
IFOX[®] Collaboration Framework LawColl© Module

LC-102

Information Kit

Version 1.0 — June 2026

A practical operational methodology for collaboration among independent law firms.

BETTER TOGETHER. STRONGER FOR CLIENTS.

Developed by:



1. Executive Summary

IFOX® LawColl© is the legal-services implementation of the broader IFOX® Collaboration Framework.

IFOX® LawColl© is a practical operational methodology designed to facilitate collaboration among independent law firms. It is not a network, not an association, not a membership organisation, and not a referral scheme. It is a framework: a shared set of principles, processes and instruments that independent firms may adopt on a matter-by-matter basis to make their professional cooperation more predictable, more efficient and more valuable for their clients.

The framework was created from a straightforward observation. Professional relationships between lawyers often exist. The decision to work together on a specific matter is frequently made. Yet the moment a firm picks up the telephone to ask a colleague for assistance, a series of uncertainties arise. How much will the initial consultation cost? How quickly will a response arrive? Who will own the client relationship once a second firm becomes involved? How will responsibilities be divided? What happens if the matter grows beyond the initial request?

These are not trivial questions. In many cases they remain unresolved until problems occur. The result is friction: delayed requests, unclear expectations, misaligned billing arrangements and missed opportunities for clients.

IFOX® LawColl© addresses each of these uncertainties through twelve governing principles, an eight-stage Collaboration Lifecycle, and a standardised onboarding instrument called the Framework Consultation Rate (FCR). Together, these elements create a common operational language that firms can use whenever they decide to collaborate, without creating any new organisational structure, membership obligation or financial commitment.

The framework operates as a complement to professional associations and networks, not as a substitute for them. Associations create relationships. LawColl provides the methodology to transform those relationships into productive professional cooperation.

This Information Kit describes the framework in full. It is intended for partners, managing partners, international lawyers and cross-border practitioners who wish to understand the methodology and consider whether to adopt it in their own practice.

2. Why LawColl Exists

The Collaboration Problem

Professional collaboration among independent law firms is common. In a world of cross-border transactions, international disputes, multinational clients and jurisdictional complexity, virtually every firm involved in international work has encountered the need for assistance from colleagues in other jurisdictions.

The decision to seek that assistance, however, is rarely smooth. Lawyers hesitate for reasons that are often practical rather than professional. They do not know whether a telephone call to a colleague will generate a bill or a favour. They are uncertain whether requesting assistance will affect their standing as the client's principal adviser. They cannot predict how long a response will take. They do not know whether a preliminary consultation will escalate into an unmanaged engagement.

Cross-border matters amplify these difficulties. Different legal cultures, billing traditions, procedural expectations and professional norms create additional layers of uncertainty. A lawyer trained in a civil law system and a colleague from a common law jurisdiction may have entirely different assumptions about what a “preliminary consultation” involves, what it costs and what obligations it creates.

The Cost of Friction

The consequences of this friction are significant. Firms delay requests longer than clients benefit from. Preliminary consultations are initiated without clear scope, creating billing disputes. Client relationships are protected so fiercely that useful expertise is never requested. Misunderstandings arise not from incompetence but from the absence of a common framework.

Clients bear the practical cost. They receive less expert, less timely and less well-coordinated assistance than they would if their lawyers operated within a shared operational methodology.

What the Framework Addresses

IFOX® LawColl© was designed to remove these specific frictions. It does so by standardising the first stages of every collaboration — the identification of need, the selection of a partner firm, the submission of a structured request, the acceptance or rejection of that request, and the conduct of an initial consultation — while leaving the substance of legal work entirely to the professional judgement of each firm.

The framework does not attempt to standardise legal services. It standardises the process of initiating and managing collaboration. This distinction matters. The substantive quality of legal advice depends on knowledge, experience and judgement, none of which a framework can supply. What it supplies is predictability: about cost, about timing, about client ownership and about professional expectations.

The framework reduces uncertainty at the beginning of every collaboration, so that firms and clients can make informed decisions earlier and with greater confidence.

