

Driving economic growth and recovery in the legal sector

Bringing economic benefit through collaboration and partnership

Legal Services are GREAT facilitates growth for UK legal services in fast growing markets, expands business networks and generates export wins for UK law firms and chambers.

- The UK legal sector brings significant economic benefit. It contributes over £22 billion gross value added a year to the British economy. It also provides employment for around 350,000 people.
- The English and Welsh legal system underpins trade, business and the markets, enabling them to function.
- English Law and the UK legal sector are forward-looking, constantly evolving and adapting to meet the challenges of an ever-changing global environment.
- Post COVID-19, there are huge opportunities for UK legal professionals to expand their global footprint by collaborating and partnering with colleagues in jurisdictions around the world.

UK-Africa Legal Services Virtual Trade Mission December 2020

In December 2020, the campaign held a virtual trade mission bringing 400 legal professionals together from across the UK and Africa. The event was hosted by the Lord Chancellor Robert Buckland QC, with a keynote speech by Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Africa Emma Wade-Smith, who spoke about strengthening economic ties between the UK and Africa.

Attendees at Ministry of Justice's virtual trade mission held in December 2020.

Creating an inclusive event

Adapting to a virtual platform for the mission enabled the event to be more inclusive, with delegates from the UK, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and beyond being able to reconnect with colleagues and make promising new professional links without leaving their office.

Trade mission panel members in the Protecting Infrastructure Projects – 2020 and beyond session.

Addressing current issues

More than 20 events took place over 3 days. Discussions focused on current issues and emerging trends in sectors from Lawtech to dispute resolution to protecting sustainable infrastructure projects.

Guest speakers also talked about the challenges of operating post-COVID-19 and the shared determination to embrace, adapt and move forward.

Trade mission panel members discussing green ambitions for the legal sector.

Creating networking opportunities

Konyin Ajayi, Managing Partner from Olaniwun Ajayi LP, in Nigeria said:

The privilege of being on this panel speaks best through my improvement in just an hour of being with you all. Thanks to MoJ for bringing together a team that leads and adds value. Much credit must be given to the organiser!

Michael Patchett-Joyce, barrister from 36 Commercial said:

It was an excellent event. The sessions were valuable – useful and informative. The opportunity to re-connect with old friends and make promising new professional links were exceptional. We will be following up with law firms from four jurisdictions in Africa, all relating to areas of common professional interest, taking place next week or the week after. So, tangible and immediate results have come from this mission already.

Working with the industry

As an industry event, the mission worked closely with The Law Society of England and Wales and the Bar Council to showcase UK legal expertise. Discussions also looked at shared opportunities ahead for UK and African firms to boost economic growth.

Supporting economic recovery

The virtual trade mission was the first of its kind for the UK Ministry of Justice and marked the beginning of a series of post-Covid campaign activity that aims to support UK economic recovery, boost growth and level up opportunity across the country.