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## The Legal 500 Asia Pacific

### 2020

The clients' guide to law firms

#### **BAE, KIM & LEE LLC**

133 TEHERAN-RO  
GANGNAM-GU  
SEOUL 06133  
SOUTH KOREA

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- Dispute resolution: local firms
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- Labour and employment: local firms
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# BAE, KIM & LEE LLC

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Bae, Kim & Lee LLC (BKL) is among the oldest and largest law firms in Korea with over 600 professionals. With practice groups specialised in every significant area of law for business in Korea, BKL supplies timely, accurate and practical legal support to its clients, wherever they are based, across a broad cross-section of industry, investment and finance.

BKL has long been at the leading edge of cross-border legal work in Korea. Among its many practice areas, it has been one of the busiest firms in Korea in the areas of M&A, finance and securities, advising clients from North America, Europe and Asia for over three decades. Likewise, BKL has built a reputation in the disputes arena not only as a litigation powerhouse but also as one of the top international arbitration and cross-border disputes teams in Asia.

Owing to the scale, quality and volume of its work, BKL has received many 'Deal of the Year' and 'Firm of the Year' honours. In every recognised client or peer assessment, BKL is ranked among the top firms in Korea. In all the firm does, it strives to provide client-focused legal services to its clients, many of whom have been with the firm for many years.

The firm's clients include many multinational business groups and leaders in the Korean market. Manufacturer clients represent industries such as automotive, software, consumer goods, pharmaceuticals, oil and gas and shipping. Among its financial clients are banks, brokerage and asset management companies, insurers and private equity groups. Other clients are in energy, property development, retail and broadcasting, to name a few.

Headquartered in Seoul, BKL maintains overseas offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Dubai, Hong Kong, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Yangon. The first Korean firm to set up offices in China and the UAE, BKL has pioneered a region-wide approach to legal services. BKL is also the first Korean law firm to establish its branch office in Pangyo Techno Valley, an industrial complex in the city of Pangyo, South Korea. BKL is a member of the World Law Group and regularly collaborates with other firms across the world.

## STAFF FIGURES

Number of partners : 223

Number of lawyers : 511

Number of fee-earners : 629



**LANGUAGES  
SPOKEN**

Burmese, Chinese, English,  
French, German, Hindi, Italian,  
Japanese, Korean, Portuguese,  
Russian, Spanish, Urdu,  
Vietnamese

## MAIN CONTACTS

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TMT	Sang Jik Lee	sangjik.lee@bkl.co.kr

## MEMBERSHIPS

American Bar Association (ABA)  
American Chamber of Commerce in Korea  
IBA (International Bar Association)  
Korean Bar Association  
IPBA  
World Law Group  
Japan Intellectual Property Association (JIPA)

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## CAPITAL MARKETS: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 1

**Bae, Kim & Lee LLC** handles the full life cycle of transactional work, including deal structuring, negotiation, closing and post-closing. Areas of expertise include cross-border transactions, IPOs, securities, derivatives, structured finance and securitization. The firm also handles tax issues, due diligence, reviewing contracts and negotiating, reporting foreign exchange transactions and registering overseas funds. The team advises on alternative investments in various fields including real estate, infrastructure, energy, aircrafts, vessels and commodities. Co-head of team **Eui Jong Chung** counts global financial institutions and private equity funds amongst his clients; he is adept at advising on regulatory matters for cross-border transactions. **Hee-Gang Shin** is also recommended; he focuses on corporate finance, corporate governance, private equity and project finance. Jeong Hoon Lee joined as partner from **Shin & Kim**.

#### Leading individuals

Eui Jong Chung

## CORPORATE AND M&A: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 1

**Bae, Kim & Lee LLC** serves a sizeable base of Korean and foreign multinational companies, as well as financial institutions and domestic and international private equity funds. Jointly led by **Dong Woo Seo** and **Sky Yang**, the group acts as a first port of call for many entities in their most strategically significant corporate and commercial transactions. In 2018, **Joonki Yi, Yong Quan Chi, Sungmin Cho** and **Soobin Kim** assisted China-based client Doublestar Group with acquiring a 45% interest in Kumho Tire for circa \$605m; this transaction was the first-ever in Korea where control of the target company was transferred from its creditors to a strategic investor without involving a sale of any existing shares. Another highlight saw Yang, **Mi Eun Roh** and **Seung Il Hong** act for Shinhan Financial Group on the KRW2.3bn acquisition of Orange Life (formerly ING Life Insurance) from MBK Partners; this was the largest deal in 2018. In a recent development, **Soobin Kim, Hyo Jun An, Choonjae Wee, Yoon Y. Huh, David Soohyun Joo** and **Michael Suh** made partner. **Ri Bong Han, Byoung-Ki Lee** and **Mok H. Kim** are among other key figures in the group.

