

Special Report

Gender Diversity at South Korea Law Firms

2023



Introduction

Legal industry rankings are an important benchmarking tool for buyers of legal services. They offer a clear indication as to which law firms and lawyers are most active, have the highest market reputation, and are working on the most significant legal matters – an independent seal of quality and assurance.

Increasingly, diversity and inclusion policies have become a consideration in the selection of outside counsel. Using data driven analysis of the latest rankings, this **Legal Media 360** special report assesses gender diversity at domestic law firms in South Korea.

The report examines data at three levels: **1)** firm wide; **2)** by practice area; and **3)** by individual lawyer rankings. It will reveal:

- Which firms are most gender diverse;
- Whether gender diverse firms are more successful than male dominated firms;
- Whether female lawyers are being afforded the same opportunities as men; and
- If rising star data implies a more gender balanced future.



LegalMedia 360

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Methodology

Results are based on the analysis of lawyer rankings in the following international publications: *asialaw*, *Benchmark Litigation*, *Chambers and Partners*, *IAM1000*, *IFLR1000*, *IP Stars*, *Legal 500*, and *World Trademark Review 1000*. These have been selected based on their multilateral research process, where peer and client reviews as well as submissions are used to determine the rankings.

For the purposes of this report, due to the variance in the categorization at atomic levels, lawyer rankings have been reclassified by **Legal Media 360** to bring them together in a common scale without distorting the differences in the range of the values. This has been achieved by referring to the definitions provided by the publications.

Lawyers have been grouped on a six-tier scale:

- **Senior Statesperson:** Retired/semi-retired influential lawyers with close relationships with major institutional clients. Mainly work as a consultant.
- **Band 1 (1.0 to 1.9):** Leading lawyers who have an outstanding reputation and a strong track record for leading the most significant matters.
- **Band 2 (2.0 to 2.9):** Highly regarded lawyers who are active on significant matters.
- **Up and Coming Partner:** Partner level lawyers establishing their reputation and have been recognised for leading/assisting on significant matters. Potential to be a tiered lawyer in the future.
- **Rising Star:** Junior lawyers establishing their reputation and have been recognised for assisting on significant matters. Potential to be a tiered lawyer in the future.
- **Notable Practitioner:** Lawyers who have had some market recognition and worked on some notable matters. Not yet a tiered lawyer.

The 2023 dataset covers rankings published from January to December 2022.



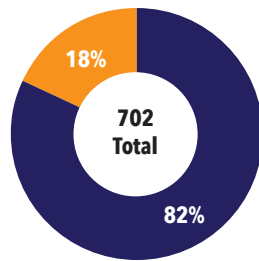
Findings

Overall Gender Statistics

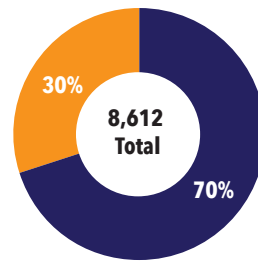
In the eight publications examined, a total of 702 lawyers in South Korea were recognized.

The national average male-to-female ratio for South Korea law firms is 82 to 18 percent, which, as can be seen from the charts, is well below the overall Asia average of 70 to 30 percent.