3. Relationship with Professional Associations

Complementarity, Not Competition

Professional associations such as AEA serve an essential function in the legal profession. They bring lawyers together across jurisdictions, create personal relationships, facilitate the exchange of knowledge and build the professional trust on which collaboration ultimately depends. These functions are irreplaceable, and the framework does not seek to replicate them.

IFOX® LawColl© addresses a different question. Associations answer: “Who do I know?” The framework answers a subsequent question: “Once I have decided to work with this firm, how should we proceed?”

The distinction is fundamental. Without relationships, the framework has no application. Without the framework, relationships alone cannot guarantee productive collaboration. The two are designed to work together, not in competition.

What the Framework Is Not

The framework creates no membership categories. It imposes no territorial arrangements, grants no exclusivity rights and creates no ranking systems. It does not certify firms, accredit practitioners or establish governance structures. There are no dues, no directories and no formal obligations flowing from adoption of the methodology.

A firm that uses IFOX® LawColl© on one matter this month is under no obligation to use it on any other matter. A firm that uses it on a hundred matters has acquired no special status. The methodology is available to any firm that wishes to use it, on any matter, at any time, without formality.

Practical Value for Associations

From the perspective of a professional association, the framework represents a potential amplifier of the value its members derive from membership. A relationship created through an association conference becomes more practically useful when both parties share a common operational methodology for translating that relationship into professional cooperation. The framework does not draw members away from the association; it gives them a practical tool to extract more operational value from the relationships the association has already helped them build.

Associations create relationships. IFOX® LawColl© provides the operational methodology to transform those relationships into practical, structured and productive professional collaboration.

4. The Collaboration Lifecycle

The framework organises every collaboration around a Collaboration Lifecycle consisting of eight stages. The lifecycle is not a rigid procedure. It is a conceptual map of how collaborations typically evolve, designed to help firms anticipate each stage, communicate clearly and make informed decisions before committing to the next.

#	Stage / Timing	Description
1	Need Identification <i>When needed</i>	The Originating Firm identifies that additional expertise, local knowledge, language capability or jurisdictional presence may benefit the client or the matter. This stage requires no formal action; it is a recognition that assistance may be appropriate.
2	Partner Selection <i>When needed</i>	The Originating Firm identifies suitable firms based on expertise, experience, professional trust and availability. This stage may draw on existing relationships, association contacts or professional networks.
3	Request Submission <i>Day 0</i>	The Originating Firm submits a structured Consultation Request Form providing a concise summary of the matter, the specific questions requiring assistance, the preferred deliverable format and the urgency level. The request initiates the formal lifecycle.
4	Acceptance or Rejection <i>Within 3 working days</i>	The Requested Firm performs a conflict verification check and responds promptly with acceptance or rejection. Silence within the agreed service level is treated as rejection, entitling the Originating Firm to approach alternative firms without further obligation.
5	Onboarding Consultation <i>Within 5 working days of acceptance</i>	A limited-scope consultation is conducted under the Framework Consultation Rate. The standard consultation is two hours. The Requested Firm provides an initial assessment, identifies key issues and risks, and recommends next steps. This stage is the operational heart of the framework.
6	Matter Evaluation <i>Following consultation</i>	Based on the onboarding consultation output, both firms and the client assess whether a further engagement is appropriate. The Requested Firm may provide an indicative scope and estimated cost for further work. No obligation to proceed arises from the consultation itself.
7	Matter Execution <i>As agreed</i>	If both firms agree to proceed, the matter advances under terms and communication protocols agreed in advance. The Originating Firm typically remains the principal coordinator and the primary point of contact with the client, unless a different arrangement is expressly agreed.
8	Feedback and Relationship Development <i>After conclusion</i>	Feedback is exchanged between the firms using the Consultation Feedback Form. Constructive, private and forward-looking feedback promotes continuous improvement and strengthens the professional relationship for future matters.

