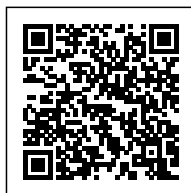


REALISING THE POTENTIAL OF THE PALOPS - RAPOSO BERNARDO

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There has been a recent trend of law firms coming to capitalise on the PALOPs (Portuguese-speaking African countries).

"We have seen American, English, French, German and even Chinese law firms entering the market, while existing Portuguese law firms are increasing their presence," says Nelson Raposo Bernardo, Managing Partner of Raposo Bernardo in Portugal, which has a presence in each of the five PALOPs. Clients are also capitalising on Mozambique's energy, oil and gas, infrastructure and real estate sectors, for example. While Guinea Bissau and São Tome offer specific business opportunities in retail, luxury products and transport and communications. "The West African coast also has important opportunities in countries like Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria and Congo," he adds, "specifically in infrastructure, water and sanitation works, roads, bridges, dams and public building". Raposo firmly believes in establishing strong partnerships, closely incorporated into the Raposo

Bernardo structure. "The reason is that we want to offer the same level of quality and efficiency as our European offices, and I don't believe that is possible without a certain level of integration." Moreover, the firm is keen to assume 100 percent of the risk, as it is the only way to get 100 percent of the client satisfaction, says Raposo, and ultimately benefit from the relationship in the long-term. "This gives us the ability to cross-sell between countries, instead of confining ourselves to operating in just Angola or Mozambique," he says. "We often support Angolan clients with their operations in São Tome, Guinea Bissau or Cape Verde, for example, as well as in Portugal, Spain or Poland." This recent trend demonstrates how the PALOP market is growing, and the influx of international firms, as well as the traditional Portuguese, shows that there is plenty of work for those willing to capitalise.