

Taiwan

Chamber of commerce:

Taiwan Chamber of Commerce
13th Floor, 168 Sung Chiang Road
Taipei City 10430
Taiwan
Tel: +886 2 2536 5455
Fax: +886 2 2521 1980
Web: www.tcoc.com.tw

Professional body:

Taipei Bar Association
9th floor, No 7 Sec 1
Roosevelt Rd
Taipei
Taiwan
Tel: +886 2 2351 5071
Fax: +886 2 2391 3895
Email: tbax@ms17.hinet.net
Web: www.tba.org.tw

Trends and developments in financial markets

Chun-yih Cheng
Formosa Transnational
Taipei

Limitation on investment in securities by overseas Chinese and foreign nationals

Under Paragraph 2, Article 4 of the Regulations Governing Investment in Securities by Overseas Chinese and Foreign Nationals (the Regulations), overseas Chinese and foreign nationals are permitted to invest in the ROC securities listed in Paragraph 1, Article 4 of the Regulations. Where funds have been transferred to Taiwan for the purchase of any of the listed securities but have not been used to do so, the Financial Supervisory Commission (FSC) may, depending on domestic economic and financial conditions and the state of the securities market, limit the use of such funds.

On November 10 2009, the FSC announced that funds transferred into Taiwan for the purchase of such listed securities can no longer be placed in time-deposit accounts. For funds that have already been placed in time-deposit accounts, such time deposits cannot be renewed upon maturity, and the funds held in time deposits are still subject to the cap of 30% of remitted funds.

Amendment to regulations regarding cross-border banking

In order to encourage foreign banks to keep their Taiwan branches well capitalised and better safeguard the interests of Taiwanese customers, the FSC has amended the regulations governing foreign bank branches and representative offices and the rules governing offshore banking units. The main amendments are as follows:

- The minimum operating capital that foreign banks must appropriate for the use of their business units in Taiwan is raised (Article 3 of the Foreign Bank regulations);

- A limitation on NT dollar credit lines to one person has been prescribed (Article 14 of the Foreign Bank regulations);
- Requirements governing the ratio between the qualified assets and NT dollar deposits have been established (Article 19-1 of the Foreign Bank regulations);
- Limitations on total credit lines have been imposed as a multiple of net worth (Article 19-3 of the Foreign Bank regulations); and
- Outward remittances of earnings by an offshore banking unit of a foreign bank must be reported to the FSC in advance (Article 20 of the Foreign Bank regulations and Article 7 of the Offshore Banking rules).

Individual minimum income tax

The Executive Yuan has announced that the minimum income tax levied on individual offshore income would come into force on January 1 2010 in accordance with Paragraph 7, Article 12 of the Minimum Income Tax Law.

According to the Law, offshore income must be included in the base income for the calculation of a tax resident's minimum income tax from January 1 2010. If a tax resident's base income (including his offshore income) reaches the threshold, and offshore income received by him, his spouse and tax dependents exceeds NT1 million (\$30,300) in a taxable year, he must pay tax in accordance with the Law and the applicable tax rate is 20%.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)

The FSC signed three financial memorandums of understanding on banking supervision, securities and futures supervision, and insurance supervision with Chinese authorities on November 16 2009. The MOUs took effect on January 16 2010. The main contents of these three MOUs are briefly summarised as follows.

- Information Sharing: Shared information is limited to that which is necessary for the

purposes of consolidated supervision of financial institutions. Information related to the financial supervision laws and regulations is also included. However, customers' personal account information is not part of the shared information.

- Information Confidentiality: Information obtained from another party may be used solely for supervisory purpose and must remain confidential.
- Financial Examinations: On-site and off-site examinations of cross-border institutions in the host country may be carried out by the home supervisor.
- Ongoing Coordination: Both sides must conduct meetings to promote cooperation and encourage exchange of visits.
- Crisis Management: When a financial institution in the host country becomes financially troubled, the financial supervisory authorities of both sides will work together to resolve the problem.

