

An Update Report on Major International Law Firms in Singapore

Changes and Trends from 2023 to 2024

In May 2023, SSQ produced an article, [Major international law firms in Singapore](#), that provided an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the Singapore legal market.

Now, over a year since the original analysis, the Singapore law society is undertaking a consultation to evaluate the effectiveness of collaborations between domestic Singaporean firms (SLPs) and their international law firm counterparts.

Many are expecting an update from the Singapore law society in early 2025, with more precise boundaries expected regarding the permitted areas of legal practice that international firms can undertake depending on the type of license they hold and the type of law practice structure they operate through.

SSQ is also expecting the Singapore law society to make decisions on any pending QFLP, JLV and FLA applications, as multiple US/UK headquartered FLPs have shown their desire to collaborate with a SLP in one law practice structure or another (see definitions of SLP/QFLP/JLV/FLA/FLP below in the section *Major International Law Firms - Practices and Sizes*).

According to the latest record on the website of LSRA (Legal Services Regulatory Authority), there has been no change in the number of international firms operating under the QFLP or JLV structure since May 2023, and Hill Dickinson is the only international firm that has had its FLA structure (with PDLegal LLC) approved in that time.

In light of these anticipated updates, this article aims to provide our clients and other audience with the latest statistical analysis of the Singapore legal market.

Lawyer Headcounts*

		2023 May	2024 Dec
Singapore solicitor	Singapore Practicing Certificate	5555	6206
	LPA** – 36E	558	497
	Sub total	6113	6703
Foreign lawyer	LPA – 36B	40	46
	LPA – 36C	1265	1314
	LPA – 36D	11	14
	Sub total	1316	1374
	TOTAL	7429	8077

*All figures above are collected from LSRA in December 2024.

**LPA: Legal Practice Act, the law governing all lawyers and law firms practicing in Singapore.

Between May 2023 and December 2024, the lawyer population in Singapore has grown by 8.7% in aggregate. The amount of both local qualified Singapore solicitors and foreign lawyers has

increased. There are seemingly more Singapore qualified solicitors working at SLPs (+11.7%) while fewer of them are working at the FLP, QFLP, JLV international firms (-10.9%). The number of foreign lawyers has grown in all aspects and the majority are registered as LPA -36C, i.e. foreign lawyer practising foreign law in any licensed law practice.

Major International Law Firms – Practices and Sizes

Types of Law Practice*	Number of Firms (in May 2023 and Dec. 2024)	Size of Firms** (number)	Firm Name
FLP*	33 (2023 May) 39 (2024 Dec)	Large** (8 – no change)	FRESHFIELDS BRUCKHAUS DERINGER SINGAPORE PTE LTD
			HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS LLP
			HOLMAN FENWICK WILLAN SINGAPORE LLP
			ASHURST LLP (previously medium size)
			LAWYERS ON DEMAND (SINGAPORE) PTE. LTD.
			REED SMITH PTE LTD
			STEPHENSON HARWOOD LLP
			WATSON FARLEY & WILLIAMS LLP
		Medium** (21 – 2023 May) (25 – 2024 Dec)	ADDLESHAW GODDARD LLP
			AKIN GUMP STRAUSS HAUER & FELD LLP
			BAKER BOTTS (SINGAPORE) LLP
			BRYAN CAVE LEIGHTON PAISNER LLP
			CMS CAMERON MCKENNA NABARRO OLSWANG (SINGAPORE) LLP
			CHARLES RUSSELL SPEECHLYS LLP (new entrant)
			COOLEY SG LLP
			DAC BEACHCROFT LLP
			DECHERT (SINGAPORE) PTE. LTD.
			DLA PIPER SINGAPORE PTE LTD
			GOODWIN PROCTER (SINGAPORE) LLP
			GREENBERG TRAUER SINGAPORE LLP
			GUNDERSON DETTMER SINGAPORE LLP
			HILL DICKINSON LLP
			KING & SPALDING (SINGAPORE) LLP (previously large size)
			LITTLER ASIA LLP (previously small size)
			MILBANK LLP
			MISHCON DE REYA LLP (SINGAPORE BRANCH)
			MORRISON & FOERSTER (SINGAPORE) LLP
			O'MELVENY & MYERS LLP (previously small size)
			ORRICK, HERRINGTON & SUTCLIFFE (SINGAPORE) PTE. LTD. (previously small size)
			SKADDEN, ARPS, SLATE, MEAGHER & FLOM (SINGAPORE) LLP
			SQUIRE PATTON BOGGS SINGAPORE LLP
			THREE CROWNS (SERVICES) PTE. LTD.
			TROWERS & HAMLINS (SINGAPORE) LLP (new entrant)
Small**	FENCHURCH LAW (SINGAPORE) PTE. LTD. (new entrant)		

