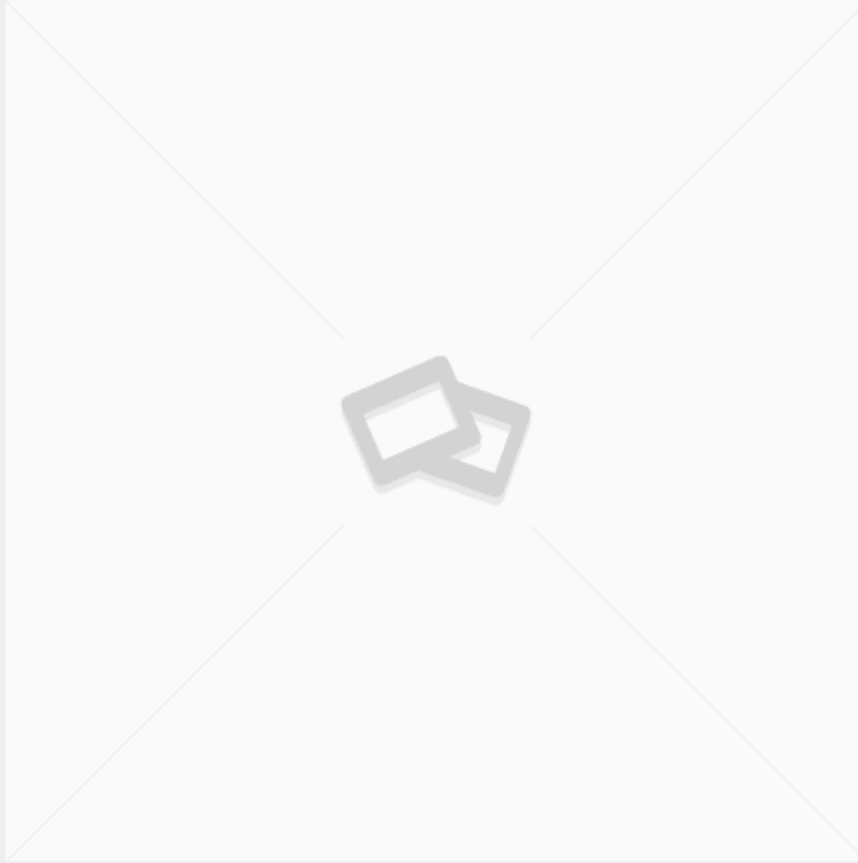


INTERNATIONAL CLIENTS RELY ON PORTUGUESE LAW FIRMS, RATHER THAN GLOBAL PLAYERS, IN LUSOPHONE AFRICA - PLMJ

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Major international law firms are unlikely to open offices in Lusophone Africa so clients look to Portuguese law firms to provide them with the level of service they expect, says Hugo Rosa Ferreira, partner at PLMJ in Lisbon.

"We don't anticipate major international firms establishing themselves in those [Lusophone African] jurisdictions, which means clients are expecting large Portuguese firms to provide the high level of service that they are used to," he explains. "But it's a double-edged sword: you try to grow internationally, but at the same time, the expectations are higher from international law firms and international clients – it's a big challenge but it's one that Portuguese firms are well prepared to face."

Rosa Ferreira says that the biggest challenge for law firms operating abroad is maintaining the level

of service, something that has been a struggle ever since Portuguese firms began looking abroad. It was this issue that was behind PLMJ's decision to open in Angola and Mozambique six years ago, he adds. "We felt we needed to take steps towards a more stabilised presence, into which we could inject our DNA, and enable the legal sector there to develop by raising the standard," Rosa Ferreira explains.