After the three cross-strait MOUs take effect, Chinese financial industries will be allowed to establish a presence in Taiwan.

Paragraph 2 of Article 26-3 of the Securities and Exchange Law

Article 26-3 of the Securities and Exchange Law (SEL) stipulates that when a corporation is a shareholder of a public company, except with the approval of the relevant authority, the provisions of Paragraph 2 of Article 27 of the Company Law shall not apply, and the representative(s) of the corporation may not concurrently be selected or serve as the Director and Supervisor of the public company.

In order to strengthen corporate governance and enable the Supervisors to better perform their supervisory duties, on February 6 2010, the FSC issued an Explanation (Jin Guan Jheng Fa Zhi No. 0990005875) indicating that the representative(s) indicated at Article 26-3 of the SEL shall include not only the person(s) appointed by the corporation, but also the person(s) appointed by the com-

panies that have a controlling or subordinate relationship with the corporation.

However, if the term of office of existing directors and supervisors will expire after the promulgation of the explanation, the explanation will be applied to the public company only after the term of office of existing directors and supervisors expires.

Capital markets

Recommended firms	
Tier 1	Baker & McKenzie Lee and Li
Tier 2	Jones Day LCS & Partners Tsar & Tsai
Tier 3	Chen & Lin K&L Gates Lexcel Partners Russin & Vecchi

Banking and project finance

Recommended firms	
Tier 1	Baker & McKenzie Lee and Li Russin & Vecchi
Tier 2	Jones Day LCS & Partners Tsar & Tsai
Tier 3	Chen & Lin Formosa Transnational K&L Gates Liang & Partners Yangming Partners

Mergers and acquisitions

Recommended firms	
Tier 1	Baker & McKenzie Jones Day LCS & Partners Lee and Li
Tier 2	Chen & Lin Lexcel Partners Tsar & Tsai
Tier 3	Formosa Transnational Formosan Brothers K&L Gates Russin & Vecchi Yangming Partners

Restructuring and insolvency

Recommended firms	
Tier 1	Baker & McKenzie Lee and Li Tsar & Tsai
Tier 2	Formosa Transnational Formosan Brothers Jones Day Russin & Vecchi
Tier 3	Huang & Partners K&L Gates LCS & Partners Liang & Partners Yangming Partners

The financial market in Taiwan has benefited from a series of new regulations in the past year with the capital markets being the most buoyant of all. The regulations governing the offering and issuance of securities by foreign securities issuers were amended by Taiwan's Financial Supervisory Commission in mid-2008 to relax listings of foreign issuers. Want Want was the first foreign company to issue Taiwan depository receipts (TDRs) under the revised regulations in April 2009. For IPOs, after a year of uncertainty due to the global financial crisis when investments were held back, the first foreign IPO of the Taiwan Stock Exchange finally came to fruition when Silicon Valley chipmaker Integrated Memory Logic was successfully listed in May 2010. Practitioners expect the market to continue to thrive in the coming year, with a number of TDRs, GDRs, euro convertible bonds (ECBs)

and IPOs of foreign issuers already in the pipeline.

Cross-strait investments have become more robust as well since the signing of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) on cooperation in financial supervision between Taiwan and China on November 16 2009. The MOU liberalises the financial markets across the Taiwan Strait, particularly in the areas of banking, securities, futures, and insurance services. For example, Taiwanese and Chinese banks can now open branches on each other's side.

The Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) signed on June 29 2010 provides further deregulation and many commentators expect it to provide greater stimulus to the financial market in the coming year. Under the agreement, Taiwanese companies will gain access in 11 service sectors in the Mainland while Chinese investors receive wider access to seven service sectors on the island. "The China factor is a unique momentum to Taiwan," says one market observer.

