

PROFILE



Sandra du Toit
EY Africa Corporate Finance Leader



Sandra du Toit started her career as an academic at the University of the Free State, lecturing in commercial law and tax law, while completing her BCom, LLB (cum laude), and LLM (cum laude) degrees.

She subsequently did her articles and qualified as an attorney at Brink Cohen le Roux & Roodt Inc, leaving the practice to set up a law firm, Roodt Inc. with a senior partner. In these boutique firms in which she practiced, she advised clients across the full spectrum of transaction requirements, including conducting legal due diligence, drafting & negotiating agreements, preparing & defending regulatory applications and managing post implementation issues. She specialised in all aspects of mergers and acquisitions.

From there, Sandra transitioned from law into Corporate Finance at Standard Bank, where she became Head of Mining and Metals before moving into a broader investment banking role. She focused on complex transactions incorporating multiple investment banking products, including advisory, equity capital markets, debt capital markets, and lending, ultimately taking on a more specialised role with the originating and executing of complex, cross-border multi-product transactions.

In 2020, Sandra joined EY as a Partner and the Lead for M&A Advisory in Africa. This move took place during South Africa's COVID-19-induced hard lockdown, with her new "job in a box" delivered at the beginning of June. In addition she has assumed responsibility for the corporate finance approach in EY's go-to-market strategy. This move took place during South Africa's COVID-19-induced hard lockdown, with her new "job in a box" delivered at the beginning of June. She now leads the EY M&A team in Africa and has also assumed responsibility

for the corporate finance approach in EY's go-to-market strategy. In this role, she has supported major state-owned entities on balance sheet restructurings and is currently advising iGas on the exercise of its-pre-emptive right in respect of ROMPCO. At EY, Sandra is also expanding her sector specialisation beyond mining & metals, and is currently engaged in a wide range of industries, including agriculture, fintech, mobile communications and wellness:

"Working with state-owned entities brings a whole new dynamic into transaction advisory work. These clients fulfil broader developmental and governmental mandates, challenging advisers to stretch the factors that play into a successful transaction beyond the strategic and commercial, into broader impacts.

Similarly, entrepreneurs open up a whole new world: EY has developed a niche focus area in which it supports individuals and families that own large businesses to undertake corporate action. While the buyers are typically the private equity and strategic buyers that normally hire investments banks, entrepreneurs are more careful in hiring advisers, and ask more. Often, they have spent a lifetime building a business, and a transaction is similar in nature to a marriage!"

Sandra is an experienced specialist in mergers and acquisitions, with a substantive legal and investment banking background, and is relishing all of the new challenges at EY. Sandra balances the energy and drive to get transactions


done with a thorough and conscientious approach to making decisions. She believes that focus creates the order and structure to efficiently manage limited resources to deliver results.

Currently, she has 20 people under her leadership throughout EY's broader Africa practice. Her management style is one

where she tries to achieve a mentoring leadership approach with her team.

On her philosophy of life, du Toit says: "Only what you do, from moment to moment, will shape your life, and only how you think about it, will shape how you experience it." This is reflected in her passion for ultra-distance running that symbolises the ultimate strategic long game – much like M&A where a transaction can take anything from 12 to 36 months.

"You have to put in some work every, single day. Some days are great and filled with significant victories. And others are just a lot of hard work in the dark and in the rain – sometimes adding both insult and injury. But what you put in, of yourself, your energy, and your attitude, is what you will get out of it. And, as much as you think that running is a solitary sport, anyone who has spent a quiet hour or two with another runner on the road, will know that it's the camaraderie, the encouragement, the friends and family cheering you on the side lines, that makes the experience so rewarding."

"In many ways my work and running are very similar: When the deal goes wrong, and you have to go back to the drawing board to find a solution that works. When a run goes wrong, and you really just want to stop, you dig deep and you finish feeling that you have overcome something bigger than just a bad day." 

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