



China Roadshows
Latin America 拉丁美洲专场
思百库 SIPAC 全球领先律师中国行

SIPAC Member Firms from Important LATAM Region

Complete Successful Series of
Roadshows Presentations Across China





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In the latest round of SIPAC regional roadshow events, over the week of July 28 through August 1, 2025, the SIPAC member firms from the key countries in the LATAM region (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico) participated in a series of roadshow events in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen for in-house counsel from top Chinese companies and partners from leading Chinese law firms.

This was the fourth in the continuing series of SIPAC regional roadshows, and followed prior presentations from SIPAC members and friends from MENA/Africa (April), CEE/SEE (May) and Eurasia (taking the form of a three-part series of webinars in the second week of July). As with all of the prior SIPAC regional presentations, this LATAM roadshow generated a very positive response from the Chinese legal community, with hundreds of in-person and online interactions and engagements.



Timely Content and Context

This delegation of leading LATAM lawyers came to China against the backdrop of continuing uncertainty in terms of US global trade policy. In fact, in the course of the roadshow, participating partners from leading Mexican firm, Basham, Ringe y Correa, were able to provide real-time updates on the further 90-day extension provided by the US for the continuing trade talks. On the other hand, at the same time, the US hit Brazil with 50% tariffs on most exports to the US.

However, Murillo Allevato, tax partner and head of China Desk for top-10 Brazilian law firm, Bichara, provided important additional context to the realities of the new multipolar world by noting that China is Brazil's #1 trading partner, and that Brazil's trade volume with China is a massive four times higher than Brazil's trade volume with the US, which ranks second. This is a trend that has been developing for the last 25 years, which matches the time period of Bichara's establishment, and the firm has continuously worked with major Chinese companies over that entire time span, making Bichara's China Desk the leading China Desk in Brazil.



When it comes to Chinese investment in Mexico, most business leaders and legal practitioners in China tend to focus on relocation of manufacturing from China to Mexico to take advantage of market access to the US via the USMCA. This market access is now threatened by the Trump tariffs, but Basham tax partner, Alejandro Barrera, explained that the Mexican government is taking a longer-term view on the tariff negotiations, and is already preparing for the 5-year USMCA review slated for next year.

In addition, Basham corporate partner, Luis Lujan, emphasized that Mexico itself presents a significant market opportunity with an addressable market of more than 130 million, as well as being a gateway to other Central and South American countries. In addition, there are many other sectors which are ripe for Chinese investment in Mexico, such as renewable energy and green technologies, electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing, and mining and mineral refinement, which are not impacted by the pending tariff negotiations with the US.

Key Points to Keep in Mind in LATAM Region

Alberto Cardemil, head of China Desk for leading Chilean law firm, Carey, who joined the roadshows via video presentation, provided surprising rankings for his home country: Chile ranks #1 in LATAM region in the IMD World Competitiveness Ranking, the Forbes Business Environment Ranking and the Heritage Foundation Economic Freedom Ranking. It is also the first South American economy to join the OECD. In addition, Chile's per capita income on a PPP basis is currently ranked #3 in Latin America.

Our friends from Marval, SIPAC member firm from Argentina, Luciano Ojea Quintana (head of Asia Desk for the firm) and María Carolina Gallardo (a Mandarin-speaking member of the China team for the firm), also presenting via video, provided updates on the massive changes to the Argentine economy since the election of President Milei. Milei's first key legislative victory of the passage of the so-called "Bases Law", more than two-thirds of which focuses on promoting foreign direct investment in Argentina. The Bases Law also includes the New Regime for Large Investments (known in Spanish by the acronym RIGI), providing preferential benefits and guarantees for large-scale investments in eight key sectors, ranging from infrastructure and natural resources to tourism, technology and agroforestry.

Eduardo Castañeda, an IP partner from Basham, introduced the new data privacy legislation that has just taken effect in Mexico, which has generated significant attention, even as more questions need to be answered. Similarly, Murillo Allevato from Bichara explained how Brazil's byzantine multi-tier tax structure is about to undergo a massive simplification, but noted that with such changes there will be winners and losers in terms of applicable tax rates.