Apart from cross-strait activities, practitioners are also optimistic that the ECFA will bring more foreign investment to Taiwan as some investors may prefer cooperating with Taiwan as a portal to enter the Chinese market instead of having direct cooperation with PRC companies.

These arrangements will be a boost to the M&A market. Observers note that it was a stagnant area in 2009 with "the local market experiencing a major downturn". Not many transactions went ahead except from a few high-profile deals involving financial institutions, such as the acquisition of businesses of the Royal Bank of Scotland by Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ), and Primus Pacific Partners' acquisition of Nan Shan Life Insurance. There has been a growing number of cross-strait transactions, but practitioners believe that "2010 is only a beginning" and many anticipate more M&A deals between Chinese and Taiwanese companies now that the ECFA is in place.

However, the future of the banking arena is still up in the air. Lawyers note that banks were reluctant to lend and "last year was a little slow for transactions" with most of the work having shifted to restructuring and litigation. It is hard to tell whether banks can take advantage from the ECFA or not.

"There are no products that can generate income," says one law firm partner on the main problem of the banking industry. "Too many banks are chasing a too limited scope of products." If banks cannot develop new products in time, the competition among each other will only be worse when more Chinese banks gain a foothold on the island.

Baker & McKenzie

The Taipei office of international firm Baker & McKenzie is perhaps one of the most successful stories of the firm's vast international network. Top-tier across the board, the office's size is one of the biggest in Taiwan and a group of leading practitioners allows it to offer an extensive array of services. The office's global connection is another significant advantage as Taiwan only has a handful of foreign firms and Baker & McKenzie was the first to enter the market.

Gaining roles in many big-ticket capital markets transactions, the firm represented Shin Kong Financial Holding in its GDR offering. Valued at \$375 million, it was the largest equity offering from Taiwan's financial sector in five years. Alex Chiang is leading a team for Himax Technologies to apply for listing on the Taiwan Stock Exchange. When the deal is completed, Himax Technologies will be the first foreign hi-tech company to be listed on the Taiwan Stock Exchange. Although Himax is a Taiwan-based company, it is listed on the Nasdaq and wasn't previously allowed to additionally list in Taiwan.

Two high-profile M&A transactions in the banking and financial sector have kept Baker & McKenzie busy. Clients appreciate the firm's extensive experience and all-round knowledge in M&A and it was hired as advisors for the post-merger stages of these two deals. Primus Pacific Partners is appointing the firm as its Taiwan special counsel to advise on any merger and post-merger issues after it won the bid to acquire Nan Shan Life Insurance at \$2.2 billion, and Wen-Yen Kang led a team in April for Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ) to advise on regulatory, post-acquisition and integration matters after ANZ acquired the businesses of the Royal Bank of Scotland in Taiwan.

The merger between Chi Mei Optoelectronics and Innolux kept the firm under the spotlight as well. Michael Wong and Kang took charge of this \$5.3 billion transaction for Chi Mei and it was the largest one in the hi-tech sector in Taiwan last year, and the most significant merger ever in the TFT-LCD industry in Taiwan.

On the banking side, Mega International Commercial Bank (Mega) engaged the firm on the purchase of an office building and relevant syndicated loan transactions in May 2009. Mega was the trustee of Shin Kong real estate investment trust (Reit) No 1 and it was the first time an existing Reit acquired a new building in Taiwan.

Leading lawyers

Henry Chang
Alex Chiang
Wen-Yen Kang
Justin Liang
Michael Wong

Chen & Lin

Chen & Lin's decently-sized team for financial and corporate work is most active in M&A and capital markets transactions. The firm is seeing an increasing deal flow in banking and finance mandates as well, featuring in a number of syndicated loans in the past year, including twice advising Chinatrust Commercial Bank as lender's counsel.

On the capital markets front, the team headed by Che-Hung Chen and Jennifer Wang can be found on both the issuer and underwriter sides. A notable transaction handled by the team saw it represent Unimicron Technology Corporation in the issuance of common shares in connection with the merger with Phoenix Technology Corporation. This December 2009 transaction was worth \$549 million.

