



Inside the Deloitte Legal Telles project

Managing partner Francisco Espregueira Mendes details the strategic alignment, shared values, motivations and goals of the new firm set to launch in 2026

by glória paiva

The idea of joining Deloitte Legal and Telles arose almost informally, during a lunch on the future of law. At that meeting, **António Lagartixo**, CEO of Deloitte, shared with **Francisco Espregueira Mendes**, managing partner of Telles, and **Miguel Torres**, chairman, Deloitte's vision for its legal market. Until then, Telles had followed a "stand-alone" approach, but the discussion changed that perspective. "We were surprised by Deloitte's openness and commitment to developing a disruptive project in the national legal landscape", Espregueira Mendes says.

From that conversation, the seed of Deloitte Legal Telles was planted, scheduled to launch in 2026 under Espregueira Mendes' leadership. Alongside him will be **Mónica Moreira**, current head of Deloitte Legal, as vice-president, and **Carlos Lucena**, founding partner of Telles, who will support the new management.

The trio is working with the 43 partners of both firms on the project's strategy and execution plan, completing regulatory procedures and defining aspects such as location and formal legal structure, whether a merger, formation of a new entity, or another solution. "More than the form, what matters is that this is a strategic integration project, aimed at creating a leading law firm without precedent in our jurisdiction", states the managing partner.

The goal is to combine strengths, starting from a structure of around 240 lawyers, a network of over 5,000 clients, and significant investments in technology and artificial intelligence, offering the full range of global services alongside Deloitte's consulting areas. In an interview with Iberian Lawyer, Espregueira Mendes discussed his leadership priorities and the strategic vision for Deloitte Legal Telles.

What are the motivations behind the alliance between Telles and Deloitte Legal?

Telles has almost 90 years of history, always guided by excellence, rigour, independence, and client proximity. We are financially solid, with highly qualified lawyers and a significant client portfolio, while keeping a "challenger" spirit. Deloitte Legal

shares the same values, having originated from CTSU and been led with commitment by Mónica Moreira, whose involvement in the new project is total since the beginning. We are strongly aligned strategically, as we share the same values and long-term vision, as well as a desire to do things differently and better. We are always focused on our clients, who are our main asset and the reason we exist. This move is a natural evolution. A response to the times, yes, but done our way (Deloitte, Deloitte Legal and Telles), with our identity, and with the ambition to be at the forefront of innovation and sophistication in national and international legal markets.

What does this integration bring as a differentiator?

This integration represents a unique move in the national legal landscape. For the first time, a Big Four organisation has a law firm with a scale comparable to its Audit & Assurance; Tax; Strate-



FRANCISCO ESPREGUEIRA MENDES

gy, Risk & Transactions; Technology & Transformation divisions, reinforcing its reputation and strategic focus on legal services. This project will strike a balance between the best of the legacy that each of us has and our ability to reinvent ourselves, so that we can provide our clients with increasingly high-quality and sophisticated services. The differentiating factor lies in balancing what we have already built with our capacity to evolve for the future.

What priorities and objectives have been set for the new structure?

Our objectives are always centred on our clients and the people who work with us. We aim to establish ourselves as a forward-looking law firm, based on the excellence of our team. We believe in client-focused law, meritocracy, talent development, and collaborative teams. We will work with a cross-cutting, a digital approach and innovative legal solutions, powered by technology and the connection to other knowledge areas. We want to grow sustainably, with qualified teams able to support our clients anywhere in the world.

