

CAPE VERDE CLIENTS NOW DEMAND MORE FROM THEIR LEGAL ADVISERS - RAPOSO BERNARDO

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Unlike in previous years, businesses operating in Cape Verde now place more of an emphasis on quality and price and are less loyal to their legal advisers

Clients in Cape Verde now have much higher expectations in terms of what they want from their legal advisers than they did in previous years, says Nelson Raposo Bernardo, managing partner at Raposo Bernardo & Associados.

"With clients now having higher standards with which to compare legal services, they are already making more demands than they did five or ten years ago," he says. "Knowing the true value of these legal services, they are prioritising quality and price over loyalty – more importantly, they are requiring that the law firm has an effective presence in their country." There are a range of sectors in Cape Verde that are providing significant opportunities for law firms and they include infrastructure, planning, real estate, finance, transports and logistics, according to Raposo Bernardo.

Raposo Bernardo draws parallels with Angola when he describes the Cape Verde legal market. "Not only are their [Cape Verde and Angola's] legal systems quite evolved, they are in line with the world's most developed countries in terms of legislation and local implementation," he says.

However, there is also a key difference between the legal markets of Cape Verde and Angola, according to Raposo Bernardo. "While Angola has become an attractive country for business, when it comes to legal services, despite obvious similarities with Cape Verde, there is strong competition from local law firms as well as international ones," he explains.

Raposo Bernardo continues: "Such is the sophistication of legal services in Cape Verde and Angola, companies are now working in partnership on various projects with leading international law firms, which is having a positive influence on the development of legal advocacy practice. However, while all of these factors benefit clients and substantially contribute towards developing the legal services market, it is when law firms understand how to do business in Africa and have the financial capacity to adopt a long-term perspective that excellent opportunities are to be found."