

# Annual Report 2024



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An aerial photograph of a long, thin, curved wall made of light-colored stones, extending from the bottom left towards the top right. The wall is situated in a body of water with a vibrant turquoise color. The water has a subtle texture with small ripples. The sky above is a clear, pale blue.

About

Defined by trust

DIAC

**Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC or the Centre) has over three decades of experience of providing dispute resolution services to parties doing business in, or through, the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia (MEASA) region. The Centre is the region's largest arbitral institution, independent and impartial, committed to excellence, efficiency, and diversity.**

We administer arbitrations pursuant to the DIAC Arbitration Rules (DIAC Rules), which are flexible and suitable for all types of arbitrable disputes. In addition, we regularly act as an appointing authority and administer arbitrations conducted pursuant to the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law Arbitration Rules (UNCITRAL Rules). We also provide other Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services including mediation and conciliation services.

Further, we conduct an international programme of events and courses. In 2024, we co-ordinated over 140 events during Dubai Arbitration Week – one of the largest arbitration weeks on the international arbitration event calendar, attended by over 1,500 delegates.

As a trusted arbitral institution, we are committed to creating a culture where our people feel respected, valued, and that they belong; supporting the communities in which our people live and work; and protecting the environment and tackling climate change.

We only work with suppliers who share these values and goals and have policies in place to ensure that our officers, people, and suppliers operate in compliance with applicable anti-bribery and anti-corruption legislation and to the highest ethical standards. We are a signatory and active supporter of the Equal Representation in Arbitration Pledge; the Equal Representation for Expert Witnesses Pledge; the Racial Equality for Arbitration Lawyers Initiative; and the Green Pledge and the Campaign for Greener Arbitrations.

We are an independent, impartial, non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation. We have a three-tier structure, comprising a Board of Directors, an Arbitration Court, and an Administrative Body. The Board of Directors has also formed an Advisory Committee to assist and support it in its functions.



# Board of Directors

The Board of Directors comprises a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and up to seven other members. The Board of Directors is currently chaired by HE Dr Tariq Humaid Matar Al Tayer and is made up largely of prominent Dubai-based business leaders, lawyers, and arbitration practitioners. It is principally concerned with the operation and development of the Centre and its compliance with applicable law. The Board of Directors does not have an active role in case administration, though it does maintain a close interest in the Centre's Administrative Body, particularly through the Arbitration Court, which supervises the work of the Case Management Team and whose members the Board of Directors appoints. The functions of the Board of Directors are set out in the Centre's statute.



**HE Dr Tariq Al Tayer**  
Chairman



**Ahmad Belyouha**  
Vice-Chairman



**Abdulaziz Bin Shafar**  
Member



**Ahmed Al Rasheed**  
Member



**Jehad Kazim**  
Member and Executive Director



**Graham Lovett**  
Member



**Prof Dr Klaus Sachs**  
Member



**Richard Briggs**  
Member



**Thomas Snider**  
Member

# Arbitration Court

The Arbitration Court is made up of 13 members, currently representing 11 nationalities, selected to provide and maintain a balance of leading practitioners in commercial arbitration from the major trading areas of the world. The Arbitration Court is the final authority for the proper application of the DIAC Rules. Its principal functions are appointing arbitrators and mediators, determining challenges to arbitrators, controlling the costs of the proceedings and deciding on other procedural matters under the DIAC Rules.

Although the Arbitration Court meets regularly in plenary sessions, most of its functions under the DIAC Rules are performed, on its behalf, by the President, Vice-President, or by three or five-member subcommittees. The functions of the Arbitration Court are set out in the Centre's statute.

The Board of Directors appoints the members of the Arbitration Court. The current members of the Arbitration Court were appointed in February 2023. The President of the Arbitration Court is Dr Michael Pyles AO PBM and the Vice-President is Erin Miller Rankin. The other 11 members of the Arbitration Court are: Abdulwahid Alulama; Prof Albert Jan van den Berg; Prof Emilia Onyema; Dr Hassan Arab; Hiroo Advani; Ilya Nikiforov; Mohammed Rasheed Alsuwaidi; Ning FEI; Dr Rouven Bodenheimer; Rupert Reed KC; and Wendy Miles KC.



**Dr Michael Pyles AO PBM**  
President



**Erin Miller Rankin**  
Vice-President



**Abdulwahid Alulama**  
Member



**Prof Albert Jan van den Berg**  
Member



**Prof Emilia Onyema**  
Member



**Dr Hassan Arab**  
Member



**Hiroo Advani**  
Member



**Ilya Nikiforov**  
Member



**Mohammed Rashed Alsuwaidi**  
Member



**Ning FEI**  
Member



**Dr Rouven Bodenheimer**  
Member



**Rupert Reed KC**  
Member



**Wendy Miles KC**  
Member

# Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee was formed by the Board of Directors in 2023 to assist and support it in the performance of its functions. It plays a critical role, providing expert insight, guidance and recommendations on the strategy and initiatives of the Centre, and promoting the work of the Centre. The Advisory Committee comprises nine members, and is chaired by Anne Hoffmann. The other eight members of the Advisory Committee are: Robert Stephen (Vice-Chair); Ahmed Ibrahim; Ali Al Hashimi; Bushra Ahmed; Prof Julian Lew KC; Sarah Malik; Wolf von Kumberg; and Dr Yousuf Al Suwaidi.