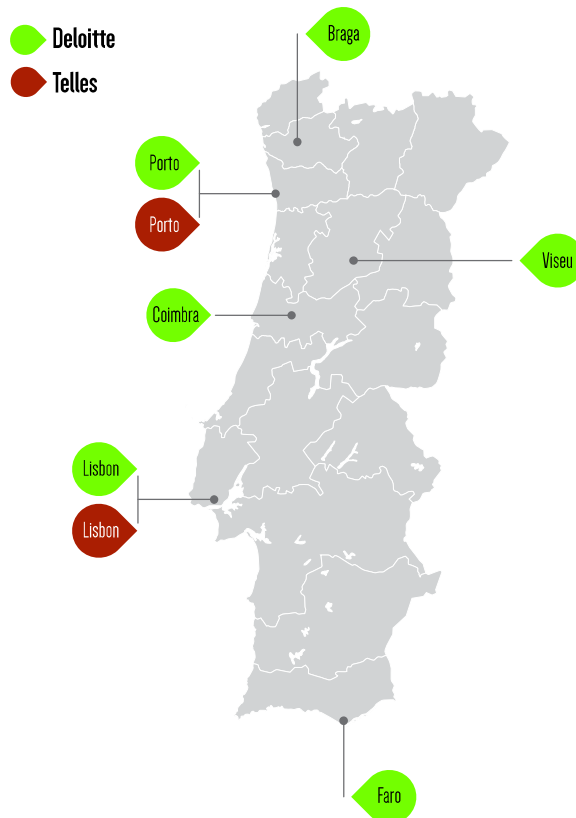
What priorities do you set for your leadership in this project?

This union is creating a law firm without precedent in our jurisdiction. As the future managing partner, the most important thing is that clients continue to receive high-quality service, and that people remain motivated, take advantage of growth opportunities, and find professional fulfilment. There is total alignment—between myself, Mónica Moreira, and all teams involved—without which the project would not have seen the light of day. We are strongly committed to the project, which has already attracted significant interest from lawyers of different generations who want to learn more about it and explore the possibility of joining us, ensuring a natural, structured and effective transition.

Deloitte has a strong international presence and a multidisciplinary profile. What opportunities can these features create?

Both Deloitte Legal and Telles provide only legal services, meaning they are not multidisciplinary firms, and the same will apply to Deloitte Legal

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Telles. The project aims to create a large law firm, focused exclusively on legal services. The multidisciplinary aspect comes from combining with other Deloitte offerings, generating synergies and integrated solutions for clients. A strong legal team will work alongside Audit & Assurance, Tax, Strategy & Risk, and Technology, providing a “turnkey” service across these areas. At the same time, we significantly strengthen our clients’ international capabilities through the Deloitte Legal global network. This project enhances referral opportunities within the network and combines them with the international relationships already established by Telles in jurisdictions where Deloitte Legal does not have a presence. This adds value and global reach to one of the main strategic objectives of both Deloitte Legal and Telles.

How are you preparing to integrate technology and AI into legal practice, in line with market trends?

Integrating technology and artificial intelligence into legal practice is a strategic pillar of Deloitte Legal Telles. There is a clear commitment to innovation as a value driver for our clients, lawyers, and non legal professionals, and for the evolution of the legal sector itself. We know AI will play an increasing role in law, but we believe its impact will be greater the better it is integrated into a culture of technical excellence and professional ethics that recognises and values human qualities. In this respect, the association with the Deloitte network, which in Portugal alone has around 3,400 people in technology, seems like a perfect match.

What motivates you most in this new role?

The opportunity to build a truly distinctive project. We are pioneering a new approach to the practice of law in Portugal. It is a project that challenges traditional law firm models and invites us to think differently, creating a more open, integrated law firm, closer to clients and their needs. We aim to exceed client expectations and provide our people with a unique space for professional development.

What has been the greatest challenge in this new scenario?

Perhaps the greatest challenge—and at the same time the most stimulating—is aligning cultures, expectations, and ways of working. We are bringing together two different realities, but with many points in common: values, focus on excellence, client interest, respect for people, and the ambition to do more and better.

Is there any lesson from your career guiding you in this phase?

I had the privilege of growing professionally in a unique law firm and learned from truly inspiring people, such as my mentor Carlos Lucena, and Luís Telles de Abreu, whose name is at the origin of Telles. From them, I learned that beyond technical mastery, what truly distinguishes a lawyer and a leader is the ability to listen, build trust, and act with responsibility, ethics, and purpose. The best

DELOITTE LEGAL TELLES IN NUMBERS (Portugal only)

Deloitte

€385 million

Turnover

5,300

Employees

Deloitte Legal

€7 million

Revenue

60

Lawyers

Telles

€19 million

Revenue

150

Lawyers

decisions balance ambition with principles, strategy with humanity. This is exactly what I intend to carry into this new phase: the conviction that only with a strong culture, based on authentic values, can something lasting and impactful be built. 

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