



# Project Finance & Infrastructure

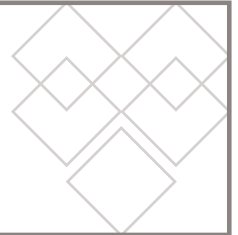
## 2026



PROFILED:

**MINGDA ZHAO**

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP



**Skadden**



Project Finance  
& Infrastructure



## MINGDA ZHAO

Partner

**Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP**

Houston, TX, US

T: 1 (212) 735 2720

E: [mingda.zhao@skadden.com](mailto:mingda.zhao@skadden.com)

### PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY

**Mingda Zhao** has broad experience advising clients on a wide range of matters within the energy and infrastructure space. In addition, he has an extensive background counselling on acquisitions and divestitures, drilling and other joint ventures. He has a deep understanding of the unique issues that arise within the energy sector, and clients frequently turn to him to tackle some of their most complex matters. In recognition of his work, he has been selected for inclusion in Chambers Global and Chambers USA's Energy: Oil & Gas (Transactional) category and The Best Lawyers in America for Energy Law and M&A Law.

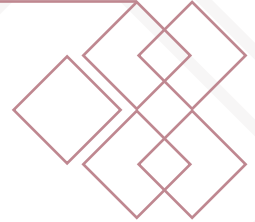
**Skadden**

**MINGDA ZHAO**

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher &amp; Flom LLP



## Q&amp;A WITH MINGDA ZHAO

**What standout moments in your career have significantly shaped your professional journey?**

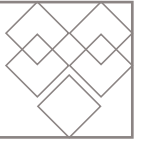
◆ One of the most formative experiences early in my career involved working with Tres Cochran, who has since retired from private practice. As a junior associate, I found him to be one of the toughest partners to work for, but he was also the partner one could learn the most from. While working on a complex and relatively new type of transaction across the table from a large energy company, I distinctly remember feeling stressed as I meticulously searched for precedents that did not exist. In that moment, Mr Cochran shared invaluable advice that benefits me to this day: practicing law is not simply copying and pasting from precedent, but rather is about doing what is right for the transaction and the client. That approach has guided me to this day.

**What qualities and values are essential for building strong, trusting client relationships?**

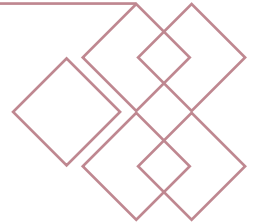
◆ I would say the qualities and values required for strong client relationships are transparency, trustworthiness, responsiveness and great work. At the end of the day, delivering high-quality work on time is what counts, but building a strong relationship requires being available for clients. Transparency is vital and it is critical to set clear expectations with clients and to ensure they are informed at every stage of a project. Trustworthiness builds confidence and assures clients that you will be in their corner no matter the circumstances. Responsiveness is also vital, as it demonstrates your commitment to addressing their needs in real time.

**MINGDA ZHAO**

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher &amp; Flom LLP

**Could you discuss a particularly rewarding case or project? What made it stand out?**

◆ A particularly rewarding project involved representing Pioneer Natural Resources across from Sinochem in their southern Midland joint venture in 2013. I led the negotiations for the divestiture aspect of the transaction, working closely with Pioneer's executives, while also engaging with Sinochem's leadership team. As trust developed, Sinochem began discussing issues with me directly in Chinese, and Pioneer entrusted me to negotiate in Chinese on their behalf. This trust allowed us to quickly cut through cultural barriers and brought the transaction to a swift conclusion. This experience underscored how building trust, not only with your client but also with those across the table, can play a crucial role in facilitating a smoother and more successful transaction. ■



**"PRACTICING LAW IS NOT SIMPLY COPYING AND PASTING FROM PRECEDENT, BUT RATHER IS ABOUT DOING WHAT IS RIGHT FOR THE TRANSACTION AND THE CLIENT. THAT APPROACH HAS GUIDED ME TO THIS DAY."**

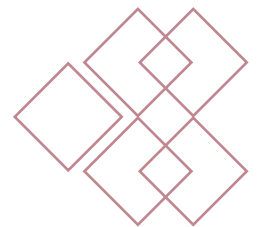
**MINGDA ZHAO**

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher &amp; Flom LLP



## REPRESENTATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

- ◆ Advising Calpine Corporation in its \$26.6bn acquisition by Constellation to create the nation's largest clean energy provider and its joint venture with a large LNG terminal operator.
- ◆ Advising EnCap EFT in its sale of Broadreach Power to Engie and its joint venture with Apollo in Broadreach power.
- ◆ Advising Marathon Oil Corporation in its \$3bn acquisition of the Eagle Ford Assets of Ensign Natural Resources.
- ◆ Advising Continental Resources, Inc., a top 10 independent oil producer in the US, in its \$3.25bn acquisition of certain entities and assets in the Permian Basin from affiliates of Pioneer Natural Resources Company, one of the largest independent oil and gas exploration and production companies in the US, and its acquisition of certain assets in the Permian Basin from a large producer.
- ◆ Advising Sixth Street Partners, LLC in its \$1bn acquisition of Iron Horse Midstream, LLC.

**Enjoyed this article?**

Join our community for free to  
access more expert insights.

[Join Now - It's Free](#)