The team was additionally present in the issuance of convertible bonds and Taiwan depository receipts (TDRs) last year, and was frequently engaged by SinoPac Securities and Polaris Securities as counsel to the underwriters in various primary listing cases on the Taiwan Stock Exchange.

Demonstrating the firm's command of sophisticated transactions, Chen & Lin represented Waterland Financial Holding to purchase all the outstanding shares of capital stock of MetLife Taiwan Insurance Company from MetLife. The case was groundbreaking as it was the first time for a financial company to break into the insurance industry by M&A means in Taiwan.

Leading lawyers

Che-Hung Chen
Jennifer Wang

Formosa Transnational

Although best known for its dispute resolution and intellectual property work, Formosa Transnational has a dedicated corporate and financial service practice group, demonstrating the firm's equal commitment to financial work.

The firm boasts a large Japanese client base and the majority of its clientele is foreign-based companies. Banking and finance is a core area of its work and the team is often found on the side of financial institutions. For example, it advised the Hong Kong branch of a Chinese bank on a cross-border syndicated

funding, and provided advice to an international bank on regulatory compliance of derivatives products.

On the M&A front, Formosa Transnational is often engaged in deals in the life sciences and hi-technology sectors. Some recent mandates include representing a trading company on the share acquisition of a TV shopping channel and acting for a research-based pharmaceutical company in reviewing a lease agreement.

Leading lawyers

Delphine Chen
Chun-yih Cheng
Rick Lee

Formosan Brothers

Most noted for its forté in restructuring and insolvency work, Formosan Brothers is a stable presence in the market and has been building up its M&A practice in recent years.

Maintaining close relationships with government authorities, an illustration of its in-depth knowledge in the market is that the firm is often commissioned to conduct various research projects by government agencies. Its most recent engagement was by the Bankers Association on the Debt Settlement Act.

The restructuring market has been hushed in Taiwan, but Formosan Brothers has not failed to earn mandates in this area. It acted for a number of Taiwanese corporations in restructuring filings and represented the debtors and creditors in the restructuring proceedings of a listed company in Taiwan.

Li-Pu Lee is the leading partner behind the firm's growing success in the M&A market. With a broad base of clients, Formosan Brothers stars in transactions in different industries. Some highlights of the team last year include advising a US-Canadian medical equipment manufacturer on the acquisition of a Taiwanese supplier company and representing a Taiwanese private-equity firm in the acquisition of a German chemical business.

Leading lawyers

Peter Chen
Chung-Chiang Lai
Li-Pu Lee

Jones Day

US firm Jones Day retains its leading status in the Taiwan market, its banking and M&A work held in the highest regard among all its practices. "Jones Day is an expert in banking and M&A regulatory issues and it has great legal skills of an international level," says one banking client.

The firm's international network and multilingual command are two assets greatly appreciated by clients: "Its ability to conduct business in two languages is a definite asset. It has also been able to solicit opinions from the US counterparts on issues that have broad ranging implications," says one.

Led by William Bryson, the banking team has been assisting the litigation team in some banking disputes arising out of the financial crisis and clients include Taipei Fubon Bank and a liquidator of Lehman Brothers Holdings. Transaction-wise, the team is advising Mitsubishi UFJ Finance & Lease in relation to its \$5 million loan to Gintech Energy Corporation. Restructuring deals have Bryson and Chung-Ping Liu acting for Capmark Asia as the dissolved company in a dissolution process with the court.

Managing partner Jack Huang heads up the capital markets and M&A practice and his experience is invaluable to the firm having been in the market for 20 years. "He is very good with local issues and very senior," says a client.

Normally acting on the side of issuers, the capital markets team was occupied with issuances of Taiwan depository receipts (TDRs) in the past year. Of note was representing New Focus Auto Tech Holdings in its TDR issuance which was the third listing since the relaxation of regulations on foreign securities issuers in 2008. In January 2010, FX Hotels Group turned to the team for its IPO on the GreTai Securities Market.

