

IJGlobal Awards 2021 – MENA Judging Team

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31/01/2022

The IJ team has once again pulled together an impressive line-up of judges for the Middle East and North Africa region of IJGlobal Awards 2021, ensuring that we once again host what we believe to be the most peer-review and independent events in the infrastructure and energy calendar.

The judges later this week for Judgment Day which – once again – we will be hosting over Teams and during which the panel will identify winners in the Company category. The Deals section is judged based on submissions by the editorial team that covers the relevant region.

As always, IJ has fielded a team of judges who are all deeply experienced in the financing and delivery of infrastructure and energy projects across the MENA region.

The judges for MENA Judgment Day are:

Christopher Cantelmi – IFC

A principal investment officer for the IFC infrastructure and natural resources department working out of Dubai, Christopher is responsible for origination and execution of debt and equity investments in the power, water, energy and essential infra sectors throughout the MENA region. He led IFC's efforts to support renewable energy programmes in Jordan and Egypt, while creating and structuring complementary low transaction cost, standardised limited recourse project financing programmes to support the many renewable developers participating. Before joining the IFC in 2013, Chris served at the Mubadala / GE Capital (MGEC) JV for 3 years in Abu Dhabi as a director and head of energy and project finance.

Abu Chowdhury – ASMA Capital

Serving as the managing director and CFO of ASMA Capital Partners, Abu is also a member of the management committee and – alongside his role within the investment decision making process – is responsible for the finance function at ASMA Capital. He is also a member of the board of directors of a number of investee companies of the fund. Prior to this, Abu was a managing partner at EMP Bahrain and was responsible for managing IDBIF I, which returned more than \$1.2 billion to its investors. Before EMP Bahrain, Abu was with Credit Suisse and Deutsche Bank where he was responsible for managing and structuring infrastructure and asset-backed investments.



Adel Elsolh – Natixis

Dubai-based managing director and co-head investment banking, coverage, and infrastructure energy finance at Natixis, Adel (pictured right) is responsible for the French bank's activities in the Middle East, Turkey and Africa. With more than 20 years' experience in banking – including 9 with the RBS infra finance group in London covering advisory, lending and equity – he has deep experience across the sectors. He has exposure to power, renewables, O&G, telecoms, water, waste, and social infrastructure as well as accommodation in META, delivering delivered fixed rate solutions from institutional investors. He has been based in the Middle East, covering the region since the summer of 2010.

**Craig Forrest – Arup**

Last seen at the IJInvestor Awards in London towards the end of last year, Craig has long had a global remit at Arup but has for the last 3 years been living in Canada (most of that under lockdown). He returns to London in March. Craig has worked at Arup since the spring of 2007, and from 2008-10 he operated out of Dubai as commercial director for the region. From 2010 to 2013, he was advisory lead for the UK, the Middle East and Africa; and then from 2013-19 he was global leader of business and investor advisory. More recently, he has been in London and then Toronto as chief executive of Arup Corporate Finance... until March at which time we will discover what he is doing back in London (bated breath held).

Madhavi Gosavi – NRF

Head of banking and finance for EMEA at Norton Rose Fulbright, Madhavi is an infrastructure and projects lawyer operating out of London – Madhavi recently stepping up to succeed Chris Brown who had held the leadership role since 2019. Madhavi focuses on advising parties in the development and financing of energy and infrastructure projects. She also acts on structured financings, project financings and restructurings. Madhavi is primarily experienced in advising commercial lenders, multilaterals, DFIs, sovereigns and development companies on lending, including financings involving ECAs.

**Ali-Tahir Jaffery – Standard Chartered Bank**

Ali-Tahir is based in the UAE and is a senior project finance transactor with extensive experience of structuring large-scale financings in Middle East and Africa region primarily in the power and water sector. He has also worked on transactions in the LNG, petrochemicals, fertilizer and telecom sectors. He has been working at Standard Chartered Bank in the Middle East since 2005, having worked there for a couple of years prior to that in Pakistan. He started his career before the turn of the millennium in Pakistan at KPMG.

Sachin Karia – Allen & Overy

Sachin is a projects, energy and infrastructure specialist who has been based in the Allen & Overy Dubai office for more than 10 years. He has a wide range of experience advising lenders, developers and government entities on solar, power, water, construction and infrastructure projects across the region. He has also advised on multiple large-scale mega projects.