The lifecycle is designed to be proportionate. Most engagements will not require explicit attention to every stage. The framework provides a shared map so that both firms move in the same direction, even when the journey is short.

5. The Twelve Principles

The twelve principles form the doctrinal foundation of the framework. Each principle addresses a specific friction point in professional collaboration. Together they create a coherent operational philosophy that prioritises clarity, predictability, professional independence and long-term relationship development.

1 Client Ownership

Purpose

The client remains the client of the Originating Firm unless expressly agreed otherwise in writing.

Problem Addressed

One of the greatest barriers to seeking external assistance is the fear that introducing a second firm may weaken the Originating Firm's relationship with the client, or that the client may be lost to the collaborating firm.

Practical Implications

Firms are more willing to seek assistance when they know the client relationship is protected. The Requested Firm participates as a collaborating adviser, not a replacement. This principle enables earlier and more frequent use of external expertise, which benefits the client.

2 Direct Access

Purpose

Originating and Requested Firms communicate directly for the purposes of collaboration, without unnecessary intermediaries.

Problem Addressed

Collaboration is slowed and distorted when all communication must pass through layers of administration rather than directly between the professionals involved.

Practical Implications

Direct communication produces faster, more accurate and more productive exchanges. The framework assumes professional conduct and mutual respect as the basis for direct engagement.

3 Conflict Verification

Purpose

The Requested Firm performs a conflict verification check before accepting any request for assistance.

Problem Addressed

Professional obligations in virtually every jurisdiction require law firms to identify and manage conflicts of interest before agreeing to assist. Failure to do so creates professional and ethical exposure.

Practical Implications

Conflict verification is a precondition of acceptance. It must be performed promptly. A conflict that prevents assistance should be communicated without delay so the Originating Firm can approach alternative advisers.

4 Rapid Response

Purpose

The Requested Firm acknowledges a request within one working day and provides a definitive acceptance or rejection within three working days.

Problem Addressed

Professional opportunities are frequently lost not through disagreement but through delay. An unanswered request leaves the Originating Firm and the client in uncertainty and may cause the matter to be handled without appropriate expertise.

Practical Implications

The service level commitments in the framework are not aspirational targets. They are operational standards reflecting professional courtesy and commercial reality. The three-working-day response window is deliberately short to ensure that clients and originating firms can plan effectively.

5 Predictable Entry Cost

Purpose

The Framework Consultation Rate (FCR) establishes a known, agreed cost for the initial onboarding consultation before work begins.

Problem Addressed

Uncertainty about the cost of an initial consultation is one of the most common reasons firms delay or avoid seeking assistance. Neither firm knows how to price preliminary work; neither wants an awkward billing conversation before any professional relationship has been established.

Practical Implications

The FCR removes this uncertainty. Both firms know the cost before work begins. The Originating Firm can communicate a clear budget to the client. The Requested Firm is compensated for meaningful preliminary work. Economic friction at the first stage of collaboration is eliminated.

6 Limited Scope Onboarding

Purpose

The onboarding consultation is time-limited and focused on preliminary assessment, not on delivering a complete legal opinion.

Problem Addressed

Without a defined scope, a preliminary consultation can expand into an unmanaged engagement, creating billing disputes, scope creep and professional misunderstandings.

Practical Implications

The standard FCR consultation is limited to two hours. Within that scope the Requested Firm provides an initial assessment covering key issues, principal risks and recommended next steps. This output is sufficient for the Originating Firm and client to decide whether a full engagement is justified.

7 Transparent Escalation

Purpose

Any additional work beyond the standard FCR consultation must be agreed in advance and explicitly.

Problem Addressed

A consultation that begins with a two-hour scope and ends with twenty hours of unbilled or disputed work creates professional damage that may outlast the specific matter.

Practical Implications

If the Requested Firm concludes that the matter requires more than the standard consultation, it must propose an extension before undertaking additional work. Extensions are limited to five hours total at the FCR rate. Beyond that threshold the matter should transition into a formal engagement structure.