Both Eduardo and Murillo underscored the fact that in both Mexico and Brazil, there is a strong culture of litigation, which generally is a surprise to many Chinese investors. One mistake many Chinese investors make is to approach local tax authorities directly. Both Basham and Bichara emphasized that the tax authorities are not your friends, and that it is extremely common to bring legal action against the tax authorities in order to achieve more favorable tax treatment. They further noted that the fact that a company is engaged in litigation with the tax authorities will not have any adverse impact on other pending matters before other government departments, including bids for government concessions. This is exactly the type of highly valuable practical local knowledge that SIPAC member firms can provide!



War Stories – Learning from the Challenges Faced by Other Companies



One other area that was addressed as part of the various country presentations related to labor law compliance. For example, in Chile, a minimum of 85% of employees must be local Chilean nationals where a workforce comprises more than 25 employees. In Mexico, the minimum percentage is 90% (with the exception of general managers), while in Brazil it is two-thirds. There are some exceptions, for example, in Brazil, foreigners with special technical capability not found in Brazil may come in under a special visa scheme.

One related case study that attracted a lot of attention during the course of the roadshow arose from media reports late last year on alleged labor law violations in connection with the construction of a major BYD manufacturing facility in Brazil. According to press accounts, BYD outsourced the hiring of construction workers to two contractors – China JinJiang Construction Brazil Ltda. (“JinJiang”) and Tonghe Equipamentos Inteligentes do Brasil Co. (“Tonghe”), which brought in around 500 Chinese employees under the special visa program for technical specialists. However, in fact, all were common construction workers, so this constituted a serious violation of Brazilian labor laws.

Upon inspection, Brazilian labor authorities found that 220 of these workers were employed in conditions “analogous to slavery” – a legal term in Brazil that can include debt bondage, degrading working conditions, excessively long hours, and any work that violates human dignity. Reports also noted that wages were withheld in whole or in part and that the outsourcing company had confiscated the workers’ passports.

While these workers were brought into Brazil by the two contractors, and BYD subsequently cut ties with JinJiang, in late May 2025 Brazilian prosecutors filed a lawsuit against BYD, JinJiang, and Tonghe (now Tecmonta Equipamentos Inteligentes Brasil Co. Ltda.), seeking approximately 257 million Brazilian reais (about USD 47 million) in moral damages.

War Stories – Learning from the Challenges Faced by Other Companies (Cont.)

In addressing the case study, Murillo Allevato of Bichara noted that he had no non-public information on the particulars of the case, but indicated that based on his experience, it may not be so unusual for Chinese companies to withhold passports of employees in certain circumstances, but that this may be subject to a vastly different interpretation in other cultural and legal contexts, so all such practices must be carefully vetted in advance with experienced legal experts to ensure proper and full legal compliance. Murillo also noted that while the potential fine was well within the ability of BYD to pay, and even though the specific conduct was done by separate contractors, the potential reputational damage to BYD may still be significant and require more time to ameliorate.

Alejandro Barrera of Basham also provided another instructive case study, presented on a confidential basis, also involving a major Chinese company. The Chinese company was represented only by personnel responsible for the business operations, so they were not sophisticated when it came to legal and tax issues. Accordingly, when the company had come to Mexico to set up a business, in the initial stages the company representatives had consulted a lawyer in a small firm to help with the company establishment, which obviously is a relatively simple exercise if the business to be undertaken is not particularly complex.

However, in this case, the Chinese company's business activities were more complex, and the small-firm lawyer they consulted was not as experienced in more sophisticated aspects of corporate and tax law. Consequently, when the major Chinese company later needed assistance with some government filings, they once again consulted the same lawyer. Unfortunately, this lawyer completed the form incorrectly, ticking a box that inappropriately characterized the nature of the company's business.