Yusuf Macun – Cranmore Partners

The leading light at Cranmore Partners, Yusuf (pictured right) has around 25 years' experience in energy and infrastructure financing and investments, having held leadership roles on the buy-side and sell-side in Europe, Middle East and Africa. He created Cranmore in 2015 as a boutique firm in the project advisory space in the wider Middle East and Africa region. Prior to this, Yusuf was global head of project and commercial finance at Abu Dhabi National Energy Company (TAQA), where he led transactions in the bank, debt and equity capital markets across MENA. Back in his London days, Yusuf spent 8 years at HSBC in the project and export finance team, and has also worked at the Emerging Africa Infrastructure Fund.

**Sami Neffati – ASI**

Managing partner of the Aberdeen Standard Investments Investcorp joint venture focusing on infrastructure in the GCC and MENA region, Sami has deep exposure to the infra / energy lending landscape and operates out of Bahrain. He previously held the position of assistant general manager for energy at SMBC in London and even worked for a stretch at the famed WestLB team. Sami is an emerging markets specialist with long experience in the MENAT region. He headed Sumitomo's business development for Africa and led teams working on financing projects in renewable energy, power generation, transmission and distribution. He also worked as an adviser on projects in the MENAT region and to Japanese conglomerates on African markets penetration strategy.

Dan Taylor – NDF

Currently an adviser to the National Development Fund of Saudi Arabia on a strategic infrastructure financing initiative, Dan is a well-known figure within the regional infra community. He started his career in leveraged and acquisition finance in Australia in 2000, continuing with UBS and Goldman Sachs in M&A advisory with a focus on the industrials, building materials and services sectors. In 2008, he moved to the Gulf where he was head of investment for a UAE sovereign direct investment entity and then CIO for a large, diversified family group. Dan recently served as head of structured finance at Al Rajhi Bank in KSA, leading the greenfield financing of a series of water, renewables and industrial projects.

Laughlan Waterston – SMBC

Head of corporate and project finance at SMBC's Middle East department based in Dubai, Laughlan (pictured right) in the summer of 2020 switched roles with Tom Waterhouse. He has more than 25 years' experience in banking with the vast majority of those focused on project and structured finance. He has experience on a wide variety of projects and corporates in the energy and infrastructure sectors including power, renewable energy, O&G, petrochemicals, waste to energy, wastewater, utilities, social infrastructure and transportation. Laughlan's roles and product areas include financial advisory, structured finance, corporate finance, acquisition finance, green/sustainable finance, debt capital markets, derivatives products and LP investment.

**Ravi Suri – AP Moller Capital**

Ravi is senior managing director for investments at AP Moller Capital, operating out of the UAE. He is a long-established infrastructure specialist having built a reputation working across its many sub-sectors around the world. He switched to

join AP Moller late last year having spent a bit more than 4 years at KPMG in Dubai and having been on the ground in the region since 2002. He started his career at GE Capital in London, spent 5 years at ABN Amro in Hong Kong and India before moving to Dubai with Standard Chartered Bank where he worked until the end of 2016 before his spell in the Big 4. His current role at AP Moller Capital serves as the culmination of his experience and the pinnacle of his career.

Brad Watson – EY

Brad operates out of Dubai and is EY's global leader for infrastructure advisory services for strategy and transactions as well as government and public sector. He also leads infrastructure for the EMEIA industry accelerator programme and is the infrastructure advisory practice leader for the EY organization in MENA. He is an experienced project manager and advise, having provided strategy and policy-based advice to senior executives in the private sector and at all levels of government across North America, and now in the Middle East, for some 25 years. Over the course of his career, Brad has worked on numerous significant infrastructure and complex procurement projects. He has advised on multiple projects that have achieved financial close across North America and MENA totaling more than \$20 billion worth of capital assets and service delivery.

Catherine Workman – Pinsent Masons

A partner and head of the Middle East region for Pinsent Masons, Catherine (pictured right) is also the board sponsor for the law firm's business in Saudi Arabia, while also serving as a board member of the British Aviation Group. She is a projects lawyer specialising in PPP across a range of sectors with a particular focus on airports, ports and waste management. She has worked on projects across Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Catherine has been delivering PPP projects for more than 25 years – including the first hospital PPP to achieve financial close in 1997 – and relocated to Dubai in 2019.



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