8 Freedom of Acceptance

Purpose

The Requested Firm is free to accept or decline any request for any reason, without obligation to explain.

Problem Addressed

Collaboration is only valuable when it is genuinely voluntary. A firm that feels compelled to accept requests it cannot handle well will not be an effective collaborating partner.

Practical Implications

The framework creates no obligation to accept. A firm that declines is expected to do so promptly and courteously. The Originating Firm is equally free to approach multiple firms and is not obligated to use the firm that accepts first if circumstances change.

9 Billing Simplicity

Purpose

Billing under the framework is transparent, straightforward and based on the FCR model for the onboarding stage.

Problem Addressed

Complex billing arrangements at the onboarding stage create disproportionate administrative burden and potential for dispute, deterring firms from entering collaborative relationships.

Practical Implications

The Requested Firm invoices the Originating Firm at the FCR rate for the agreed hours. The Originating Firm decides how to handle costs with the client under its own engagement terms. Billing for further work, if any, is agreed separately before it begins.

10 Professional Independence

Purpose

Each firm participating in the framework remains fully independent. Participation creates no joint venture, no partnership, no agency relationship and no shared liability.

Problem Addressed

A methodology implying organisational integration, shared responsibility or joint liability would create legal, regulatory and commercial complications that would deter adoption rather than encourage it.

Practical Implications

Firms using the framework are collaborating professionals, not affiliated entities. Each firm's professional obligations, indemnity arrangements and liability remain entirely its own. The framework creates a shared methodology, not a shared organisation.

11 Quality Feedback

Purpose

Feedback on the onboarding consultation is exchanged privately between the firms, with the objective of continuous improvement.

Problem Addressed

Without structured feedback, collaborations are evaluated informally and inconsistently. Good performance is not recognised; problems are not addressed; improvements are not made.

Practical Implications

The feedback mechanism is private, constructive and forward-looking. It is not a rating system, not a public directory and not a ranking mechanism. Its purpose is to help each firm improve its professional offering to collaborating partners and, ultimately, to clients. Feedback is normally provided by the Originating Firm through LC-F04 Consultation Feedback Form. The Requested Firm may also provide reciprocal feedback regarding the quality of the request and the collaboration process through LC-F04(b) Request & Collaboration Feedback Form (optional).

12 Long-Term Cooperation

Purpose

The framework is designed to support the development of trusted, long-term professional relationships, not merely to facilitate individual transactions.

Problem Addressed

Professional relationships built over time — based on mutual experience, reliable performance and shared professional values — generate more value for clients and for firms than any individual engagement.

Practical Implications

The lifecycle concludes not with billing but with feedback and relationship development. A successful collaboration on one matter creates the foundation for easier, faster and more productive collaboration on the next.

6. The Framework Consultation Rate (FCR)

Rationale

The Framework Consultation Rate is the most operationally distinctive element of the methodology. It was designed to solve a specific problem that is so common in professional collaboration that it is almost never discussed: neither firm knows how to handle the first conversation.

The Originating Firm is reluctant to formally engage a second firm before knowing whether assistance will be useful. The Requested Firm is reluctant to invest professional time in a preliminary assessment that may never be compensated. Both firms default to informality — a telephone call, a collegial exchange — which may not produce the level of analysis the client needs, and which creates uncertainty about whether any professional obligation has been undertaken.

The FCR resolves this structural problem by creating a defined, agreed economic framework for the first stage of every collaboration.

The Standard Onboarding Model

The standard FCR onboarding consultation operates as follows:

- The Originating Firm submits a Consultation Request Form describing the matter and specifying the assistance required.
- The Requested Firm, once it has accepted the request, agrees to conduct an onboarding consultation of up to two hours of professional time.
- The FCR for the standard consultation is EUR 125 per hour plus applicable VAT, producing a known maximum cost of EUR 250 plus VAT for the two-hour session.
- Within those two hours, the Requested Firm reviews the available information, assesses the principal legal issues, identifies key risks and considerations, and provides a recommendation on next steps.
- The output is documented in a Consultation Report Form, which is delivered to the Originating Firm.

