

Top Legal Talent Transition: Five Shearman Lawyers Join Ashurst in UK and Asia



Ashurst, a prominent UK law firm, has announced that five lawyers from the renowned US law firm Shearman & Sterling will be joining their ranks as partners in various locations. This development comes just two days after Shearman & Sterling and Allen & Overy revealed their plans for a merger.

The lawyers joining Ashurst's energy and infrastructure practices are Sanja (Sonny) Udovicic, Julia Derrick, Anna Chung, Jean-Louis Neves Mandelli, and Scott Baggett. Julia Derrick is returning to Ashurst after a brief stint at Shearman & Sterling lasting nine months. The new partners will be based in different offices - Udovicic and Derrick in London, Chung in Seoul, and Neves Mandelli and Baggett in Singapore.

Ashurst highlighted that the team of lawyers possesses extensive experience in advising both sponsors and lenders on project development and finance matters across the globe. Notably, they were involved in providing counsel to NEOM Company, a Saudi Arabian property developer, for the Helios Project. This project aims to establish a \$6.5 billion green hydrogen and ammonia production facility. Shearman & Sterling expressed their well wishes for the departing group.

In a significant move, Shearman & Sterling, originally founded in New York, and Allen & Overy, established in London, jointly announced their plans to merge pending partner votes at both firms. If the merger proceeds, it would create a combined entity boasting approximately 3,900 lawyers and generating \$3.4 billion in global revenue.

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Ashurst's recent expansion follows its merger with South Korean law firm HwaHyun in December 2022. This merger positioned Ashurst as the first international law firm to practice Korean law and hire local attorneys in the country since the opening of the legal market to foreign law firms in 2011.

The addition of the five lawyers from Shearman & Sterling to Ashurst's team bolsters the firm's capabilities and strengthens their presence in key locations such as London, Seoul, and Singapore. These lawyers bring with them valuable expertise in energy and infrastructure matters, which aligns with Ashurst's focus areas.

Ashurst has a reputation for providing high-quality legal services to clients worldwide, and their expansion strategy demonstrates their commitment to offering comprehensive expertise across different jurisdictions. By attracting top legal talent, Ashurst aims to enhance their ability to serve clients in complex cross-border transactions and projects.

The legal industry continues to witness notable movements and shifts as law firms seek to adapt to changing market dynamics and client demands. The merger plans between Shearman & Sterling and Allen & Overy indicate a strategic response to the evolving legal landscape, as firms look to consolidate resources and expand their global reach.

As the legal market becomes increasingly competitive, law firms are focusing on talent acquisition and strengthening their practice areas to provide clients with comprehensive and specialized services. The addition of the Shearman & Sterling lawyers to Ashurst's team exemplifies this trend, as the firm seeks to reinforce its energy and infrastructure practices with highly experienced professionals.

Overall, the recent developments highlight the dynamic nature of the legal industry, where firms are proactively responding to market changes through mergers and strategic hiring. Ashurst's expansion through the addition of five talented lawyers from Shearman & Sterling positions them for continued success in the global legal arena, enabling them to better serve their clients' needs across various jurisdictions and sectors.