Male to Female Ratio: South Korea

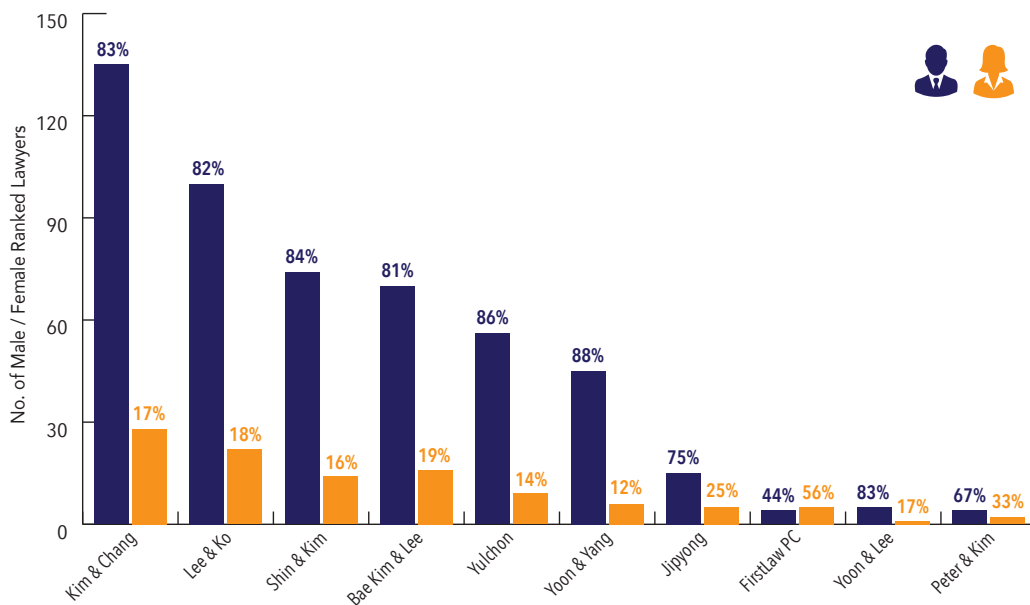


Male to Female Ratio: Asia



Firm Level

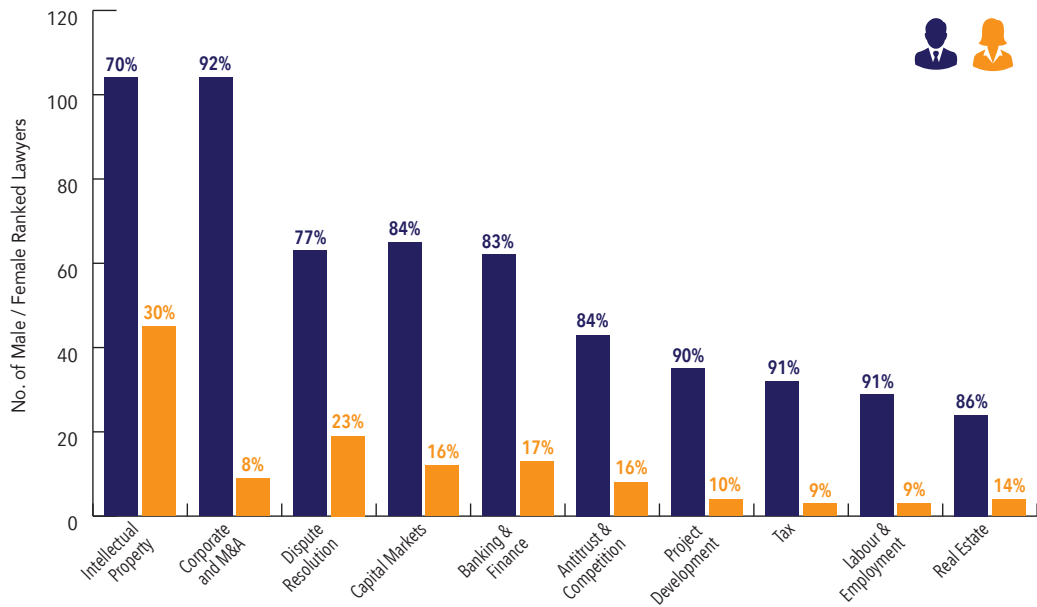
Top 10 Firms with the Most Lawyer Recognitions





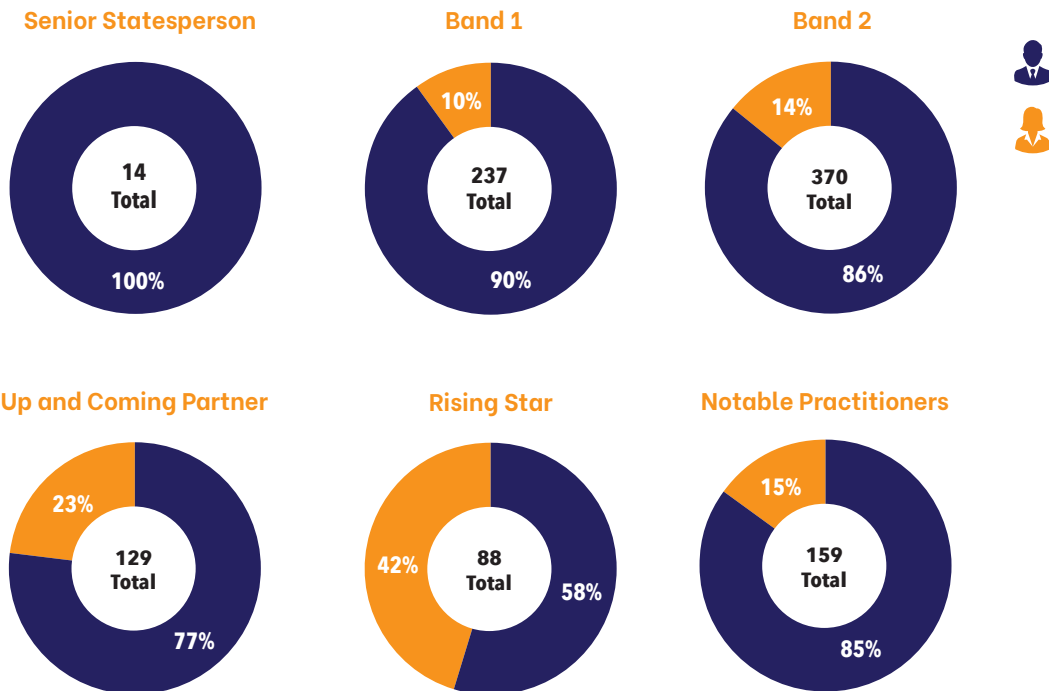
Practice Area Level

Gender Representation by Practice Area



Lawyer Levels: Gender

Breakdown of Gender by Tier





Commentary: The lawyer tiers can be seen to reflect the development cycle in a lawyer's career. Senior Statesperson represents those lawyers in their senior years. Tier 1, 2 and Notable Practitioners are lawyers at partner level, while Up and Coming Partners and Rising Stars reflect the future representation of a law firm.

The above figures shows that the market is shifting to be more gender balanced.



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