This model has several important features. The cost is known in advance by both firms and, where relevant, by the client. The scope is defined. The output is structured. There are no billing disputes about preliminary work because the terms are agreed before work begins.

The Extension Model

If the Requested Firm determines during the initial consultation that the matter is materially more complex than the request suggested, it may propose an extension before undertaking additional work. The extension may be up to three additional hours, for a maximum total onboarding engagement of five hours at the FCR rate.

The extension requires the explicit agreement of the Originating Firm before it is undertaken. It cannot be applied retrospectively. Beyond five hours, the appropriate structure is a formal engagement with scope and fees agreed in a separate engagement letter.

Economic Logic

The FCR should be understood as an investment in collaboration, not as a substitute for professional fees. Its purpose is not to set the market rate for legal services in any jurisdiction. It is to remove the economic barrier to initiating a meaningful preliminary assessment.

For the Originating Firm, the FCR provides a defined, communicable budget for the preliminary stage of any international or specialist matter. For the Requested Firm, it provides fair compensation for meaningful professional work, and a foundation for demonstrating capability that may lead to a full engagement.

The FCR is a baseline onboarding rate. It is not a constraint on the commercial terms of any full engagement that may follow. Firms remain free to agree any terms they consider appropriate for the subsequent phase of the matter.

7. The Client Ownership Principle

Why It Matters

The Client Ownership Principle may be the single most important element of the framework. It addresses the fundamental concern that prevents many collaborations from being initiated at all: the fear that introducing a second firm will compromise the Originating Firm's relationship with the client.

This concern is understandable and legitimate. Law firms build client relationships over years. Those relationships represent commercial value, professional reputation and personal trust. A partner who fears that seeking assistance from a colleague may result in the client being captured by that colleague will avoid seeking assistance, even when assistance would clearly benefit the client.

The framework addresses this concern directly and unconditionally. Unless expressly agreed otherwise in writing, the client remains the client of the Originating Firm for all purposes.

Behavioural Impact

The significance of this principle is primarily behavioural. It changes the decision calculus of the Originating Firm's partner at the moment the question arises: "Should I ask for help?"

When client ownership is uncertain, the answer is frequently "Not yet" or "Not unless absolutely necessary." When client ownership is protected by a clear principle that both firms have acknowledged, the answer changes to "Yes, as soon as it would benefit the client."

Earlier, more frequent requests for assistance produce better client outcomes. They also produce more professional development opportunities for Requested Firms, greater use of specialist expertise across the profession and more efficient allocation of legal resources overall.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of the Client Ownership Principle are specific:

- The Requested Firm participates as a collaborating adviser and does not acquire any independent client relationship with the Originating Firm's client as a result of the collaboration.
- Direct communication between the Requested Firm and the client requires the prior agreement of the Originating Firm. The default assumption is that communications pass through the Originating Firm unless a different arrangement is expressly agreed.
- Marketing or business development activities directed at the Originating Firm's client, arising from the specific matter on which the firms are collaborating, are contrary to the spirit of the framework.
- If the Requested Firm is subsequently approached directly by the client on a related matter, good professional practice suggests informing the Originating Firm before accepting a direct instruction.

These implications are not intended to create permanent territorial restrictions or to prevent any natural development of independent professional relationships over time. They are intended to ensure

that collaboration can begin with confidence, and that Originating Firms are not deterred from seeking assistance that would benefit their clients.

8. Acceptance and Rejection Rules

The Importance of Prompt, Explicit Responses

The framework places particular emphasis on the acceptance and rejection stage of the Collaboration Lifecycle. An unanswered request creates precisely the uncertainty the framework is designed to eliminate. The Originating Firm cannot plan. The client's matter is in limbo. If the matter is urgent, delay at this stage may have direct professional consequences.

The framework therefore establishes clear service level expectations and clear consequences for non-compliance. These are not aspirational benchmarks. They are operational standards reflecting the professional obligation to treat a colleague's request with the same seriousness as a client instruction.

