

By Francis Kajubi

A PRIVATE law firm, IMMMA Advocates, has trained Somali officials on a number of government business areas, including production sharing agreements (PSA).

The four-day training was held early last September in Nairobi where 30 Somali civil servants participated.

Speaking recently to Smart Money, IMMMA Advocates Managing Director for Partnership, Sadock Magai, said that the Somali officials who received the training included lawyers, engineers, members of parliament, directors and poli-

cymakers.

"Training is important for any nation that wishes to achieve economic development through private and public partnership. With PSA, the government and investors understand their obligations and who has what right in a specific agreement. PSA is also fundamental for capacity building in negotiating investments between governments and companies," Magai said.

He said the training focused on three main work streams that would enable Somalia come up with a wonderful PSA on oil and

Local law firm beats global peers to train Somalis on state contracts

gas. "Among the three work streams was to train Somali officials on preparing professional PSA model, a document used by the state to enter contracts with international oil companies (IOCs) to explore, develop and develop oil," Magai said.

He said the other work stream was to train them on preparing a negotiation manual that helps parties to an agreement understand the terms of contracts they sign. They were also trained on writing a strategic report that links the context of the PSA model and the negotia-

tion manual.

Proteus Ishengoma, IMMMA Advocates Head of Infrastructure, Oil and Gas Team said the training on PSA is important in fostering economic growth since a well written PSA can prevent governments from entering bad pacts with investors.

"This training is important because officials need to have knowledge on how PSA works. I think it's the best idea to have a good PSA and to train officials on understanding how to apply it. Currently, Somalia has the best PSA in Africa and we made it possible," Ishengoma said.

"PSA helps business partners get the input of what either side wants through a win-win situation and how valuable this is to their countries or companies. It took us six months to

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come up with a good PSA sample that we used to pitch for training out of almost 20 law firms," he added.

He further said that training government officials on the basic knowledge about PSA is crucial since the market is dynamic and the exchange of workers in offices is permanent.

He said that having a professional PSA would do good to TPDC, Ewura and Tanesco in their contracts with foreign companies to avoid fraud, theft and tax evasion. Ishengoma said that the training was sponsored by African Legal Support Facility through Afri-

can Development Bank.

IMMMA Advocates was established 20 years ago and currently has made it to a team of 25 legal qualified lawyers. It is a member of the DLA Piper Group, an alliance of leading independent law firms working together in association with DLA Piper, both internationally and across Africa.

To win a deal with the Somali government, IMMMA Advocates pitched the tender in collaboration with IKM Advocates from Kenya and the DUNDEE University of Scotland under the Centre for Energy, Oil and Mineral law department.