

# About the World Law Group

World  
Law  
Group

The international legal advisory needs of business today are as unique as each of those businesses. For one company, the ability to access responsive, top-flight legal professionals on the ground in a score or more jurisdictions any day (and time zone) of the week is essential. For another, occasional guidance and insight into the laws and regulations or just “how things are done” in a particular region might be all that’s required.

Maintaining the responsiveness, international reach, operational flexibility and cost-efficiency required to meet a range of clients’ needs for high-quality legal services internationally was the World Law Group’s original mission when our founding firms came together more than 20 years ago.

That *raison d’être* holds true today, as the binding force of our 47 independent member firms worldwide. Each WLG member firm shares a commitment to delivering exceptional legal services and an enthusiasm for helping each other to continuously enhance the quality of those services for the benefit of all of our members’ clients, wherever they do business.

## Your Passport to Premier Local Counsel

With a single call, companies the world over have immediate access to the local knowledge and in-depth expertise of more than 10,500 lawyers in 250 major business centers in 50 countries (and counting).

But, more than that, clients of World Law Group® member firms know they are being represented by some of the most highly regarded professionals in every jurisdiction in which we have a presence. In fact, many WLG members have been ranked top firms in their regional or national markets by various industry arbiters like Chambers Global and the International Financial Law Review.

Moreover, WLG member firms strive to provide clients the same level of personal attention and focused service they expect from their “home” firm. The World Law Group’s membership standards mean clients receive domestic legal expertise and client service unmatched by mega-firms with a string of offices of varying strength. We know, respect and trust our WLG colleagues’ commitment and capabilities so we can refer our clients to them with confidence.

## Independent, But Sharing Values

Each World Law Group member firm retains the independence needed to address ownership and other practice rules, as well as to grow and adapt as needed to maintain its high standing in its local market.

We believe this independence makes the World Law Group as a whole stronger, more flexible and better able to serve international clients wherever they operate. At the same time, a shared commitment to responsive and respectful service provides those clients with a consistently reliable service experience.

## WLG Quick Facts

- Founded in 1988.
- 47 member firms on six continents.
- Offices in most of the world’s major and mid-sized commercial centers.
- 10,500+ lawyers in a comprehensive range of practice areas.
- Languages spoken: 150+
- Membership is by invitation only. New members are evaluated to meet the WLG’s professional practice and client service standards.
- Philosophy of a well-managed “best friends” network, governed by collegiality, respect, shared values and trust.

Moreover, we constantly enhance our network’s bonds via a range of WLG-sponsored programs and activities. These include two major conferences annually as well as get-togethers at major legal and business events throughout the year. Our international internship program enables young lawyers to gain experience practicing with member firms in other jurisdictions.

Our members frequently collaborate on comparative guides, white papers and other projects and come together again as members in more than a dozen WLG global practice groups. Special professional and practice development workshops and seminars are designed to share knowledge and experience among member firms for the benefit of all our clients.

## Local Firms, Global Outlook

As a matter of course, World Law Group member firms also share a commitment to the practice of international law and a belief in the benefits of seeing beyond one's own border. But it's the matters we work on together for clients that really cement our relationships. Below, we describe just a few recent experiences. To learn more, please visit [theworldlawgroup.com](http://theworldlawgroup.com).

## Our Work for Global Clients

Whether two World Law Group member firms are collaborating on a single matter, or more than a dozen firms are handling different components of a mega-deal, the quality of the work performed is matched only by each firm's commitment to delivering unparalleled client service.

### Winning a U.S./Brazil Cross-border Dispute

A dispute between a U.S. company (referred to here as USCO) and a Brazilian one (BRAZCO) arose out of a distribution agreement under which the latter was to distribute electronic equipment made by USCO. In concluding the agreement, USCO had relied on a statement by BRAZCO that the deal would bring significant tax benefits.

But, when many of the promised benefits never materialized, USCO sought to recover damages relating to the misrepresentation through arbitration. USCO and its counsel, Miami-based **Greenberg Traurig**, a World Law Group member firm, asked for assistance from **Tozzini Freire**, a WLG firm based in São Paulo, where the arbitration would be held. This assistance eventually included providing logistical and document management support and (although the hearings themselves were conducted in English using New York law), helping Greenberg partners with issues involving Brazilian law and the Portuguese language interpretations of the testimony of Brazilian witnesses.

Not only did USCO prevail at arbitration, the case illustrated again how often a well-coordinated approach to international legal challenges can add up to a winning solution for the client.

### Swiss and U.S. Firms Team Up on Multi-jurisdictional Litigation

Clients with operations or affiliates in more than one country can find themselves involved in simultaneous litigation over the same events in the courts of different countries. This was the situation faced by a **Miller & Martin** client, a U.S.-based medical devices company with a subsidiary and affiliates in Switzerland.

When a dispute arose between two groups of shareholders of the client's Swiss affiliate, one group of shareholders filed a lawsuit against the U.S.-based parent company in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Atlanta. The shareholders objected to a transaction involving the U.S. parent company and its European subsidiary and also challenged the client's rights to

certain technology invented by some of the shareholders and covered by U.S. patents.

Miller & Martin enlisted the aid of its WLG counterpart in Zurich, Switzerland, **CMS von Erlach Henrici AG**, who initiated legal proceedings in Switzerland against the shareholders to establish ownership of the patents.

Meanwhile, Miller & Martin attorneys in Atlanta filed a motion to dismiss the U.S. court action on the grounds that the Swiss courts were a more convenient forum for the disputes. With the Swiss firm submitting supporting declarations explaining Swiss law and procedure, the U.S. court dismissed the case in favor of the Swiss proceedings.

### Obtaining a Dismissal in Investor-State Arbitration

When a Spanish company claimed \$120 million from the Republic of El Salvador in an International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes arbitration at the World Bank for expropriation and breach of a contract to construct and operate vehicle inspection and emission control stations, the respondent turned to WLG member firm **Arnold & Porter LLP** to defend the claim. Arnold & Porter's investor-state arbitration specialists developed a strategy to seek dismissal of all claims for lack of jurisdiction at ICSID because the contract had been fraudulently procured and was therefore not an investment "in accordance with law" as required under the Spain-El Salvador bilateral investment treaty.

Theory is nice, but proving the theory is crucial. That's why Arnold & Porter enlisted **Cuatrecasas and SyCip Salazar Hernandez & Gatmaitan**, WLG member firms in Spain and the Philippines respectively, to assist with factual investigations, witness statement preparation and expert legal opinions.

Cuatrecasas helped to generate the proof of the fraud and the falsified documents submitted in the tender, and provided valuable expert advice on Spanish law. (The Spanish claimant had included a copy of a contract with a Philippine municipality in its tender for the emissions control project.) SyCip Salazar helped to prove that no such contract existed and that the claimant had falsified its tender documentation. These discoveries went to the heart of the defense argument that there was no jurisdiction under the investment treaty to hear cases concerning investments born in fraud.

The collaboration bore fruit and in August 2006, the ICSID Tribunal hearing the case issued a rare award dismissing all claims for lack of jurisdiction and ordering the claimant to bear all the costs of the arbitration.

The members of the World Law Group are independent and autonomous firms and are not affiliated for the joint practice of law. Each member firm is solely responsible for its work product and staff, and provides professional services to its respective clients on an individual and separate basis.