

IJGlobal ESG Legal Adviser – Pro Bono – Norton Rose Fulbright

Angus Leslie Melville

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The IJGlobal ESG Legal Adviser trophy in the Pro Bono category has been created and presented to Norton Rose Fulbright... having been prompted by the law firm's submission as it impressed judges so much.

During the judging session, the independent panel was so impressed by the pro bono section in NRF's submission for ESG Legal Adviser of the Year... that they chose to create a new award category to celebrate this element.

While it is slightly unfair that NRF appears to have been victorious in a one-horse race, other law firms had included pro bono in their other submissions... but none competed on this front to the extent of NRF.

Now that this category exists, there will be a separate award to recognise this element in future events across a range of disciplines. The creation of this category also stands true to *IJGlobal's* mandate to be led by the independent panel of judges who have the power to create and scrap awards as they see fit... based on submissions (and furious glares from the editorial director).

One judge said of NRF that it showed "strong pro bono commitment" while another lauded saying "this is excellent pro bono work resulting in potential ESG benefit". The judge added: "This is a great example of how a law firm can innovate and lead."

Norton Rose Fulbright singled out in its submission the pro bono advice it gave to its charity partner Save the Children UK on a new fundraising policy that will enable it to receive Zakat – the third pillar of Islam, requiring Muslims to give a percentage of their qualifying wealth each year in aid of Zakat-eligible communities who need it for specific causes.

This new fundraising policy – endorsed with a Fatwa by leading Islamic scholar Shaykh Haytham Tamim – allows Muslim philanthropists to give their Zakat and donate their Sadaqah in a Shari'a-compliant way to the world's most marginalised children.

The policy will facilitate the raising of vital funds to support children in Muslim-majority countries in which Save the Children operates, to get a healthy start in life, keep learning and stay safe. Zakat payments will be held in a Zakat Fund and be distributed within one lunar year of giving, according to the Zakat Policy.

As the submission states: "Giving alms is a religious requirement in Islam and this new policy opens up a source of funding that will allow Save the Children to help some of the most disadvantaged people in society.

"The pro bono support followed the successful launch of our 3-year strategic partnership with Save the Children, in which we committed to supporting the global NGO with pro bono legal advice, alongside fundraising and volunteering initiatives.

"The partnership exists to accelerate the recovery of the global educational landscape, following the impact of Covid 19, and to help children reach their full potential.

"To do this, we have also joined the NGO as an inception partner for its Safe Back to School response and its new Catch up Clubs in a bid to tackle the biggest challenge to children's education in our lifetime."

The Norton Rose Fulbright team was led by Farmida Bi and included Andrew Coote, Mark Brighthouse and Matt Dixon-Ward from the London office; Robin Balmer, David Johnston, Najma Ahmad, Sara Al-Hamlawi and Abdullah Al-Faifi in the Riyadh office; and Shabnam Karim and Mustafa Aljundi, from the Dubai office.

Picture added after IJGlobal ESG Awards 2022. The NRF team with IJGlobal editor Ila Patel and editorial director Angus Leslie Melville.





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