This was, as Alejandro explained, a small mistake that resulted in a very big problem. Later as the business developed, the Mexican tax authorities imposed a very high tax assessment on the company. The company objected, claiming that this tax liability was not consistent with the actual nature of their business, but the tax authorities simply referred back to the form that the small-firm lawyer had completed for the company and which the company had signed, which confirmed the characterization of the company's business consistent with the tax assessment. As a result, the Chinese company is liable to provide a guarantee for multiple hundreds of millions of US dollars, all because they did not get proper legal and tax advice up front.



More Conversations on Enhancing Cross-Firm Collaboration

Another highlight of the roadshow was the in-person visits to top Chinese law firms and Chinese companies. Members of the LATAM delegation were able to meet with Silk Road Fund, China Three Gorges International and BYD outside of the main roadshow events as well as representatives from leading companies such as Huawei, TCL, OPPO, Foxconn, Transsion, etc. at the events themselves.

In addition, the members of the delegation were able to set up meetings with partners from Haiwen, Han Kun, Chance Bridge, Zhong Lun, Fangda, Global Law Office, Jingtian & Gongcheng and China Commercial outside of the core public events. In addition, partners from scores of other leading Chinese law firms, including JunHe, Tian Yuan, AllBright, East & Concord attended the events and were able to engage in one-to-one conversations with the delegates.

In the law firm visits, once again a key topic for discussion was how to enhance cross-firm collaboration between Chinese firms and foreign firms in connection with outbound projects and disputes on behalf of Chinese clients. The SIPAC team has already organized initial small working groups of partners in leading Chinese firms as well as SIPAC member firms, and progress has been made on creating a set of best practices for reference and discussion.

In the next stage, SIPAC will engage with the remainder of its members around the world as well as set up further consultations with core groups of leading partners in major Chinese law firms to solicit more input on how best to manage the cross-firm collaboration in a manner that best meets the particular requirements of the Chinese market. As a final stage, we will be undertaking consultations with selected in-house counsel in major Chinese companies who are responsible for management of international legal affairs for the company to get their input as well.

The results of this multi-faceted consultation process will be shared with the members of the SIPAC community, inside and outside China, who attend the next Sino-International Legal Forum (SILF) to be held in Shenzhen in April 2026. More news to come on this key event for the SIPAC community. We look forward to having you join us!



Upcoming Roadshows – Please Plan to Join Us!

Before we get to SILF 2026 early next year, we still have more roadshows planned, as set out below.

Region	Beijing (Mon)	Shanghai (Wed)	Shenzhen (Fri)
Early September 2025 Compliance	Sep 1	Sep 3	Sep 5
Late September 2025 Western Europe	Sep 22	Sep 24	Sep 26
Early December 2025 Asia	Dec 1	Dec 3	Dec 5
January 2026 US/Canada	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed

Note: The regions and schedule listed above are for reference only and may be adjusted based on actual circumstances.

SIPAC Global Member Firms

SIPAC has established a presence in nearly 50 jurisdictions worldwide through its network of exclusive member firms—each a leading independent full-service law firm in its jurisdiction—providing Chinese clients with professional, comprehensive, and timely local support.



We help build mutual **TRUST**
beyond legal borders.

WHO WE ARE

The Sino International Professional Advisory Council (SIPAC) is a global network of outstanding professional service providers built to service all aspects of the global expansion of Chinese business in the context of an evolving geopolitical environment.

OUR OPPORTUNITY

Professional services platforms in China have limited access to international resources. Global professional platforms have limited understanding of China. SIPAC is uniquely positioned to fill this gap.

OUR MISSION

SIPAC's mission is to bring the Sino-Global legal communities together by:

1. providing Chinese lawyers engaged in cross-border legal work access to the full range of international-standard resources so that Chinese companies can conduct business overseas with confidence, supported by trusted professional advisors, and
2. helping leading independent law firms and other professional advisors around the world to develop trusted advisor relationships with their counterparts in Chinese companies and law firms.

SIPAC 2025 CHINA ROADSHOWS

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 **Beijing Highlights**



 **Shanghai Highlights**



 **Shenzhen Highlights**

