

India Proposes To Open Arms to the Global Legal Profession

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India is finally gearing up to permit foreign law firms to conduct business within its borders. As Edge International's principal in India, I would be more than happy to assist firms that are interested in exploring possible future opportunities for entering into this exciting new market.

A Decade of Working for Change

The admission of non-Indian law firms to India's legal sector finally appears to be coming about after a difficult process that took more than ten years of debate and discussion. During that time, the Government of India considered and addressed many concerns that were raised by individual lawyers in India, and by associations that act as custodians of interest to Indian lawyers – in particular the Bar Council of India (BCI), which is the apex body regulating the legal profession in India, and the Society of Indian Law Firms (SILF), which represents the top law firms in the country. Most of their concerns related to maintaining a level playing field for domestic firms, although there were also other issues that derived from the particular history and nature of India's legal industry and of India itself.

Since the latter half of 2015, the Government of India has been pro-active in reaching out to all stakeholders, explaining its rationale for opening up the legal sector in a calibrated manner. The profession is now in advanced stages of its discussions with the Government regarding the global liberalization of legal services. The move aims to set certain regulations in place to protect some of the interests and mandates of Indian firms and regulatory agencies. In addition, to enhance the goals of a level playing field for all legal practitioners, for the first time ever, Indian law firms may be allowed to advertise on a limited basis.

It is contemplated that foreign law firms entering the Indian legal sector will be able to practice only in certain restricted fields, and within particular guidelines. They are likely to be more successful if they are familiar with the traditional structures and ways of thinking that currently exist within the Indian legal market. This is where I believe Edge International can help.

As the world economies are integrating, India is seen as the most progressive nation in Asia, with the government opening its key sectors to invite investments and know-how, while creating a new and fair level playing field for Indian companies. This is an opportune moment for firms from around the world to investigate how they may be able to contribute to this exciting and rapidly growing economy.

We Can Help

In 2011, as part of its ongoing mission to provide global support to law firms of all sizes and areas of expertise, Edge International created an alliance with Legal League Consulting of Delhi and Mumbai – the oldest and most respected consultancy to law firms and corporate legal departments in India. As founder and CEO of Legal League, and a chartered accountant with more than thirty years of experience in working with top Indian law firms, I joined Edge International as a principal. Since then, the staff of Legal League's offices have been instrumental in facilitating Edge International's work in India.

Please contact Edge International if I or any of my Edge colleagues can be of assistance to you in taking your first steps into India's legal landscape.