

Linklaters

CR / Portugal

With the Portuguese economy significantly affected by the current economic crisis, the Linklaters Lisbon office is playing a key role advising and supporting our clients during this period. This is part of our corporate responsibility commitment: we listen to, understand and respond to the needs of our clients, our people, our communities and the environment.



Clients and markets

International outlook; local knowledge

In 2010/11, at the height of the financial crisis, Linklaters lawyers in Lisbon have been key advisers to our clients in these challenging markets where new strategies and regulations have demanded highly committed and knowledgeable lawyers with a deep understanding of the legal framework and the new market landscape. In addition, our visibility in Lusophone Africa is increasing both within and outside the firm and this has resulted in our receiving new instructions from clients.

Supporting our clients

Over the last year we remained close to our clients by keeping them up to date with the most relevant legal developments taking place in Portugal; for example, through our series of working breakfasts, which covered areas such as tax. Likewise, we put together a cross-practice half-day Restructuring and Insolvency forum and several client seminars, in Lisbon and Oporto, to discuss the new social security code.

Supporting the marketplace

We strongly believe it is our responsibility to contribute to the markets in which our clients operate and to the legal sector more widely. We are active members of a large variety of professional bodies and we have strategic partnerships with key Portuguese universities, where we have regular lecturers.

People

Learning and development

This year the Lisbon office provided access to more than 2,000 training hours for fee-earners and more than 1,000 hours for business services/secretaries.

Our investment includes personal development plans as well as ongoing professional development, offering a wide range of training opportunities within the Linklaters Law and Business School programmes and our Lisbon in-house training programme, which included more than 20 training sessions presented by our top lawyers and university professors.

We also provided English and Spanish language courses for our people.

Leading individuals

More than 25% of our lawyers are consistently recognised as excellent and leaders in their field of law, as quoted by Chambers Europe 2011, a leading directory in this field. Our people are internationally minded, living the values and the culture of the firm.

Flexibility and mobility

This year 16% of our people were on secondment in offices such as London, Amsterdam, Madrid, São Paulo and Brussels. This also included people from Business Services who have been giving support to other offices. The opportunity to work abroad is a strong motivation for the trainees and lawyers that seek to join us. The secondments give our people a closer understanding of our clients' business and the global markets in which we operate, while providing the opportunity to share their skills and expertise more widely.

Listening to our people

The Lisbon office took part in the first Linklaters Global Engagement Survey to seek the views of everyone in the firm on key aspects of working at Linklaters and particularly the degree to which they feel motivated, involved and valued. The 100% response rate and the overall results of the office were clearly among the top of the firm.

Local highlights

56

people

100%

response rate in the Global Engagement Survey

3,000

hours of learning and development for our people

77%

increase in the number of pro bono hours per lawyer, compared with last year

16%

of our people spent time on secondment in another office, 7% more than last year

60%

volunteers in our local workforce

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Performance management

We consistently have 100% of our people taking part in the formal year-end appraisal process and this year we also implemented a mid-year review process with great success. These initiatives help ensure our people develop their skills, experience and careers effectively.

Community

Building relationships with our communities

The Lisbon office continues to be committed to community investment. This year, the office devoted close to 1,050 hours to legal pro bono and non-legal general volunteering efforts. This notable feat was achieved by the participation of more than 55% of the office lawyers and business services.

Pro bono

We have established pro bono protocols that allowed us to increase by 77% the number of pro bono hours per fee-earner, last year. These pro bono protocols were established with our community partners ANDC, GRACE, São Pedro de Barcarena, and OCP. The protocols link our pro bono time with our partners' specific legal expertise relating to corporate, employment and litigation work.

Volunteering

We implemented our first Volunteer Day four years ago. This year we saw that our local volunteers comprised more than 60% of the total local workforce.

Venture Catalysts

One of our global community investment themes is Venture Catalysts which uses our skills and experience to grow the capabilities of not-for-profit organisations. Associação Nacional de Direito ao Crédito (ANDC) supports the social reintegration of those at risk of social and financial exclusion, by helping to set up sustainable micro-businesses.

The Lisbon office continues to provide pro bono legal advice and training on basic business law for charity volunteers.

Learn for Work

Another global theme is Learn for Work, helping young people to grow their skills, aspirations and experience. Centro Social Bairro 6 de Maio focuses on the achievement of young people's potential in Lisbon's 6 de Maio and Estrela de Africa neighbourhoods, two of Lisbon's most deprived areas, through enhancing their personal, social and professional skills. "A Step in the Right Direction Project" has been supported by the Lisbon office since 2008, where volunteers help in a special learning support scheme and funds for university scholarships. The results have been highly rewarding; school marks have improved over the year and for the first time neighbourhood students reached university, which is remarkable considering that before the support was available, no students from these areas had ever gone to university.

Since last year, we have shared this support with Banco Santander, which has a benchmark social responsibility education programme.

Environment

Managing our impacts

After investing in reducing the usage of water, paper and electricity in the last few years, this year we reinforced the need to recycle by introducing new recycle bins for paper and replacing all electrical batteries with rechargeable ones. We also converted used notebooks into new recycled ones. These measures have reduced cost, natural resource use and waste.

Raising awareness

Our office Green Team has continued to implement a number of environment-related activities throughout the year, including raising awareness, especially around World Environment Day on 5 June. This year these initiatives included an in-house competition for the best "green" idea.

Case studies



Sharing expertise

Our office has been an active member of a leading corporate responsibility organisation GRACE (Grupo de Reflexão e Apoio à Cidadania Empresarial), where our COO has been re-elected, this year, for another term as deputy chairman. Over the past year we have shared our corporate responsibility practices with other associates, including several key clients, and participated in G.I.R.O. (GRACE, Intervir, Recuperar, Organizar), the biggest corporate volunteer event in Portugal.



OCPzero

The office supports the Portuguese Chamber Orchestra (OCP) in one of its social and educational projects – OCPzero. This project aims to give young (under 18) and talented people the opportunity to rehearse and study with the same renowned soloists, rehearsal coordinators and maestros that the OCP has for its seasons. As a complement to rehearsals and training, OCPzero also performs in mini-tours of schools and deprived neighbourhoods, thus creating new audiences. This will broaden access to culture, put classical music into context and create new and wider horizons for young people. We support OCPzero with cash donations and, in turn, the young people that have access to the programme give their time, pro bono, to other young people from deprived neighbourhoods. The programme gives young people opportunity to develop their music skills and build their wider aspirations and experience.



“When I first heard of Linklaters, I thought their main focus was law, this was the first image that came to my mind. Today Linklaters is, not only for me but also for the people I meet in the most diverse circumstances, a mix of business, professionalism, ethics and accuracy, together with huge amounts of soul. Linklaters is, after all, a law firm which vigorously focuses on success from, with and to the community. Thanks go to Linklaters, to your people and the selfless and unique way you approach the world.”

Conceição Zagalo GRACE President and IBM representative