial experience in handling corporate internal investigations and government-led investigations. And, accordingly, each has earned the trust of its clients, of other law firms and, importantly, of the government agencies in the jurisdictions in which it operates.

Our conclusions are based largely upon submissions we received – around three-quarters of the firms herein supplied full, comprehensive submissions detailing every aspect of their investigations practices – and from the dozens of phone calls and meetings we carried out with partners from the firms we list.

The results are also based on our own specialist, in-house knowledge. Our team of reporters, based in London and Washington, DC, cover the work of these 100 firms and others all day, every day. What's more, we were also able to draw upon – and contribute to – the work of colleagues on our sister publications, not least Who's Who Legal, whose research for its Investigations and Business Crime Defence editions has been invaluable in undertaking this project.

Finally, Global Investigations Review is sincerely grateful to all the firms who provided information for the GIR 100. We appreciate it was no mean feat, and in many cases saw firms burning the midnight oil to get the submission in on time. We hope you will agree that the results are well worth it.

Methodology

We invited firms across the world to make a GIR 100 submission to Global Investigations Review. To do so, each firm was asked to complete a detailed questionnaire on its investigations and white-collar crime practice.

The questionnaire comprised two parts. The first aimed to gather information on the characteristics of a firm's investigations practice. Here, we requested public, on-the-record information that would enable us to write a profile of the firm. We wanted to know about the firm's clients, its star partners, its most noteworthy investigations, together with the achievements and developments the firm's investigations practice is proud of – and able to tell the world about.

The second part takes a look below the surface. We wanted to provide firms with an opportunity to demonstrate their experience and current activity levels, without breaking any ethical rules. For this section, we gave firms the opportunity to submit information confidentially. This has enabled us, first, to recommend a firm to readers on the basis of its current practice (rather than past, public successes), and second, to rank firms using objective data for the GIR 30. We asked for detailed information on the investigations and monitorships the firm has carried out over the past two years. We also looked at billable hours, partner travel, government experience and more.

Around a quarter of the firms featured in this guide did not provide a full submission. In most cases, where we strongly believed a firm should feature in the 100, we arranged a telephone call with the head of practice or another partner to discuss the firm's investigations experience. For these firms we have written shorter profiles.

Addleshaw Goddard

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld

Allen & Overy

Anderson Mori & Tomotsune

Arnold & Porter

Arthur Cox

Bär & Karrer

Baker & McKenzie

Baker Botts

BCL Burton Copeland

Bennett Jones

Blake Cassels & Graydon

Brown Rudnick

Cadwalader Wickersham & Taft

Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton

Clifford Chance

Corker Binning

Covington & Burling
Cravath Swaine & Moore
Crowell & Moring
Cuatrecasas Gonçalves Pereira
Davis Polk & Wardwell
Day Pitney
De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek
Debevoise & Plimpton
Dechert
DLA Piper
Egorov Puginsky Afanasiev & Partners
Estudio Durrieu
Eversheds
Feigen Graf
FeldensMadruga
Foley & Lardner
Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer
Fried Frank Harris Shriver & Jacobson
Gibson Dunn & Crutcher
Goltsblat BLP
Goodwin Procter
Gowlings
Greenberg Traurig
Herbert Smith Freehills
Hogan Lovells
Holland & Knight
Homburger
Hunton & Williams
Jenner & Block
Johnson Winter & Slattery
Jun He
K&L Gates
Kim & Chang
King & Spalding
King & Wood Mallesons
Kingsley Napley

Kirkland & Ellis
Lalive
Latham & Watkins
Lenz & Staehelin
Levy & Salomão Advogados
Linklaters
Mayer Brown
McGuireWoods
Miller & Chevalier Chartered
Morrison & Foerster
Morvillo
Morvillo Abramowitz Grand Iason & Anello
Nagashima Ohno & Tsunematsu
Nishimura & Asahi
Norton Rose Fulbright
Nortons
O'Melveny & Myers
Paul Hastings
Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison
Perkins Coie
Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan
Ropes & Gray
Schellenberg Wittmer
Shearman & Sterling
Sidley Austin
Simmons & Simmons
Simpson Thacher & Bartlett
Siqueira Castro Advogados
Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom
Slaughter and May
Squire Patton Boggs
Stephenson Harwood
Steptoe & Johnson
Studio Legale Pisano
Sullivan & Cromwell
Taylor Wessing

TozziniFreire

Trench Rossi e Watanabe

Vinson & Elkins

Von Wobeser y Sierra

Weil Gotshal & Manges

White & Case

Wiersholm

Williams & Connolly

Willkie Farr & Gallagher

WilmerHale

WongPartnership