

Special Report

Gender Diversity at International Law Firms in Asia

2023



LegalMedia360



Introduction

Legal industry rankings are an important benchmarking tool for buyers of legal services. They offer a clear indication as to which law firms and lawyers are most active, have the highest market reputation, and are working on the most significant legal matters – an independent seal of quality and assurance.

Increasingly, diversity and inclusion policies have become a consideration in the selection of outside counsel. Using data driven analysis of the latest rankings, this **Legal Media 360** special report assesses gender diversity at at onshore international law firms in Asia (excludes domestic joint ventures).

The report examines data at three levels: **1)** firm wide; **2)** by practice area; and **3)** by individual lawyer rankings. It will reveal:

- Which firms are most gender diverse;
- Whether gender diverse firms are more successful than male dominated firms;
- Whether female lawyers are being afforded the same opportunities as men; and
- If rising star data implies a more gender balanced future.



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Methodology

Results are based on the analysis of lawyer rankings in the following international publications: *asialaw*, *Benchmark Litigation*, *Chambers and Partners*, *IAM1000*, *IFLR1000*, *IP Stars*, *Legal 500*, and *World Trademark Review 1000*. These have been selected based on their multilateral research process, where peer and client reviews as well as submissions are used to determine the rankings.

For the purposes of this report, due to the variance in the categorization at atomic levels, lawyer rankings have been reclassified by **Legal Media 360** to bring them together in a common scale without distorting the differences in the range of the values. This has been achieved by referring to the definitions provided by the publications.

Lawyers have been grouped on a six-tier scale:

- **Senior Statesperson:** Retired/semi-retired influential lawyers with close relationships with major institutional clients. Mainly work as a consultant.
- **Band 1 (1.0 to 1.9):** Leading lawyers who have an outstanding reputation and a strong track record for leading the most significant matters.
- **Band 2 (2.0 to 2.9):** Highly regarded lawyers who are active on significant matters.
- **Up and Coming Partner:** Partner level lawyers establishing their reputation and have been recognised for leading/assisting on significant matters. Potential to be a tiered lawyer in the future.
- **Rising Star:** Junior lawyers establishing their reputation and have been recognised for assisting on significant matters. Potential to be a tiered lawyer in the future.
- **Notable Practitioner:** Lawyers who have had some market recognition and worked on some notable matters. Not yet a tiered lawyer.

The 2023 dataset covers rankings published from January to December 2022.



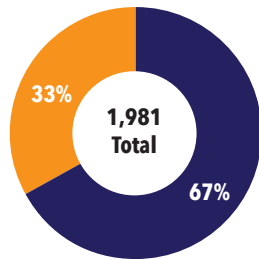
Findings

Overall Gender Statistics

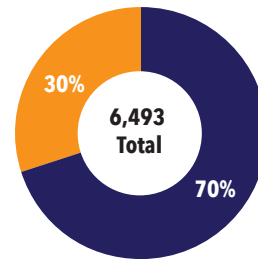
In the eight publications examined, a total of 1,981 lawyers at international firms were recognized.

The average male-to-female ratio at international firms across Asia is 67 to 33 percent, which, as can be seen from the charts, is slightly above the average of Asian headquartered/domestic law firms which gender ratio stands at 70 to 30 percent.

