

# Bracewell: 'Paris Is a Leading Hub for Energy Work'

Media Mentions

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Bracewell's **Anne Lapierre**, managing partner of the firms' new Paris office, recently discussed with *IFLR* her aim in helping Bracewell become the go-to firm for energy and infrastructure in France.

"My long-term goals are to expand the practice and become the go-to firm for energy and infrastructure-related matters," Lapierre told *IFLR*. "I also aim to drive the successful development of Bracewell's expansion in France and elsewhere, and to ensure Bracewell's brand growth in the markets we operate in and globally."

She said that the US energy market is crucial for French and EU energy and infrastructure companies, many of which are global leaders investing heavily in energy transition projects. By opening a Paris office, Lapierre said that Bracewell's Francophone clients will gain access to the firm's connections in the US energy market, aiding them in achieving their goals overseas.

Lapierre also expanded on key factors influencing her team's decision to join Bracewell, adding to the firm's global footprint, as well as the opportunities and challenges ahead.

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## What Are the Key Factors That Led to Decision to Join Bracewell?

**Lapierre:** Bracewell knows energy. It has one of the largest energy and infrastructure practices in the world. Their expertise is very important to me and to our clients, who see us not only as legal counsel but as strong business partners.

I am very happy to have this opportunity and to contribute to Bracewell's global growth – and in many ways our work is complementary to Bracewell's.

### Related People

**Anne Lapierre**

Managing Partner – Paris

**PARIS**

+33 6 74 64 81 98

[anne.lapierre@bracewell.com](mailto:anne.lapierre@bracewell.com)

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We are dedicated to infrastructure, energy and non-recourse project finance and have a prevailing expertise on renewable energy and energy transition matters. That immediately expands Bracewell's work in renewables and complements their expertise in oil and gas and with energy transition projects.

Bracewell is a firm with a collaborative mindset. There is expertise and excitement to do together what we do best. We are more than lawyers: we are also stakeholders assisting our clients in the success of their projects.

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## How Will the Paris Office Contribute to Bracewell's Global Presence and Growth?

**Lapierre:** Our Paris team expands Bracewell's global footprint in France and the EU – where there are important financial and energy markets – and in Francophone Africa.

Specifically, the US energy market is extremely important to French and EU energy and infrastructure companies. In fact, several leading global energy players are French, and they are investing tremendous amounts of capital worldwide in energy transition projects – including in the US.

By joining Bracewell, our energy and infrastructure clients immediately benefit from the firm's deep experience, renowned expertise and important connections in the US energy market; this can help them meet their US market goals.

On the client services side, we are able to tap into the "One Bracewell" approach to delivering stellar, efficient legal services. This move immediately brings the experience, expertise and connections of Bracewell attorneys based in important energy and financial markets, such as Houston, New York and Washington, DC.

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## What Trends and Opportunities in the Energy and Infrastructure Sectors are You Excited About?

**Lapierre:** Paris, along with London, is a leading hub for energy work in the EMEA region.

There are over 20 French-speaking countries in Africa and most of them have legal systems that derive from the French Civil Code. The Paris team is highly knowledgeable and has significant experience working in these countries; they execute a lot of the M&A, project development and finance work that is done in Francophone Africa.

In addition, up to 90 percent of investment activity that takes place in Africa is in the energy and natural resources area, lending itself to excellent opportunities for Bracewell.

Green hydrogen is heavily supported by dedicated financing by the EU. In Francophone Africa, because of numerous green hydrogen mega projects currently looked at, and because of solar low-cost production, opportunities are huge. Not only on the projects themselves but also on the infrastructures where ports, facilities and others will need to be built to address the large export volumes to Europe and the world.

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## **What Challenges do You Foresee in the French Energy Market and How do You Plan to Mitigate Them With the Team?**

**Lapierre:** The main challenge is the question of the current political outcome in France. Today there is an unstable political environment in France, Europe and in some Sub-Saharan Africa countries. There is a disconnect between the time of planification and realization of an investment (which is long) and the short-term view of politics. This leads to uncertainty.

There is an impressive amount of energy and infrastructure projects which are scheduled in the coming 10 years, but because the outlook from politics is shorter than the time needed for investment and completion of those projects, there is uncertainty on the number of projects which will actually be developed.

For new energy technologies, the economics are not fully there yet, and financial investment decisions for all those projects will no doubt depend upon the size of subsidies that the sponsor will benefit from. Otherwise, financing will be difficult to access.

We mitigate those challenges by focusing more on clients than projects and countries. Another benefit is that Bracewell addresses several markets, so our business is not dependent on the economic wealth of one country.