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Miranda: new lead, new strategies

The firm's newly elected managing partner, Nuno Cabeçadas discusses technology, ESG, and cross-border opportunities as growth drivers

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by glória paiva

Nuno Cabeçadas took over as managing partner of Miranda in July, succeeding **Diogo Xavier da Cunha** after ten years of leadership. With 23 years at the firm, since joining as a trainee, he is a banking and finance specialist who has advised on major projects and transactions. Africa, a cornerstone of the firm's strategy, was also a defining influence on his career: he spent six years in Maputo on secondment with Miranda Alliance, an experience that shaped him both personally and professionally.

A partner since 2013 and board member since 2021, Cabeçadas now leads Miranda through a governance restructuring that strengthens the link between strategy and operations. Daily management is entrusted to a new Executive Committee, comprising Cabeçadas, **Nuno Gouveia** and **Sofia Martins**, while an Ethics and Risk Committee chaired by **Ana Pinelas Pinto** reinforces the institutional framework. In this exclusive interview with Iberian Lawyer, Cabeçadas sets out his priorities: building a digital culture, investing in young lawyers, and boosting business development in an increasingly competitive market.

What are your main strategic priorities as managing partner?

I see three main priorities. The first is technology: the challenge is not deploying tools, but creating a digital culture across the firm, where people feel comfortable using them. That's what turns software into transformation, and it matters because clients expect speed, efficiency and new ways of delivering value. The real priority is not just adopting technology, but embedding innovation into the way we think and work. The second is people. The future of Miranda depends on how we invest in our younger lawyers, giving them the same opportunities to learn and grow as I had 25 years ago. Beyond technical skills, clients want lawyers who understand business, different cultures and judgment—something only achieved through

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structured training and mentoring. The third is business development: clients now look not just at reputation, but at who shows sector knowledge, communicates value and is present in the right processes.

Miranda has a well-established presence in several African countries. What opportunities and challenges do you see for strengthening this position in the coming years?

Africa is where we see the biggest opportunities: the demographic and economic trends are extraordinary. By 2050, the African workforce will be larger than the combined workforces of China and India. That will drive demand for infrastructure, energy, natural resources, technology, healthcare and services at a scale that few other regions can match. For Miranda, this is not new territory: we have been present on the ground for almost 40 years. Clients want advice that is technically sound but also realistic in the local context, and we are one of the very few law firms that can deliver both

consistently across so many jurisdictions. So when I look ahead, I see Africa as central to our growth.

Is the firm planning to expand into new markets or strengthen its presence in any specific jurisdiction?

We are always attentive to new opportunities, whether that means reinforcing our presence where we already are or looking at new markets. For us, expansion has to be driven by client needs and by the ability to deliver quality and consistency on the ground. Right now, our focus is on making sure that the Miranda Alliance continues to deliver at the highest level across all the jurisdictions where we already have a strong presence. That is what sets us apart. But we remain open and alert. If the right opportunity arises – in a jurisdiction, in a sector, or through a new partnership – we want to be ready to seize it.

How is Miranda adapting to the new demands of the global legal market, such as digitalisation, ESG, or artificial intelligence?

We are deploying platforms that help us work faster and smarter, from research to document review. But more important than the tools is the culture around them, which is why we launched a program to build a genuine digital mindset across the firm. An essential aspect is security: technology only adds value if it is safe, and client trust depends on data protection, confidentiality and information security — which are non-negotiable. On ESG, the shift is clear: it is no longer optional, but central, to how clients operate and how we advise them. Whether in energy transition, financing or governance, ESG is now embedded in our daily work. To address this, we created a dedicated ESG team bringing together corporate, finance, energy and regulatory lawyers, so we can approach issues in an integrated way and support clients with compliance, reporting and structuring in line with today's regulatory and market expectations.



The professional path of Nuno Cabeçadas

- 2002** Joins Miranda as trainee
- 2004** Associate in Mozambique
- 2010** Returns to Lisbon as associate
- 2013** Becomes partner
- 2025** Elected managing partner

How has your experience in Africa shaped your view of law and legal practice?

I spent six years in the Maputo office and have traveled to more than 20 African countries for work. My practice has always been focused on Africa, particularly Lusophone Africa, and those experiences shaped me as both a lawyer and a person. The first lesson is humility: practicing law in Africa teaches you to listen, adapt, and never take anything for granted. The second is impact. As a project finance lawyer in energy and infrastructure, I sometimes see directly that my work helped bring electricity to a community or created infrastructure that improves lives. That is both a privilege and a motivation. The third lesson is resilience. Africa's pace of change is uneven and environments can be challenging, but they teach patience, resourcefulness, and the ability to keep going when things don't move as fast as you would like. Africa is a place that has shaped the way I see law, clients and the role of our profession.

How would you describe Miranda's current position in the Portuguese and international legal markets?

In Portugal, we have an important and solid practice that is essential to who we are. It shapes and builds the know-how that we then export to Africa and other markets. Lisbon is not just our headquarters, it is the center of gravity where talent is developed and knowledge is created before it is applied abroad. Internationally, we have something truly unique: the Miranda Alliance, with a footprint across Africa that no other Portuguese firm can match. What makes this special is not just the map of where we are, but the depth of the relationships and the know-how we have built over almost 40 years of continuous work in these jurisdictions.

What are the main sectors or industries the firm is focusing on for growth in the coming years?

We see growth in sectors that reflect major economic and social trends: energy, infrastructure and natural resources. These have always been central to Miranda's practice, but demand is rising as African countries expand power grids, invest in renewables, modernise transport and open new opportunities in mining and gas. Finance and telecoms are also key, as they are the backbone of



PRACTICE AREAS
Banking & finance, project finance, and debt transactions

SECTOR FOCUS
Project development and finance in power (including renewables) and infrastructure


AFRICA EXPERTISE
Advises sponsors, project companies, and lenders across Africa

HOBBIES & INTERESTS

- Reading about African history
- Cooking and exploring diverse flavors

much of this growth. Many of our deals involve cross-border financings or large investments, while telecoms and digital services are booming and creating new types of projects. Portugal plays a vital role: we have a strong national practice in public law, energy, litigation, real estate and employment, but Lisbon is also where know-how is built and exported. Strengthening our Portuguese teams directly strengthens what we deliver to clients in Africa.

What legacy would you like to leave at the end of your term as managing partner?

When I joined Miranda in the last year of law school, I never imagined that one day I would become managing partner. So just having the opportunity to serve the firm in this role already carries a huge symbolic meaning. I don't see legacy as something individual. What I hope is that, when my time as managing partner ends, people will feel that Miranda is stronger, more united and better prepared for the future. If younger lawyers feel that the firm invested in them, if technology and new ways of working have become a natural part of our culture and if our international platform continues to be a source of pride and opportunity, then I will feel I did my part. 

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