

# 2023 African Legal Award winners

By  Shan Raddiffe

8 Sep 2023

The winners of the 10th annual African Legal Awards were announced at a gala ceremony emceed by popular comedian and television presenter, Sivuyile 'SiV' Ngesi, at the Hilton Sandton on Friday, 1 September 2023.



Image: [African Legal Awards](#)

Hosted by Law.com International, in partnership with the Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa (CCASA) and Africa Legal, the awards seek to honour the industry's brilliant talent across the continent, engaging more of a pan-African audience each year.

This year's prestigious judging panel was made up of a collection of corporate and independent legal minds: Gary Berndt - independent legal consultant; Bertrand Delpont - SSA | BT's Global; Gail Evans - Steinmüller Africa; Nastacea Faber - Empact Group; Sonia Guerra - HKA; Yolandi Jukes - JD Group; Alison Lee - Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa; Lusani Nelufule-Mugivhi - Discovery Health Medical Scheme; Sandy Oberholzer - independent legal consultant; Karen Pinheiro - independent legal consultant; Shivani Singh - independent legal consultant; Mark Spinner - MV Spinner Incorporated; Ben Smit - BJS Alliance (Pty); Jaco Theunissen - ACTOM; and Lameez Vania - Reckitt Benckiser.

This year, the awards were broken up into three main categories: In-House Awards; Private Practice Awards; and Awards Open To All.

In the In-House category, Sappi SA was named the best small team legal department, while Takealot won for best large team legal department.

Webber Wentzel was the most decorated private practice of the evening with a total of five awards, which included ESG Initiative of the Year Award for the third consecutive year. This award is for the pro bono advice the firm is providing to the Minerals Council of South Africa's Partnership to tackle gender-based violence in mining communities. In their comments, the judges noted that "Webber Wentzel is the continent's driver in ESG".

Said Christo Els, Webber Wentzel senior partner and chair, "Congratulations to Tobia Serongoane, our very own trailblazer, for winning the Private Practice Most Promising Newcomer Award. This award highlights the work done by Tobia on prominent cases, as well as his assistance to a large mining company in conducting an ESG risk assessment of its mining operation in sub-Saharan Africa and for contributing to the wider community by offering pro bono assistance as an Advisory Board Member for various NGOs."



## Winners of the 2022 African Legal Awards

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Other firms that all won two awards each were Aluko & Oyeboode, Allen & Overy, G. Elias, DLA Piper Africa, as well as Olaniwun Ajayi, which took the coveted African Law Firm of the Year award.

Bowmans also took home two awards, which included East African Partner of the Year for Paras Shah, while Dreny & Partners' Sherine El Menyawy and Imane Raouf were named Private Practice Rising Star and North African Partner of the Year respectively.

Other special awards were the Robert Legh Excellence in Leadership, won by Isobel Boaten from AB David, with Professor David McQuoid-Mason winning this year's Lifetime Achievement Award.

**See the full list of award winners below:**

## In-House Awards

| Category                                  | Winner                                            |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Legal Department of the Year - Small Team | Sappi Southern Africa                             |
| Legal Department of the Year - Large Team | Takealot Group                                    |
| General Counsel of the Year               | Hermien Uys, Vedanta Zinc International           |
| In-House Rising Star Award                | Songezo Maqubela, Mining Qualifications Authority |
| Risk & Compliance Department of the Year  | Storage Technology Services trading as Nexio      |
| Lifetime Achievement Award                | Professor David McQuoid-Mason                     |

## Private Practice Awards

| Category                                             | Winner                          |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Competition and Regulatory Team of the Year          | Webber Wentzel                  |
| M&A Team of the Year                                 | Bowmans                         |
| Banking & Finance Team of the Year                   | Aluko & Oyeboode                |
| Capital Markets Team of the Year - Medium Sized Firm | Bentsi-Enchill, Letsa & Ankomah |

|                                                          |                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Capital Markets Team of the Year - Large Firm            | Fasken                                  |
| Employment Law Team of the Year                          | Webber Wentzel                          |
| IP Team of the Year                                      | Adams and Adams                         |
| Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Team of the Year | Allen & Overy                           |
| Litigation and Dispute Resolution Team of the Year       | TripleOKLaw Advocates                   |
| Property and Construction Team of the Year               | G. Elias                                |
| Restructuring Team of the Year                           | Allen & Overy                           |
| Specialist Law Firm of the Year                          | LNP Attorneys Inc.                      |
| TMT Team of the Year                                     | Covington                               |
| Private Equity Team of the Year                          | Aluko & Oyeboode                        |
| Transportation and Infrastructure Team of the Year       | Webber Wentzel                          |
| Private Practice Most Promising Newcomer Award           | Tobia Serongoane, Webber Wentzel        |
| Private Practice Rising Star Award                       | Sherine El Menyawy, Dreny & Partners    |
| Tax Team of the Year                                     | G. Elias                                |
| African Network/Alliance of the Year                     | LEX Africa                              |
| East African Partner of the Year                         | Paras Shah, Bowmans                     |
| East African Law Firm of the Year (Medium Sized)         | Africa Law Partners                     |
| East African Law Firm of the Year (Large Sized)          | DLAPiper Africa                         |
| North African Partner of the Year                        | Imane Raouf, Dreny & Partners           |
| North African Law Firm of the Year                       | DLAPiper Africa                         |
| Southern Africa Partner of the Year                      | Lerisha Naidu, Baker McKenzie           |
| Southern African Law Firm of the Year (Medium Sized)     | Mulenga Mundashi Legal Practitioners    |
| Southern African Law Firm of the Year (Large Sized)      | Norton Rose Fulbright                   |
| West African Partner of the Year                         | NanaAma Botchway, N.Dowuona and Company |
| West African Law Firm of the Year (Medium Sized)         | Thiam & Associés                        |
| West African Law Firm of the Year (Large Firm)           | Olaniwun Ajayi                          |
| International Law Firm of the Year                       | Clifford Chance                         |
| Robert Legh Excellence in Leadership                     | Isobel Boaten, AB David                 |
| African Law Firm of the Year                             | Olaniwun Ajayi                          |
| Lifetime Achievement Award                               | Professor David McQuoid-Mason           |

## Awards Open To All

| Category                                                      | Winner                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Best Use of Technology                                        | Sheria Kiganjani Company Limited |
| Innovation Award                                              | Afriwise                         |
| ESG Initiative of the Year                                    | Webber Wentzel                   |
| CSR, Diversity, Transformation and Economic Empowerment Award | Lawtons Africa                   |

## ABOUT SHAN RADCLIFFE

Shan Radcliffe is the editor of Bizcommunity HR, Education and Legal.

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