Service Level Commitments

Action	Service Level
Acknowledgement of request	Within 1 working day of receipt
Acceptance or rejection	Within 3 working days of receipt
Consultation delivery (if accepted)	Within 5 working days of acceptance (subject to matter complexity)

Silence as Rejection

If the Requested Firm does not communicate acceptance within the three-working-day service level, silence is treated as rejection under the framework. This rule exists to protect the Originating Firm and the client, not to penalise the Requested Firm.

The consequence is that the Originating Firm is immediately entitled to approach alternative firms without any further obligation to the first firm contacted. No fee is payable to a firm that has not communicated acceptance within the service level period.

The Right to Decline

The framework preserves the Requested Firm's absolute right to decline any request, for any reason, without obligation to explain. Reasons may include conflict of interest, capacity constraints, expertise limitations, matter complexity or any other professional or commercial consideration.

A rejection should be communicated clearly and promptly. Professional courtesy suggests that where a decline is related to a conflict or incapacity the Originating Firm should be aware of, a brief explanation is helpful. However, no detailed explanation is required.

No Fee on Non-Acceptance

No fee is payable to the Requested Firm for time spent on conflict verification, initial review of the request or internal consideration, unless acceptance is communicated within the service level period. The FCR rate applies only from the point of acceptance.

The acceptance and rejection stage is designed to be fast, unambiguous and professionally courteous. Prompt responses — even negative ones — reflect well on the responding firm and strengthen the professional relationship.

9. Benefits

The framework creates value for each of the four categories of participant who interact with it.

Stakeholder	
<p>Originating Firms Access. Confidence. Control.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Faster access to the right expertise across jurisdictions, with a defined and communicable onboarding cost. – Confidence that the client relationship is protected throughout the collaboration. – Predictable preliminary costs that can be communicated transparently to the client. – Reduced risk of misaligned expectations through a structured onboarding process. – Stronger, longer-term professional relationships with trusted collaborating firms. – Broader capability to serve clients on complex, multi-jurisdictional matters.
<p>Requested Firms Opportunities. Visibility. Trust.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Recognised and compensated preliminary work through the FCR model, eliminating uncompensated first-stage effort. – A structured, professional process that allows the firm to demonstrate competence and expertise. – Defined and manageable scope for the initial consultation, preventing uncontrolled commitment. – No membership fees, no directories, no obligations beyond the specific matter. – A pathway to longer-term engagements based on demonstrated performance. – Freedom to decline any request at any time, preserving professional autonomy.
<p>Clients Better Service. Lower Risk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Access to the best available expertise across jurisdictions, identified and coordinated by their existing adviser. – Faster responses and more informed preliminary assessments on complex matters. – Seamless cooperation between trusted professionals operating within a shared methodology. – Predictable preliminary costs and clear scope at every stage of the collaboration. – Greater confidence in cross-border and specialist matters through a structured process. – A single point of contact — the Originating Firm — maintaining coordination and accountability.

**Professional
Associations More
Value. Stronger
Networks.**

- Increased practical value of relationships created through association membership and events.
- A concrete tool that helps members extract operational benefit from the relationships the association facilitates.
- Strengthened member engagement as the association becomes associated with practical tools, not only networking.
- A framework that reinforces the association's role in creating the relationships on which the methodology depends.

10. Frequently Asked Questions

Is IFOX® LawColl© a network?

No. The framework creates no network, directory, membership structure or organisational affiliation. It is a practical methodology — a set of principles, processes and instruments — that independent firms may adopt on a matter-by-matter basis. Using the framework does not make a firm part of any organisation.

Does the framework compete with AEA or other professional associations?

No. The framework is designed explicitly to complement professional associations, not to replace or challenge them. Associations create the professional relationships on which collaboration depends. The framework provides the operational methodology for translating those relationships into structured, predictable professional cooperation. The two serve different purposes and operate at different stages of the professional relationship.

Is participation mandatory?