"Jones Day is resourceful in terms of Taiwan public offering procedures and regulations," says a client. "Its attorneys are organized and efficient in responding to clients' requests."

A significant M&A transaction handling by the firm is the acquisition of K-tronics (Suzhou) Technology and the computer monitor and television assets of Jean by BOE Technology Group. Advising BOE as the acquirer, this cross-strait deal is the first inbound transaction between two listed companies in China and Taiwan.

"The firm has been very responsive to our needs. We have found the lawyers perform their research consistently and have a number of experts in various fields available in-house," says one in-house client.

Leading lawyers

William Bryson
Jack Huang
Chung-Ping Liu

K&L Gates

The Taipei office of K&L Gates went through two mergers with counterparts in 2005 and

2008 respectively and is finally consolidating its position in the market. Observers note that the firm was strongest in capital markets traditionally, but the practice is now rapidly gaining momentum into other areas, most notably M&A, banking and dispute resolution.

As one of the few law firms in Taiwan with an international connection, K&L Gates has access to a global platform and many of its team members are dual-qualified in Taiwan and the US, making the firm an ideal choice to foreign companies and for cross-border issues. Reflecting this strength saw it advise Array Network, a company based in Silicon Valley, on its IPO on Taiwan's GreTai Securities Market in June 2009; the first ever IPO made by a company based outside Taiwan.

James Chen and Jacqueline Fu are the two key partners taking charge of the firm's financial and corporate practice. Chen is popular in the market and one peer notes that he is "a person with good qualities".

Leading lawyers

James Chen
Jacqueline Fu

LCS & Partners

A young and aggressive local outfit, LCS & Partners has been very successful in growing its practice since its establishment in 1998 and it is eroding the positions of other market heavyweights.

"LCS is a very slick, sophisticated shop with superior market knowledge and technical expertise," says a client. "It essentially provides global firm quality bespoke for the Taiwan context." Another client has more flattering words for the team: "It is strong in theory and pragmatic in approach which I and my clients, and even counterparts, appreciate."

M&A is at the core of its practice; the firm claims a big share of the market and is a leading player in the private-equity space. Victor Chang, Mark Harty and Rich Lin are frequently involved in the firm's significant transactions and clients hold them in high regard.

"Victor and Mark are two very big hitters who can work well with global firms to deliver creative and commercial solutions," says a client of the duo. "Victor has enormous experience and is very market and regulator savvy, which is critical in complex private equity deals. Mark is also at the top of his craft."

The duo is advising a financial institution on the acquisition of the issued share capital of Nan Shan Life Insurance Company. Chang was found in another deal with Lin to represent Australia and New Zealand Banking

Group (ANZ) in the acquisition of Royal Bank of Scotland's retail, wealth, commercial and institutional businesses in Taiwan. An important step in ANZ's Asia-Pacific strategy, the transaction involved complex regulatory approvals and it was the first foreign-to-foreign sale of banks on the island.

No less active in the capital markets, the firm is working on a number of "Return to Taiwan" IPOs of foreign issuers and TDR offerings. The LCS team starred in the first IPO on the Taiwan Stock Exchange by representing foreign issuer Integrated Memory Logic, and the listing is expected to raise NT\$1.17 billion (\$37 million).

One client speaks highly of the firm's ability to act on precedent-setting projects by giving an example: "LCS is leading the way in terms of new deal structure not happened in Taiwan before. For instance, an acquisition involving a tender offer requires loads of communication and education with the regulatory bodies which LCS has been instrumental in building the regulators' knowledge so deals can be approved."