		(4 -2023 May) (6 – 2024 Dec)	MCDERMOTT WILL & EMERY SINGAPORE LLP (<i>previously medium size</i>) PENNINGTONS MANCHES COOPER SINGAPORE LLP QUINN EMANUEL SINGAPORE LLP (<i>new entrant</i>) ROPES & GRAY (SINGAPORE) LLP (<i>new entrant</i>) VEDDER PRICE PTE. LTD.
QFLP*	9 (no change)	Large** (8 – 2023 May) (7 – 2024 Dec)	ALLEN OVERY SHEARMAN STERLING LLP (<i>name change after merger</i>) CLIFFORD CHANCE PTE LTD LATHAM & WATKINS LLP LINKLATERS SINGAPORE PTE LTD NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT (ASIA) LLP SIDLEY AUSTIN LLP WHITE & CASE PTE LTD
		Medium** (1 – 2023 May) (2 – 2024 Dec)	GIBSON, DUNN & CRUTCHER LLP (<i>previously large size</i>) JONES DAY
JLV*	9 (no change)	Large** (5)	BAKER & MCKENZIE.WONG & LEOW CLYDE & CO CLASIS SINGAPORE PTE LTD HOGAN LOVELLS LEE & LEE MAYER BROWN PK WONG & NAIR PTE. LTD. PINSENT MASONS MPILLAY LLP
		Medium** (4)	DUANE MORRIS & SELVAM LLP KENNEDYS LEGAL SOLUTIONS PTE LTD RPC PREMIER LAW PTE LTD SIMMONS & SIMMONS JWS PTE. LTD.
SLP*	5 (no change)	Large** (5)	BIRD & BIRD ATMD LLP DENTONS RODYK & DAVIDSON LLP K&L GATES STRAITS LAW LLC MORGAN LEWIS STAMFORD LLC WITHERS KHATTARWONG LLP
RO*	1 (no change)		NIXON PEABODY LLP (SINGAPORE REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE)
In total	57 (2023 May) 63 (2024 Dec)		

FLA*	Constituent FLP/QFLP	Constituent SLP
ASHURST ADTLAW	ASHURST LLP	ADTLAW LLC
CLIFFORD CHANCE ASIA	CLIFFORD CHANCE PTE LTD	CAVENAGH LAW LLP
CMS HOLBORN ASIA	CMS CAMERON MCKENNA NABARRO OLSWANG (SINGAPORE) LLP	HOLBORN LAW LLC
HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS PROLEGIS	HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS LLP	PROLEGIS LLC
NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT ASCENDANT	NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT (ASIA) LLP	ASCENDANT LEGAL LLC

REED SMITH RESOURCE LAW ALLIANCE	REED SMITH PTE LTD	RESOURCE LAW LLC
STEPHENSON HARWOOD (SINGAPORE) ALLIANCE	STEPHENSON HARWOOD LLP	VIRTUS LAW LLP
WFW & WTL	WATSON FARLEY & WILLIAMS LLP	WONG TAN & MOLLY LIM LLC
HILL DICKINSON PDLEGAL ALLIANCE (<i>new entrant</i>)	HILL DICKINSON LLP	PDLEGAL LLC