#### Leading individuals

Sky Yang

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## DISPUTE RESOLUTION: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 1

**Bae, Kim & Lee LLC**'s high-calibre team includes practitioners with experience of serving as judges, notably **Wu Cheol Song**, **Tony Dongwook Kang**, **Soon Ik Kwon** and **Kitae Hong**. In addition to being active in all aspects of general commercial litigation, the group excels in more specialised areas, such as white-collar crime, hostile takeovers and defence, product liability, antitrust and intellectual property. **Jung Myun Oh** has over 20 years of construction and real estate experience. Recent highlights included Kang, **Jeong Rai Cho** and **Yongman Bae** successfully representing the Export-Import Bank of Korea and ten other parties at the Supreme Court in a landmark circa KRW1bn damages action brought by Kookmin Bank in connection with the workout of Sungdong Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering. Another highlight involved Kwon and **Jungno Yoon** advising the Export-Import Bank of Korea on litigation brought by JC Com over losses it allegedly sustained due to the shutdown of the Gaesung Industrial Complex in 2013 as a consequence of deteriorating relations between North and South Korea. Bae, **Myung Eun Oh**, **Taejoon Kook** and **Soyoung Lee** made partner in January 2019.

#### Leading individuals

Tony Dongwook Kang

Wu Cheol Song

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 1

The '*well-organised*' IP practice group at **Bae, Kim & Lee LLC** is renowned for its contentious capabilities in this space, which cover general IP litigation and dispute resolution in addition to patent prosecution and trade secret-related matters. A particular strength in representing major players in the pharmaceutical and high-tech industries distinguishes the practice. Elsewhere, the team also handles IP licensing and technology transfers and advises on data protection and privacy issues. Practice heads **Taeck Soo Kwon**, **Jihyun KIM** and **Jong Wook Lee** are all recommended. Also noteworthy is **Tae Uk Kang**, who boasts five years' prior experience as a judge including his two-year-long service at the IP department of Suwon District Court.

#### Leading individuals

Taeck Soo Kwon

#### Next generation partners

Tae Uk Kang

## INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION

### Tier 1

**Bae, Kim & Lee LLC**'s heavyweight team has a wealth of experience acting as counsel in arbitrations seated in jurisdictions across Asia, Europe and North America. Investor-state work is an area of growth, with the firm increasingly being sought out to advise Korean investors on disputes with foreign states. Elsewhere, international construction disputes form a large part of the firm's overall caseload, with the firm advising many of the largest and most active Korean construction companies and other key clients on contentious matters; **Matthew Christensen** heads up a specialist group in this space. In one highlight, a group led by **Kap-You Kim, John Bang** and **Seung-Hyeon (Alex) Kim** is acting as co-counsel to Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) in a high-value LCIA arbitration against a consortium of two Korean conglomerates over the construction of the first nuclear power station in the United Arab Emirates. The firm is also a market-leader in high-stakes international commercial disputes; recent work included Bang, Kim, **Junu Kim** and others acting as sole counsel to SAP Korea in an ICC arbitration concerning claims of unauthorized use by a government-owned utility company and its subsidiary of high-value proprietary enterprise resource planning software (in breach of a licence). **David MacArthur**'s experience includes IP/IT-related matters and cases connected with the shipbuilding and automotive industries. **Seokchun Yun** made partner in 2018. **Kyongwha Chung** has recently also made partner.

#### Leading individuals

John Bang  
Matthew Christensen  
Kap-You Kim

#### Next generation partners

David MacArthur  
Junu Kim

#### Rising stars

Woochul Hwang



## LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 1

The labour and employment team at **Bae, Kim & Lee LLC** provides a full range of labour and employment services to Korean conglomerates and multi-national companies doing business in Korea. Especially renowned for employment litigation, particularly in defending corporations in major labour disputes with employees, the group also has a very strong relationship with the Ministry of Employment and Labour which it has been advising on the amendments to the Occupational Health & Safety Act. **Hyung Ro Kim** represents various clients in large-scale disputes and projects regarding ordinary wage, illegal dispatch, and criminal cases. **Jungwoo Lee** was recently promoted to the partnership and is also a key name to note alongside practice head **Wook Rae Lee, Jeong Han Lee** and litigation expert **Sang Kyun Lang**.

#### Leading individuals

Jeong Han Lee

#### Next generation partners

Hyung Ro Kim

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## REAL ESTATE: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 1

The real estate group at **Bae, Kim & Lee LLC** has a strong reputation for inbound and outbound real estate investment transactions. The firm's enviable client roster includes Korean real estate developers and regularly advises on commercial, residential and multi-use building city development projects. **Gun Chul Do** leads the practice from Seoul. The department recently handled a number of high-value real estate transactions in Korea and abroad. Other key contacts include REITs and investment expert **Hyeon Kang, David Ahn, Chiyong Song** and **Eun Jin Jeon**.

#### Leading individuals

Gun Chul Do

## REGULATORY: COMPLIANCE AND INVESTIGATIONS: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 1

“**Bae, Kim & Lee LLC** is home to extensive experience in representing companies and individuals in criminal trials, international investigations and administrative proceedings. Specific expertise includes negotiations with tax authorities, money laundering issues, embezzlement, anti-corruption and auditing regulations. **Sangchul Lee** is an expert on IP property rights, fair trade issues, environmental issues and trade secret matters. He heads the practice which possesses broad industry expertise include financial services, construction, energy, media, real estate, technology, telecommunications and retail. In a recent highlight, the team successfully represented the former chairman of KT Corporation in high-profile charges of embezzlement and violation of one’s duty. Hwan Gyun Roh departed.”