No. Participation is entirely voluntary. There is no obligation to use the framework on any matter, and no commitment arising from having used it previously. A firm that uses the methodology on one matter this month is under no obligation to use it on any future matter.

Must the FCR rate be used? What if local market rates differ significantly?

The FCR is the recommended baseline rate for the onboarding consultation stage. It is designed to create predictability and remove economic friction at the first stage of collaboration. Firms are free to agree alternative terms for the onboarding consultation if both parties prefer. They are entirely free to agree any terms they consider appropriate for any full engagement that follows. The FCR is a methodology tool, not a price-fixing mechanism.

Can I decline a request? Do I need to explain why?

Yes. The Freedom of Acceptance Principle preserves the absolute right of any Requested Firm to decline any request, for any reason, at any time, without obligation to provide an explanation. The only expectation is that a rejection be communicated promptly and professionally.

Who owns the client?

The client remains the client of the Originating Firm unless expressly agreed otherwise in writing. The Requested Firm participates as a collaborating adviser and does not acquire any independent client relationship as a result of the collaboration.

Can the Requested Firm bill the client directly?

Not by default. The standard model is that the Requested Firm invoices the Originating Firm. Direct billing of the client requires the prior agreement of the Originating Firm and should be documented in the Matter Collaboration Sheet. The Originating Firm determines how to handle client costs under its own engagement terms.

What happens if several firms are involved in the same matter?

The framework accommodates multi-firm matters. The Originating Firm normally acts as the principal coordinator, maintaining clear communication lines and avoiding duplication. The same principles — client ownership, scope clarity, transparent escalation and professional independence — apply to each firm's participation. Where a matter involves multiple jurisdictions, a separate Consultation Request Form and Matter Collaboration Sheet may be appropriate for each firm's involvement.

What happens if the Requested Firm does not respond within three working days?

Silence within the three-working-day service level is treated as rejection under the framework. The Originating Firm is immediately entitled to approach alternative firms without any further obligation to the non-responding firm, and no fee is payable for work undertaken prior to acceptance.

Is the framework legally binding?

The framework is a voluntary operational methodology, not a legally binding contract. The instruments — particularly the Matter Collaboration Sheet and the Consultation Request and Report Forms — create a documented record of the agreed terms for each engagement, which may have legal relevance in the event of a dispute. Firms should apply their own professional judgement regarding the legal status of any specific arrangement.

Does the framework apply to domestic matters as well as cross-border ones?

Yes. The framework applies equally to domestic matters involving specialist expertise, regulatory assistance, litigation support, sector-specific knowledge or any other area where a firm may benefit from the assistance of a colleague. The cross-border dimension is a common use case, but not the only one.

What is the standard FCR rate and how was it determined?

The recommended FCR rate is EUR 125 per hour plus applicable VAT, producing a standard two-hour onboarding consultation cost of EUR 250 plus VAT. This rate was set to create meaningful and fair compensation for preliminary professional work across a broad range of jurisdictions, while remaining accessible as an entry point for collaboration. It is deliberately positioned as an onboarding rate, not as a market rate for full professional services.

What if the matter requires more than two hours to assess?

The Requested Firm may propose an extension before undertaking additional work. Extensions may be agreed up to a total of five hours at the FCR rate. Beyond five hours, the matter should transition into a formal engagement with scope and fees agreed separately. Extensions cannot be applied retrospectively and require explicit agreement from the Originating Firm before additional work begins.

How is confidentiality handled?

Each firm's standard professional confidentiality obligations apply to all information exchanged under the framework. Information shared for the purpose of a consultation is intended solely for the evaluation and assistance regarding that specific matter. The framework instruments include appropriate confidentiality acknowledgements. Data protection obligations applicable in each relevant jurisdiction continue to apply.

Can I use the framework with a firm I do not know personally?

Yes, though the framework operates most smoothly between firms that share some degree of professional trust, whether established through a professional association, a conference, a referral or a

prior professional relationship. The Client Ownership Principle and the conflict verification process provide protection when firms have limited prior experience of each other.