Leading lawyers

Victor Chang
Amy Chin
Mark Harty
Rich Lin

Lee and Li

"Absolutely a dominant firm in Taiwan," says a client of Lee and Li. "It is a very professional law firm, with qualified professionals from juniors to top levels," says another. An uncontested leader in the Taiwan legal market, the breadth and depth of Lee and Li's practices are unsurpassed by others. The firm continues to storm ahead and appears on the top-tier across all four practice areas for another year.

The firm has acted on many landmark and first-of-its-kind transactions over the years. In 2009, it featured in the first two issuances under the new securities regulations which were relaxed in 2008. The first one was the NT\$32.6 billion (\$1.03 billion) offering of Want Want in April 2009, followed by the NT\$17.3 billion offering of Ju Teng International Holdings one month after. Ju Teng did another offering in October and Lee and Li was its counsel again.

During August to October, the firm worked on no less than three global depository shares (GDSs) offerings with values ranging from \$198 million to \$312 million. Head of the capital markets team Abe Sung is spoken highly of by clients. "He is very friendly and is always there to provide help. He is also easy to negotiate with," says one banking client.

A highlight transaction navigated by the M&A team was advising KGI Securities to acquire Taishin Securities which involved obtaining many regulatory approvals from the government. A private-equity deal saw the team advise HSBC Asian Ventures Adviser (Cayman) in the acquisition of 7% of total issued share capital of Gourmet Master, a market leader in Taiwan's café and pastry industry with a presence in China. A client recommends Sophia Yeh and Vivian Cheng as "very good and helpful in private equity".

The banking and project finance group is found on the more sophisticated deals as well. A prime example was representing eight Taiwanese financial institutions on the refinancing of two syndicated loans of NT\$382 billion to Taiwan High Speed Rail Corporation. Industrial and Commercial Bank of China turned to Lee and Li for a couple of aircraft financings for the sale and purchase back of aircrafts.

"The firm is very client-oriented, knows how to solve complex issues and convinces people with different interests," says a client.

Leading lawyers

Chao-Tung Chang
Robin Chang
Sherry Lin
Abe Sung
Ken-Ying Tseng

Lexcel Partners

This small yet intelligent team has a very good name in the market with clients and rivals unanimously praising its capability in M&A work.

"Echo [Yeh] and Sue [Su] do a very good job for the clients and they are technically very good," says a peer. Clients share the same view: "Lexcel Partners has quite extensive experience in M&A activities. The firm is also fully committed to these transactions," says one. "It is creative, responsive and diligent, and provided not only legal services, but also certain financial and tax related advice."

The team scored big last year featuring in the one of the largest M&A transactions in 2009. Su led a team for Taishin Securities in its \$935 million merger into KGI Securities, making KGI the second largest securities firm in Taiwan.

A client offers praise for Su: "She knows how to communicate with the regulators. She is very polite, but she can also be aggressive when trying to help us achieve what we want to achieve."

Another example demonstrating the team's command of headline transactions saw it act for China Strategics in selling 30% ownership in Nan Shan Insurance to China Trust Bank

and to enter into an alliance for the management of the insurance company, after the high profile acquisition made by China Strategics' subsidiary to Nan Shan.

Having established a solid standing in the M&A space, Lexcel Partners is pushing into the capital markets by drawing on its expertise in M&A to act in cases where it assists clients to list by demerging first. In an ongoing transaction, the team is advising Asustek Computer in the spin-off of Pegatron Corporation and the subsequent listings of both companies on the Taiwan Stock Exchange.

Leading lawyers

Sue Su
Echo Yeh

Tsar & Tsai

One of the more traditional law firms with a long history in Taiwan, Tsar & Tsai does not lag behind the changing times and remains at the forefront of the market.

Its size and history are two things that have given an edge to the firm when competing against rivals. "Tsar & Tsai has a more extensive network and is able to advise on broader kinds of issues," says one client.

Jackie Lin, Janice Lin and Richard Chuang lead the charge of the corporate team and are the masterminds behind the firm's transactions. Jackie Lin in particular is popular in the market and is mentioned by clients and peers often: "She is quite good," says an in-house counsel.

