

# RISING DEMAND FROM PHARMA COMPANIES FOR COMPLIANCE ADVICE - ESQUÍVEL ADVOGADOS

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**The pharmaceutical sector may have become more concentrated due to regulatory and compliance demands, but this has meant more work for law firms, says José Luís Esquível, managing partner of Esquível Advogados in Lisbon.**

"The Portuguese government has been trying to reduce the amount of money spent on medicine and medical devices," he says. "Our firm advises companies within the public procurement area on presenting bids for public tenders. As we are under the control of different public entities – such as the Ministry of Health – pharmaceutical companies must pay a lot of attention to regulatory and compliance rules around price."

Consequently, clients are contacting their legal advisers in order to understand the level of risk and how they can "manage market conditions", Esquível explains. With quality no longer a priority and a greater focus on quantity and price, there are already signs that the pharmaceutical sector is changing, says Esquível. "Some companies now see Portugal as a less interesting place to do business and have decided to cut certain lines of product as there is no margin to be made," he

adds. "Furthermore, with the only criteria being price, there are also companies in the marketplace with products which do not represent the most quality and advanced solutions".

However, for law firms that represent clients in the pharmaceutical sector, workflow is on the increase and is currently higher than it was in 2015. Esquivel says that, other than in the banking and pharmaceutical sectors, there is not a significant amount of compliance work available, but the level of demand for legal advice within those two industries is high. He adds that, in particular, demand from pharmaceutical clients for advice on regulations in relation to public procurement is an area of work that is keeping law firms extremely busy.