Does the framework create territorial exclusivity?

No. The framework creates no territorial rights, no exclusivity arrangements and no preferred-firm relationships. An Originating Firm may approach multiple firms in the same jurisdiction and is free to work with different firms on different matters. The framework fosters long-term relationships through demonstrated performance, not through contractual exclusivity.

What documents are included in the operational toolkit?

The toolkit consists of five instruments:

1. the Consultation Request Form (LC-F01, submitted by the Originating Firm to initiate a request);
2. the Matter Collaboration Sheet (LC-F02, documenting the agreed terms of the collaboration)
3. the Consultation Report Form (LC-F03, completed by the Requested Firm following the onboarding consultation);
4. the Consultation Feedback Form (LC-F04, exchanged between firms after the consultation);
5. the optional Feedback Form (LC-F04(b), by impulse of the Requested Firm after the consultation).

The Executive Overview (2-page infographic) provides a visual summary of the framework, its lifecycle, principles and key benefits.

In other words, the Toolkit includes 5 forms: LC-F01, LC-F02, LC-F03, LC-F04 and optional LC-F04(b).

The Information Kit and Executive Overview are companion documents.

Why is it called IFOX® LawColl©?

IFOX® is the brand name of the broader professional cooperation framework of which LawColl is the first implementation. LawColl stands for Law Collaboration. The framework was designed with the legal profession in mind, with the intention that similar methodologies may be developed for other professional services disciplines under the broader IFOX® Collaboration Framework.

11. Next Steps and Operational Toolkit

How to Begin Using the Framework

Using IFOX® LawColl© requires no formal enrolment, no registration and no administrative process. A firm wishing to use the framework on a specific matter needs only to apply its principles and use its instruments. The first step is as simple as completing a Consultation Request Form and sending it to a colleague.

The following resources are available to firms wishing to adopt the methodology:

The Information Kit (this document)

The primary explanatory resource for the framework. It describes the methodology in full, defines its principles, explains its instruments and answers the most common questions. It is designed for distribution to colleagues, managing partners and professional contacts without requiring substantial supplementary explanation.

The Executive Overview (2-page Infographic)

A two-page visual overview of the framework summarising its purpose, collaboration lifecycle, twelve principles, stakeholder benefits and key operational features. Designed for introductory presentations, conference handouts, professional associations and initial discussions with prospective collaborating firms.

The Operational Toolkit

The toolkit consists of five instruments, available as editable Word documents:

- Consultation Request Form — submitted by the Originating Firm to initiate a formal request for assistance.
- Consultation Report Form — completed by the Requested Firm to document the output of the onboarding consultation.
- Matter Collaboration Sheet — used to document the agreed terms of the collaboration for a specific matter.
- Consultation Feedback Form — exchanged between firms after the consultation to support continuous improvement.

The Operational Toolkit also contains the governing Intellectual Property Notice, License Terms, Trademark Provisions and Disclaimer applicable to the framework and its instruments.

Sharing the Framework

This Information Kit may be shared freely with professional colleagues, potential collaborating firms, managing partners, conference contacts and members of professional associations. The framework is intended to be widely available and broadly adopted.

This Information Kit may be shared and distributed freely, provided that it is reproduced in its entirety, with all copyright notices, trademark notices, disclaimers and attributions preserved, and subject to the terms of the applicable IFOX® LawColl© License.

Firms wishing to introduce the framework to colleagues or to a professional association are encouraged to do so. The two infographics, combined with this Information Kit, provide a complete introduction to the methodology suitable for any professional audience.

A Note on Future Development

The framework is intentionally designed to evolve. Version 1.0 represents the first complete operational implementation of the IFOX® LawColl© methodology. Future versions may incorporate refinements based on practical experience, feedback from users and evolution in professional standards. The framework's lightweight architecture — principles, processes and instruments rather than organisations, memberships and structures — is designed to facilitate adaptation without disruption.

12. Intellectual Property, License and Disclaimer

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