* *Types of Law Practice:*

- *SLP (Singapore Law Practice): practice Singapore law and foreign law in areas that the SLP is competent to practice*
- *FLP (Foreign Law Practice): practice foreign law and Singapore law - but only in the limited context of international commercial arbitration or in relation to the Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC)*
- *QFLP (Qualified Foreign Law Practice): practice foreign law and Singapore law - but only in the “permitted areas of legal practice” ****
- *JLV (Joint Law Venture): practice foreign law and Singapore law - but only in the “permitted areas of legal practice”*
- *RO (Representative Office): liaison or promotional work only - not allowed to practice law or conduct any business activities in Singapore*
- *FLA (Formal Law Alliance): SLP and FLP/QFLP remain distinct entities, practicing what they are respectively allowed to practice*

** *Size of Firms*

The categorisation of law firms into “Large”, “Medium” and “Small” refers to firms with (a) 31 or more lawyers; (b) 6 to 30 lawyers; and (c) 1 to 5 lawyers, respectively.

**** The “permitted areas of legal practice” in Singapore include banking law, corporate law, intellectual property law and maritime law but exclude domestic areas of litigation and general practice such as criminal law, family law, retail conveyancing and constitutional law.*

Over the past 18 months, we have seen more international UK/US-headquartered law firms launching and growing in Singapore and mostly under the FLP structure. There are multiple new entrants across both UK and US-headquartered international firms, including Charles Russell Speechlys, Trowers & Hamblins and Fenchurch Law on the UK side; and Ropes & Gray and Quinn Emanuel on the US side.

The size of the existing UK-headquartered firms has remained largely stable (with only Ashurst moving up from a “medium” to “large” sized firm). On the other hand, the size changes across the US law firms present a mixed picture: Orrick, OMM (which has recently recruited a team from Hogan Lovells) and Littler (US firm specialising in employment law) have grown from “small” to “medium” in size, but firms including Gibson Dunn, King & Spalding and McDermott have all reduced their lawyer headcounts, and Butler Snow has closed its Singapore office.

Other Significant Firms – PRC Firms and Offshore Firms

In addition to the changes with the UK/US headquartered law firms, PRC law firms and offshore law firms are showing visible growth in the region, both in terms of firm numbers and sizes.

	Firm Name	Size of Firms
China	ALLBRIGHT LAW OFFICES (SINGAPORE) PTE. LTD	Small
	FANGDA PARTNERS (SINGAPORE) LLP	Small (<i>new entrant</i>)
	HAN KUN LLP	Medium (<i>previously small size</i>)
	HUI ZHONG LAW FIRM (SINGAPORE) PTE. LTD	Small
	JINGSHI LAW FIRM SINGAPORE LLP	Small
Offshore	BEDELL CRISTIN (SINGAPORE) LLP	Small
	CAREY OLSEN SINGAPORE LLP	Medium
	CONYERS DILL & PEARMAN PTE. LTD.	Medium (<i>previously small size</i>)
	FORBES HARE PTE LTD	Medium
	HARNEY WESTWOOD & RIEGELS SINGAPORE LLP	Medium
	MAPLES AND CALDER (SINGAPORE) LLP	Medium
	MOURANT OZANNES (SINGAPORE) LLP	Small (<i>new entrant</i>)
	WALKERS (SINGAPORE) LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP	Medium

For example, Han Kun Singapore, which was launched in mid-2023, has quickly grown to become a “medium” sized firm, while another “Red Circle” firm, Fangda Partners, entered the market earlier this summer. SSQ anticipates more leading PRC firms launching or growing in Singapore in the foreseeable future, as they have done in Hong Kong over the past decade.

There is also strong competition among the offshore law firms within the Singapore legal market. Eight firms are now operating in the region further to Mourant’s arrival in late 2023. With Conyers increasing their lawyer headcount, six out of the eight major offshore firms in Singapore are already “medium” in size, showing the steady growth in demand of offshore law services in the region.

Having operated on the ground in Asia for over a decade, SSQ has a strong local team of consultants in our Singapore, Hong Kong and China offices working seamlessly with our colleagues around the world. Our Asia team is currently assisting multiple international and regional law firms entering and growing in the Singapore market, advising on the establishment of different law practice structures and the acquisition of strategic legal talent. Please reach out to Felix Lee, Alex Harris, Shawn Chen, or your usual SSQ contact if you have any enquires or need our assistance in relation to the Singapore legal market.



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