

Q&A



Stefanie Busch

Senior Associate | Namibia

Stefanie Busch is a Senior Associate at ENS in Namibia. She specialises in energy and environmental law, as well as M&A and project development, especially in relation to ports and other major infrastructure projects. Stefanie also advises on general corporate-commercial matters and has, over the years, worked on M&A deals within the eco-conservation, hospitality, downstream and upstream oil, and renewable energy industry.

Stefanie holds an Advanced Masters in Energy Law, which she obtained with the North Sea Energy Law Programme, a programme jointly offered by the Universities of Oslo, Copenhagen, Aberdeen and Groningen. During the course of her studies, she gained technical and legal knowledge in relation to renewable energy, oil and gas, electricity systems, biogas and nuclear energy.

Besides her work at ENS, Stefanie is also the Regional Lead for Southern Africa for Women in Renewable Energy (WiRE), where she seeks to build a network of women working in the renewable energy industry across the SADC region.

Q *What led you to pursue a career in M&A, specialising in energy projects?*

A One of the reasons I decided to specialise in energy law and obtain an LLM in Energy Law was to have a positive impact in driving the decarbonisation of our global energy systems. Shortly after I made the decision to pursue this field of law, Namibia was identified as a potential green energy and green hydrogen hub. I have not been disappointed with my career choice, and it is truly an exciting time to be an energy lawyer in Namibia!

Q *What is one of the most exciting and noteworthy M&A deals you have worked on and why?*

A When I was a young attorney, I assisted in advising a high-net-worth client to acquire Erindi Private Game Reserve, Namibia's largest privately owned game reserve. This was one of my first M&A deals, and I will never forget the experience of closing a transaction of such magnitude, with a client team of such high calibre (and in the midst of a pandemic, even!).

Q *What is your outlook for M&A activity in Namibia over the next 2-3 years?*

A I certainly foresee that M&A activity in Namibia will increase tremendously over the coming years. This will be driven by the recent extraordinary petroleum discoveries offshore, as well as the development of various renewable energy projects and green hydrogen valleys in Namibia. These emerging industries will, in turn, drive investments in various offshore support services to cater for the petroleum industry, major infrastructure development, as well as a major move towards the industrialisation of Namibia. This envisioned "green industrial revolution" is underpinned by the projection that, in an effort to decarbonise, major manufacturing or other energy-intensive industries will move their operations to Namibia in order to benefit from the green electrons which can be generated from Namibia's renewable energy resources.

Q *When things go wrong on a transaction, what advice would you give about moving on?*

A It is important to recognise (and even embrace) the fact that everyone makes mistakes – the distinguishing factor is how you deal with the mistakes and move forward. Accountability and owning up to one's mistakes is essential to maintaining your reputation and integrity as a lawyer.

Q *What attributes do you think are essential for a good M&A lawyer?*

A In my view, being passionate about the work that you do and understanding your client's business is vital, as well as being emotionally intelligent (in order to read your client and opposing party). And it doesn't hurt to be "street-smart"!

Q *What do you do to celebrate the closing of a big deal?*

A Pop a bottle of delicious Prosecco, of course!

Q *Did you have a mentor and, if so, what was the most important thing you learnt from them?*

A One of the many mentors I have had throughout my legal career has been Hartmut Ruppel, who was one of the drafters of our Namibian constitution. Over the many years I have worked with him, he has taught me that integrity, honesty and compassion in your everyday dealings is non-negotiable.

Q *What do you do to unwind and get away from the stress of work?*

A Spending time with family and friends is always therapeutic, even better when that is done while trying out some new cuisine and a nice glass of wine. Another manner of unwinding for me is to travel and explore the wonders the world has to offer.

FUN FACTS

Favourite colour:

(Emerald) Green and Purple.

Current book on your nightstand:

When McKinsey comes to Town by Walt Bogdanich and Michael Forsythe.

Preferred holiday destination: Any snowy place, especially anywhere in Scandinavia!

What genre of music would one find on your favourite playlist? A mixture of indie-rock and electronic music. 🎧

