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## PLMJ sets up Swiss presence to target HNWI work

17 March 2014 | By [Joanne Harris](http://www.thelawyer.com/author/joanne-harris/) (URL=[joanne-harris/62.bio](http://www.thelawyer.com/author/joanne-harris/))

Portuguese firm PLMJ has set up a Swiss desk and opened an office in Lausanne in response to increasing amounts of work involving private clients with assets in Switzerland.



Nuno Cunha Barnabé

The initiative is led by partner Nuno Cunha Barnabé, who was recently admitted to practise in the canton of Vaud and is now spending several days a month in the canton's capital Lausanne.

Cunha Barnabé said Switzerland is popular among Portuguese high-net worth individuals (HNWI) as a location for their assets. There is also a significant Portuguese population in Switzerland, with almost 238,000 Portuguese people living there in 2012 according to Swiss statistics - the third-largest foreign population, behind Germans and Italians.

He told The Lawyer the project was the result of increasing instructions relating to Switzerland and the fact he was travelling to Switzerland more often.

"The more time we spend there, the more work will result," Cunha Barnabé said.

A further attraction for PLMJ was the interest of Swiss-headquartered corporates in Portuguese-speaking countries, including Angola, Brazil and Mozambique, where the firm has associated offices. Existing clients include consumer giant Nestlé, which is has its global head office in the Vaud town of Vevey.

Cunha Barnabé said PLMJ already has a lawyer on full-time secondment to a Swiss client in the canton, which helped drive the decision to begin the firm's Swiss operations in Vaud rather than the private client capital of Geneva. However he said he would not rule out future expansion to Geneva if the project proved successful.

"Technical work can be done anywhere," Cunha Barnabé added. "The point is that we need to be available for clients."

He said he expected to be spending increasing amounts of time in Switzerland as demand continued to grow, especially from private clients.

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