

Rising Star: King & Spalding's Almiro Clere

By Georgia Kromrei

Law360 (July 23, 2025, 4:10 PM EDT) -- Almiro Clere of King & Spalding LLP has advised Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism on what planners say will be the world's largest artificial reef off Dubai, where 1 billion corals will live on a marine bed the size of New York City, earning him a spot among the construction law practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

His proudest moment as an attorney:

Clere said his proudest moment was completing his work as lead counsel on the Dubai Reef, a deal he led from the beginning. His work structuring its legal framework began at the end of 2023 and ended in September 2024, once the construction contract was signed.

"It's a hugely ambitious project," he said, "and one that I think will make a large difference to people's lives in the region."

Along with serving as a buffer against storms — Dubai has recently experienced a number of intense floods — the project will allow research into coral species in waters where they have traditionally not been found, Clere said. The project will also generate money by offsetting carbon emission equivalents, and it was designed with ecotourism in mind.

"A lot of the modules are shaped so they can be explored by recreational divers, as well," he said.

The project, expected to finish in March 2028, will comprise 20,000 reef modules composed of 12- to 20-ton precast environmentally friendly concrete made using renewable power on land, Clere said. Each module is taken onto a barge and then lowered onto the seabed in patterns to maximize coral production and fish interaction, he explained. Key challenges have included deciding where the reef modules should be placed and when to place them, since offshore Dubai is one of the world's busiest waterways.

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Almiro Clere
King & Spalding

Age: 35

Home base: Abu Dhabi

Position: Partner

Law school: The University of Otago's
Faculty of Law

First job after law school: Beach
lifeguard

"You have recreational fishermen, you have recreational divers, you have massive cruise liners, you have marine traffic at trading vessels — and while it's usually quite calm, conditions can change quite quickly," Clere noted.

Clere advised on the design and construction of the reef, as well as a number of other infrastructure and energy projects in North America, Saudi Arabia and Taiwan.

The deal was entirely financed by the UAE government, but getting insurance for the project was no simple matter, Clere said, noting that insurers didn't have anything to benchmark against, as construction contracts in the Middle East don't typically contemplate underwater risks or adverse weather. To find solutions, Clere said, he drew on recent work.

"We were able to leverage previous experience of offshore wind farms in Asia, where you have a lot of the same kind of risks of doing underwater work, so you could use those solutions and adapt them to the Middle East," Clere added.

What motivates him:

"Creating solutions is something I particularly enjoy," Clere said.

There's ample opportunity — and need — for innovative solutions in the Middle East, Clere said, explaining the region has a relatively new construction sector, but one that's booming with unprecedented growth.

In the Dubai Reef project, for example, because the marine bed is not well charted and visibility is poor at times, there was a risk of running into submerged wrecks, or damaging existing coral or underwater cables, Clere added. Echolocation to map the entire area couldn't account for everything, so Clere said they turned to a time-tested solution.

"Every time a reef module was going to be lowered, a team of divers would go down with it," Clere said. "That's an example of an old-fashioned eyesight solution being deployed when kind of new technology with underwater mapping and echolocation sonar wasn't as comprehensive as it had been hoped."

"There's a lot of unique challenges and creative thinking that's required often," he added, "because something hasn't been done before."

Why he is a construction attorney:

For Clere, the length of time that he spends on each project — nine to 12 months — is a big part of the appeal of construction work, he said.

"You have to understand all of the different component parts, but you're also working with the same client for an extended period of time," he said.

On construction projects, the work is collaborative and solution oriented in order to build something, Clere said, adding that another key attraction for him is that each project is different.

In addition to advising on the Dubai Reef, Clere has advised on an industrial port project in Saudi Arabia; a green hydrogen and ammonia megaproject in Canada; and a 100% renewable, greenfield multi-utility gigaproject in Saudi Arabia. A megaproject is very large, but typically does not exceed \$10 billion in

expenses, while gigaprojects exceed \$10 billion, he explained.

"There's variety in terms of what's being built, where it's been built, who's involved and how it's been developed," said Clere. "I really enjoy that they all have unique challenges and all require innovative solutions."

How his practice will change over the next 10 years:

Clere said he is already seeing artificial intelligence change his field as the "hot topic on everyone's lips." He said he sees the technology as an opportunity to deliver a better product to clients.

"I think it will improve the efficiency of processes," he said. "But I think it's also an opportunity for lawyers to deliver more high-value work."

Clere said his firm is already using a number of AI tools internally, including Harvey and Microsoft Copilot. While the tools deliver hallucinations, and the results must be verified, they are useful for low-value case work, such as identifying starting points for research tasks, identifying market trends, or reviewing changes in contract clauses, he said.

"What's still missing — and I suspect this will change — is the analysis of the impact of that clause, which is where we can add more value," he said.

Clere added that the "long-term vision" of the Middle East countries will make the region a global hub for the construction sector, if it's not already.

Said Clere: "The projects that I want to work on — the complex first of kinds — will continue to be done in this part of the world."

--As told to Georgia Kromrei. Editing by Amy French.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2025 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,100 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2025, to be eligible for this year's award.