

The past 12 months have been marked by ongoing uncertainty in the world's financial markets, coupled with the deep sense of shock engendered by the disasters affecting Japan. In these uncertain times, the actions undertaken in the name of corporate responsibility are of increasing importance. We believe that law firms have a unique role to play in driving the corporate responsibility agenda forward together with our clients and our people.

Clients and markets

Supporting our clients

For Linklaters in Paris, as in all of our offices, corporate responsibility is about achieving our strategic priorities through responsible relationships with our people, the communities around us, the environment and also with our clients.

As a law firm, our primary responsibility is to ensure that the advice we provide to our clients is of the highest technical quality.

In response to the changing business landscape which our clients face, many of them have chosen, like us, to place corporate responsibility at the heart of their corporate strategy. For Linklaters in Paris, this has become a subject of shared interest with our clients and has allowed us to build client relationships that go beyond the purely legal.

Aligning ourselves with the concerns and objectives of our clients is of fundamental importance to us. In the last year, we welcomed the head of corporate responsibility for a CAC 40 company to a presentation aimed at identifying similarities in the approaches adopted by our two organisations. We have also recently welcomed senior female in-house counsel to share their thoughts on the requirement for an increased number of women on the boards of listed companies in France.

Supporting the market

We continually seek to engage with the wider markets in which we do business, thereby contributing to the development of the legal environment that affects our clients. This year, we have hosted and participated in various conferences, including: "Obligations Foncières: The French Business Model of Covered Bonds – Security, Transparency and Stability"; "Offshore wind farm projects: lessons learned from our European experience and the French procurement programme"; and "Is the economic value of a company taken into account in French restructurings?".

Lawyers from our Paris, Hong Kong and Shanghai offices recently participated in the Paris Europlace International Financial Forum about the challenges currently facing the financial sector, where they led a session on "Offshore Renminbi Financing and China Cross-border Investments". Some 200 people, including many of our clients, attended the session, a sign of the markets' growing interest in diverse financing routes.

People

Diversity and inclusion

Linklaters has a long history of involvement in projects which favour diversity and inclusion. One example is the launch of a "diversity scholarship", together with the French university Sciences-Po. The winning candidate for 2011, based on academic performance and social criteria, has been given the opportunity to complete an internship at the Paris office and has been mentored by one of our lawyers.

Diversity within the senior ranks of lawyers remains a challenge which we continue to tackle.

Learning and development

The training and professional development of our staff and lawyers is of paramount importance to Linklaters.

We review our performance and are attentive to any drop in satisfaction regarding our Knowledge & Learning approach internally.

Below are a number of examples of our training approach in practice:

- > Total hours of training undertaken in 2011: 6,365
- > Average number of hours per year per lawyer: 27
- > Average number of hours per year per employee: 11.5



Local highlights

300

people

76

lawyers and members of Business Services involved in charity work and pro bono

2,170

hours dedicated to charity work and pro bono

27

hours of training per lawyer

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> 95 lawyers attended programmes at the Linklaters Law and Business School (55% of the total number of lawyers)

We aim to provide our lawyers and business services staff with the opportunity to spend time in another office or, when the business need arises, to spend time with one of our clients. This year 24 of our people were seconded to or from the Paris office and 13 lawyers spent time out at a client.

Listening to our people

For the second year in a row we carried out an internal satisfaction survey to give our people the opportunity to voice their concerns and to let us know what they like about working at Linklaters. The 2011 results were, for the most part, an improvement on those of the preceding year, perhaps owing at least in part to actions put in place to improve our working environment following on from comments made in the survey in 2010. We will continue to learn from the feedback from this year.

Community

Our community investment programme focuses on “Learn for Work” which uses our skills to help disadvantaged young people build their aspirations, and “Venture Catalysts”, which helps not-for-profit organisations and entrepreneurs grow their capabilities. In recognition of our work in this area, we have recently been awarded the “Jury’s Favourite” prize at the recent Mecenova awards, presented by Jeannette Bougrab, French Minister for Young People and the Community, and Claude Bébear, President of IMS and former CEO of AXA Group.

Learn for Work

We have provided both legal and financial support in order to help set up the Réseau Etincelle, an organisation which helps young adults who have left school with no qualifications to recognise professional opportunities and to plan for a successful future.

We continue to support the École de la 2^{ème} Chance, a school specialising in providing training to young, unqualified adults to help them to realise a professional goal. To this end, three students of the school have completed internships with Linklaters.

Venture Catalysts

We have renewed our long-standing partnership with Adie (Association pour le Droit à l’Initiative Économique), an organisation specialising in micro-credit, for a further three years. We will continue to provide financial support, to give legal training to the Adie advisers and to answer questions via a legal hotline from those setting up a business.

Environment

Climate change

The Paris office Green Committee took the decision this year to carry out our first carbon assessment as part of our ongoing objective to reduce our carbon footprint. We are the first law firm in France to carry out the “Bilan Carbone”. The results of this exercise were presented to the Paris office and together we will continue to look for ways to improve our future performance.

Managing our impact

We continue to monitor our environmental impact. This year’s key indicators are as follows:

- > 2.5% reduction in paper use
- > 3.5% reduction in energy consumption
- > 90% of waste recycled

Case studies



Supporting clients and the market

We hosted a debate attended by clients between the President of Sciences-Po (an elite French university) and the Head of the Cercle de l’Industrie on the subject of “Diversity: a stringent obligation or a competitive advantage?”.



People

We have been awarded the “Trophée de la Diversité” (Diversity Trophy) for “Involving the sector in diversity initiatives”. The award, organised by Diversity Conseil, IMS Entreprendre pour la Cité and the Charte de la Diversité (Diversity Charter), recognises our proactive and communicative attitude towards diversity within the legal sector. The jury particularly appreciated our presentation to the Bar Council about the importance of diversity.



Community

We provide free legal and financial support to Adie, an organisation that helps French people outside the financial mainstream to access credit and set up businesses. We recently launched a constitutional challenge to a French law that acts as an unnecessary barrier to small entrepreneurs setting up in business. Paul Lignièrès, Public Law Partner and Managing Partner of the Paris office, represented Adie in this challenge before the highest court in France.