#### Leading individuals

Sangchul Lee

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## TMT: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 1

**Bae, Kim & Lee LLC**'s team have a *'deep understanding in the technology-based industry, such as fintech and blockchain services'*, with additional expertise in the regulatory side of telecoms, broadcaster, data privacy and IT networks. Prominent lawyers include **Ji Yeon Park** for telecom and broadcast regulation, as well as e-commerce and online media issues; **Joon Yong Park**, **Sang Jik Lee** and **Yangho OH** for data security regulation and **Jong-Baek Park** for fintech, cryptocurrency and software licensing. **Kwang Hyun Ryoo** leads the practice.

#### Leading individuals

Kwang Hyun Ryoo

#### Next generation partners

Joon Yong Park

## ANTITRUST AND COMPETITION: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 2

“ The antitrust and competition bench at **Bae, Kim & Lee LLC** comprises 40 lawyers solely dedicated to this practice area. Practitioners include Korean attorneys, foreign attorneys, former judges and former KFTC officials across both the junior and senior levels. The firm has a reputation for successfully representing clients in competition investigations and litigation before both the KFTC and the courts; these often involve allegations of domestic and international cartel activities, abuse of market dominance and unfair business practices. Cross-jurisdictional merger filing is another core piece of the practice, which is led by key contact **Keumseok Oh**. Foreign attorney **Sanghoon Shin** boasts nine years' prior experience at KFTC. **Joon Kyu An** and **Jong Ha Park** were made up to partner in January 2019. ”

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## BANKING AND FINANCE: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 2

**Bae, Kim & Lee LLC** often acts for private equity funds as borrowers on financing mandates. More recently, the group has been handling a greater number of acquisition financing mandates in which it represents the lender. Other observable growth areas include aviation financing and real estate project financing. Advising Korean sponsors on financing the exportation of nuclear or hydropower to foreign jurisdictions is a niche hallmark of the practice. Team head **Eui Jong Chung** has an enviable track record, having previously advised the Korean government in relation to the Korea-EU free trade agreement. **Hee Gang Shin** is the name to note for project financing. Also strongly recommended is **Ho Jin Kim**.

#### Next generation partners

Ho Jin Kim

## INSURANCE: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 2

Led by **Jong Ku Kang** and **Jaiyoung Kim, Bae, Kim & Lee LLC** represents both international and domestic insurers across a range of contentious and non-contentious mandates. Kang advises on regulations, insurance claims and the asset management of insurance companies, whereas Kim is highly experienced in handling regulatory compliance and investigations. Another key member of the team is **Jong Min An**, who also advises on insurance regulations.

#### Leading individuals

Jong Ku Kang

#### Rising stars

Jae Seok Yang

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## PROJECTS AND ENERGY: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 2

“**Bae, Kim & Lee LLC** is prominent in the power, oil and gas sectors as well as in infrastructure projects covering highways, railroads and airports. **Seungkyo Lee** leads the team with knowledge of power projects, investments and project finance. **Hyunchul An**, alongside Lee, advised the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport in relation to a project to produce environmentally friendly cement and concrete. **Chinpyo Park** is a key member of the team with experience in electricity and gas regulations.”

#### Leading individuals

Seungkyo Lee



## SHIPPING: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 2

In addition to acting for Korean clients, **Bae, Kim & Lee LLC** generates work from entities in Singapore and across Europe. Jointly led by **Jong Ku Kang** and **Jai Young Kim**, the team excels in shipbuilding disputes, collision cases, cargo damage claims, vessel arrests and charter party disputes. The group also advises clients on non-contentious shipping matters, such as corporate restructurings, finance transactions and business management issues. Entities that instruct the firm include Korean shipping companies, Korean shipyards, P&I clubs and commercial banks. Kang is acting as Korean counsel to Boyang in LMAA arbitration proceedings against the owners of MV Uruguay Reefer; the dispute arose from the client losing circa \$4m worth of cargo when the vessel sank during its voyage to the Falkland Islands. **Yoon Jeong Park** is a name to note in the group. Tae Jeong Kim joined Hyundai Heavy Industries.

#### Leading individuals

Jong Ku Kang

#### Next generation partners

Yoon Jeong Park

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## TAX: LOCAL FIRMS

### Tier 2

**Bae, Kim & Lee LLC** handles a broad range of tax work but is best known for representing clients in tax disputes. The firm has an excellent track record of defending corporations in major tax assessments. Transfer pricing is another core area of expertise; besides basic review of intercompany transactions, the team is also instructed on the preparation of transfer pricing studies, advance pricing agreements and mutual agreements procedures. Furthermore, the practice works closely with the firm's white-collar crime department to assist clients with highly contentious tax probes, investigations and litigation. **Wu Cheol Song** and **Il Young Cho** together lead the group. Foreign attorney **Maria Chang** is another key contact.

#### Leading individuals

Il Young Cho

#### Next generation partners

Maria Chang