The team had a successful 12 months landing on some important mandates. On the M&A front, of note was its representation of China Mobile on its entrance into share subscription and strategic cooperation agreements with Taiwan's Far EasTone Telecommunications. The new issues of shares subscribed by China Mobile will represent 12% of Far EasTone's issued capital on a fully diluted basis. This \$526 million deal is still happening, and once closed, will be the first direct investment made by Chinese investors in the Taiwan telecoms industry.

On capital markets deals, Tsar & Tsai was found on the side of the issuers last year. Twice it advised Wisdom Marine Lines on, first, applying for trading on the GreTai Securities Market in August 2009, and three months after, on the rights issue of common shares. Chunghwa Picture Tubes engaged the team in its capital increase and issuance of new shares raising \$295 million, and sought the team's advice in the private placement of 4 billion shares to bring in Compal as its strategic partner.

Banking work saw the firm occupied with some debt restructuring plans for different entities, such as the \$130 million plan of Powerchip Semiconductor Corporation, and advising a group of syndicated lenders in the debt restructuring of a semiconductor company.

Leading lawyers

Richard Chuang
Jackie Lin
Janice Lin

Russin & Vecchi

Russin & Vecchi has an indisputable standing in the banking market in Taiwan, thanks largely to the reputation of Thomas McGowan. "Tom is a very experienced lawyer and he has been in Taiwan for more than 20 years. He knows everything here," says a client. Rivals as well acknowledge the firm's strong brand in this area.

A go-to firm for many banks and financial institutions, the firm is most often seen acting as lenders' counsel in all kinds of financing transactions. Peers note that the firm is a key player in acquisition financing, considered to be a more complex and high-end type of transaction, which again reflects its leading presence in the banking arena.

"Russin & Vecchi is very sharp and professional and cost-effective when interacting with the parties involved," says a client.

Leading lawyers

Thomas McGowan

Other notable firms

With a branch office in Shanghai, Lee Tsai & Partners positions itself as a greater China firm. Offering a full-range of services, the firm is particularly active in M&As and has expertise in the technology sector. Of note last year was representing Bayer Taiwan Company, as the surviving company, in its merger with Bayer CropScience as the dissolving company.

One client offers praise for associate partner Elizabeth Pai: "She has an exceptional knowledge and insight on Taiwan company and corporate laws and regulations, and would go the distance looking after her clients' interest."

Having built a reputation in the banking area, Lin & Partners is actively diversifying its services to advise on a wide scope of legal matters and is developing sector expertises in gaming law and green energy recently.

Reflecting its status in the banking market, the firm has been the sole counsel for the Bankers' Association ROC, an association whose membership comprises all banks in

Taiwan, for over 10 years. The firm has a strong relationship with government authorities and it was selected by Taiwan's Financial Supervisory Commission in June 2009 to draft a financial ombudsmen scheme for resolving disputes between customers and financial institutions.

Managing partner George Lin is described by a client as "very business-oriented and a solution provider".

Pamir Law Group receives special mention from clients for its corporate M&A work. Managing partner Nicholas Chen is a favourite of many in-house counsels. "He is outstanding in what he does. He is extremely smart," says one. Another client "would definitely recommend the firm" for any cross-border issues, especially those between Taiwan and the US.

Formerly known as Puhua & Associates, the Taiwan office of **PricewaterhouseCoopers Legal** enjoys the benefits of joining the international network of PwC Legal. Partners Eric Tsai and Ross Yang head up the practice and provide comprehensive legal services including advice on M&A transactions, banking and finance, capital markets and other corporate matters.

Yang is helping Bank of Communication (China) to be one of the first few banks to set up its branch in Taiwan. The firm also played a role in the first merger between a Taiwan securities firm and a securities finance firm, advising Capital Securities in its merger with Enties Securities Finance.