**Male to Female Ratio:
International Law Firms**

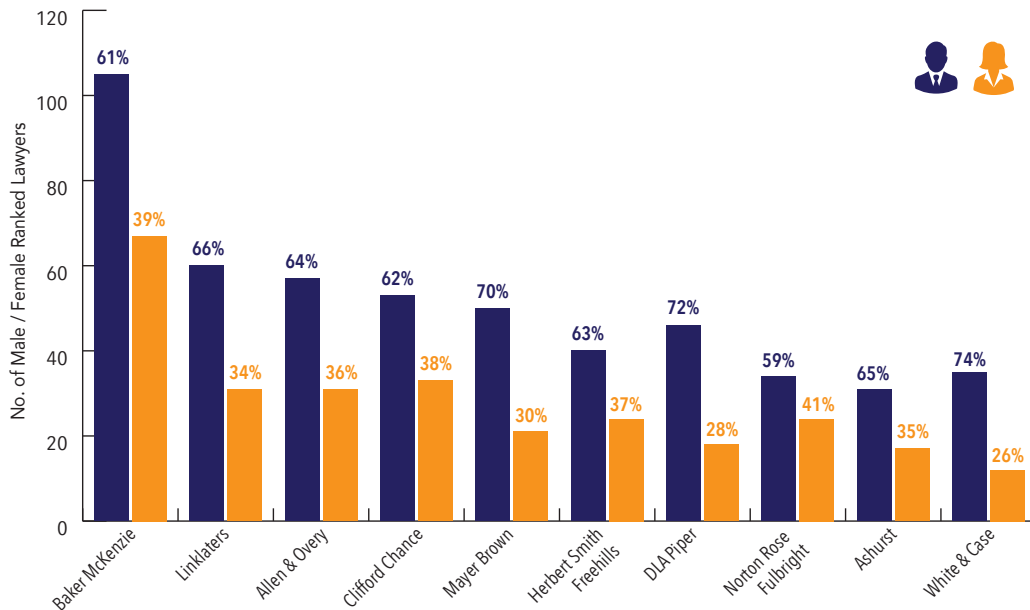


**Male to Female Ratio:
Domestic / Asia Law Firms**



Firm Level

Top 10 Firms with the Most Lawyer Recognitions



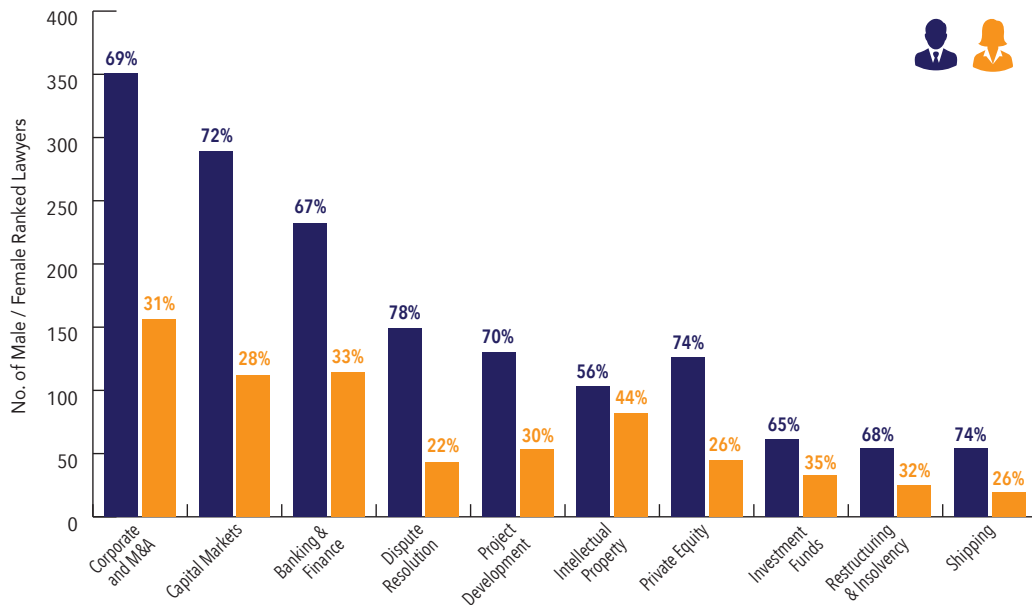


Commentary: Examining the law firms with the greatest number of lawyer recognitions reveals:

- Seven of the top 10 firms have a better gender diversity ratio than the average for Asia, with Norton Rose Fulbright and Baker McKenzie being the most gender balanced;
- The three firms with the largest gender imbalance in favour of men are Mayer Brown, DLA Piper and White & Case, whose gender ratios fall below the average for international law firms across Asia.

Practice Area Level

Gender Representation by Practice Area



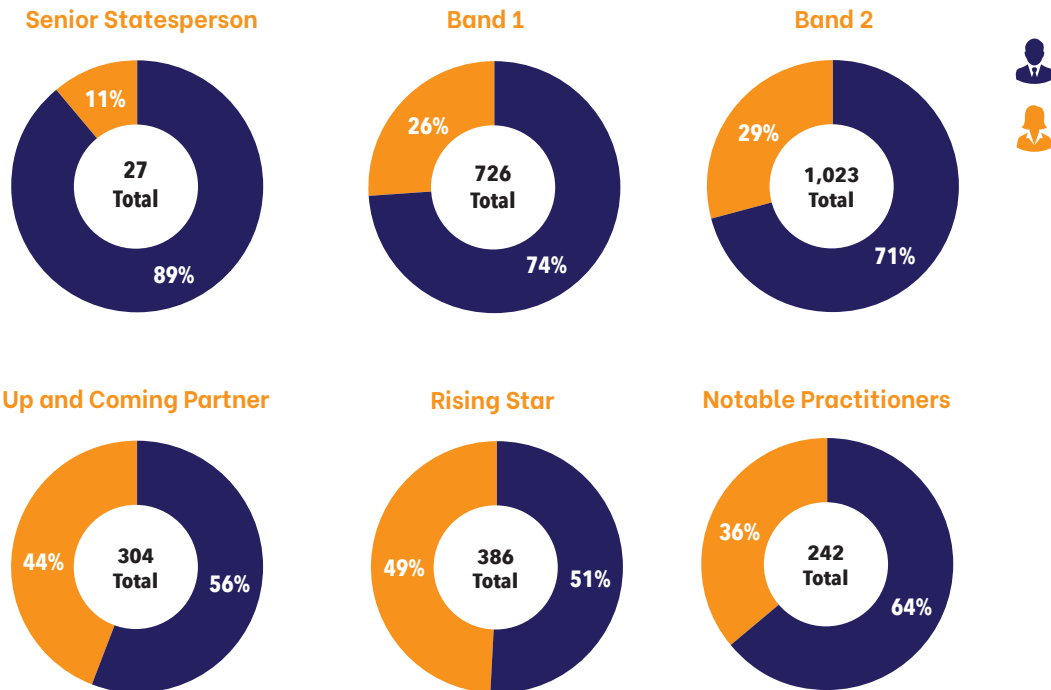
Commentary: The above chart shows the top 10 practice areas by recognized lawyer count.

It is clear from the data that the gender balance is only (fairly) neutral for Intellectual Property, and women lawyers are most under-represented in Dispute Resolution, Private Equity and Shipping.



Lawyer Levels: Gender

Breakdown of Gender by Tier



Commentary: The lawyer tiers can be seen to reflect the development cycle in a lawyer's career. Senior Statesperson represents those lawyers in their senior years. Band 1, 2 and Notable Practitioners are lawyers at partner level, while Up and Coming Partners and Rising Stars reflect the future representation of a law firm.

Up and Coming Partner and Rising Star data points to the market is shifting to be more gender balanced, however this doesn't necessary mean that as a female lawyer progresses in their career they will be offered the same opportunity to lead cases/deals as their male counterparts. As the above data shows Band 1 and 2 lawyers are still predominantly male.



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