**Anne Hoffmann**  
Chair



**Robert Stephen**  
Vice-Chair



**Ali Al Hashimi**  
Member



**Bushra Ahmed**  
Member



**Prof Julian Lew KC**  
Member



**Sarah Malik**  
Member



**Dr Yousuf Al Suwaidi**  
Member



**Ahmed Ibrahim**  
Member



**Wolf von Kumberg**  
Member

# Administrative Body

Headed by an Executive Director, Jehad Kazim and Registrar, Robert Stephen, the Administrative Body is responsible for the operations of the Centre and the day-to-day administration of all disputes referred to the Centre.

## Management



**Jehad Kazim**  
Executive Director



**Robert Stephen**  
Registrar

## Case Management Team



**Christoffer Coello Hedberg**  
Deputy Registrar



**Mohamed Hafez**  
Special Counsel



**Katy Hacking**  
Senior Counsel



**Tala Fahoum**  
Senior Counsel



**Laura Jiménez Jámez**  
Senior Counsel



**Akash Srivastava**  
Senior Counsel



**Peter Barna**  
Counsel



**Laura Roberts**  
Counsel



**Isabela Monerat Mendez**  
Counsel



**Sherif Laz**  
Counsel



**Sunitha Menon Thamattoor**  
Case Manager



**Monique Nicolas**  
Executive Assistant

## Operations



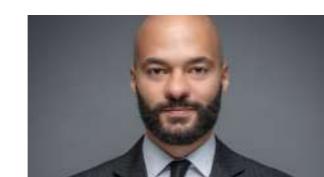
**Zain Makhlouf**  
Strategy and Marketing Manager



**Ritta Saoud**  
Events Manager



**Rochelle Cruz**  
Lead Accountant



**Hesham Basha**  
Strategy and Marketing Executive



**Nayiri Boghossian**  
Events Executive



**Sreekala Babu**  
Accountant and Audit Executive



**Majed Al Banna**  
Administrator



**Nama AlAli**  
Events Administrator



**Daisy Cureg**  
Accountant



**Ibrahim Noor**  
Administration Assistant and Public Relations Officer



**Ayah Haffar**  
Executive Assistant

An aerial photograph of a traditional sailboat, likely a dhow, with a single white sail, navigating through clear, turquoise-blue ocean water. The water is dotted with small, dark green patches of marine vegetation. The boat is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the frame, moving towards the top right.

Message from the Chairman

Defined by integrity



## HE Dr Tariq Al Tayer Chairman

Welcome to our 2024 Annual Report, a year that marked the 30th anniversary of the Dubai International Arbitration Centre. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has supported the Centre over the past three decades—we could not have achieved our success without your continued support and belief in our vision.

The Centre's growth continued throughout 2024, with a notable increase in the quality and complexity of cases registered. A total of 295 cases were registered this year, comprising 262 arbitrations and 33 appointing authority cases. I am pleased to report that the total aggregate amount in dispute rose to AED 9.7 billion, up from AED 5.5 billion in 2023—an increase of over 75% year-on-year. Unsurprisingly, the average amount in dispute more than doubled to AED 37 million, demonstrating the growing confidence users place in the Centre to handle their most significant and complex matters.

Equally important has been our continued focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion, and our commitment to the fair representation of women and equal opportunity. This commitment was recognised when the Centre was shortlisted for the influential Global Arbitration Review (GAR) Equal Representation in Arbitration Pledge Award at the 15th Annual GAR Awards held in Paris on 10 April 2025. In 2023, 31% of all arbitrators appointed by the DIAC Arbitration Court were women, with female arbitrators making up 47% of all Court appointments. I'm proud to say that our progress remained consistent in 2024. The number of arbitrators appointed by the Arbitration Court increased by more than 170%, with 33% of those being women, and again, female arbitrators represented 47% of all Court appointments. While these achievements are significant, we know there is more work to be done. We have several exciting initiatives in the pipeline, and we remain committed to actively promoting diversity in gender, age, and national origin when recruiting, selecting arbitrators and mediators, and when organising or participating in conferences, events, and training.

Our global reach has also expanded. In 2024, arbitrations before the Centre originated from 53 different countries, up from 49 in 2023, spanning an increasingly diverse range of sectors and industries.

Another important milestone for the Centre in 2024 was regaining whitelist status in the GAR Guide to Regional Arbitration. We were proud to be the only arbitral institution in the UAE—and one of just three in the MENA region—to hold this distinction and be recognised. Whitelist status is an endorsement that the Centre is reliable, internationally credible and user-approved.

A further highlight of 2024 was our strategic technology partnership with Opus 2. In early 2026, we will launch a state-of-the-art digital case management system, featuring integrated hearing technologies and services. In addition, we will soon unveil a refreshed website, presenting a new and contemporary face for the Centre to the world.

None of this success would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our people. Their efforts, experience, and professionalism continue to be instrumental to our reputation, growth, and development. I thank each of them for their valuable contributions. Today, Dubai is widely regarded as the leading hub for arbitration in the MEASA region, and we remain grateful for the visionary leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai.

The Centre is now 30 years into its journey. This milestone offers an opportunity to reflect not only on what lies ahead, but also on the progress we have made. Over the past three decades, we have adapted to global shifts in the arbitration landscape and helped shape its evolution as a trusted provider of world-class arbitration and ADR services. We are excited about the future, and I am confident that—with the continued efforts of our team and the support of our stakeholders—the Centre will continue to deliver outstanding services and contribute to cementing Dubai's position as the world's most forward-thinking arbitration destination.

Thank you for your continued support.

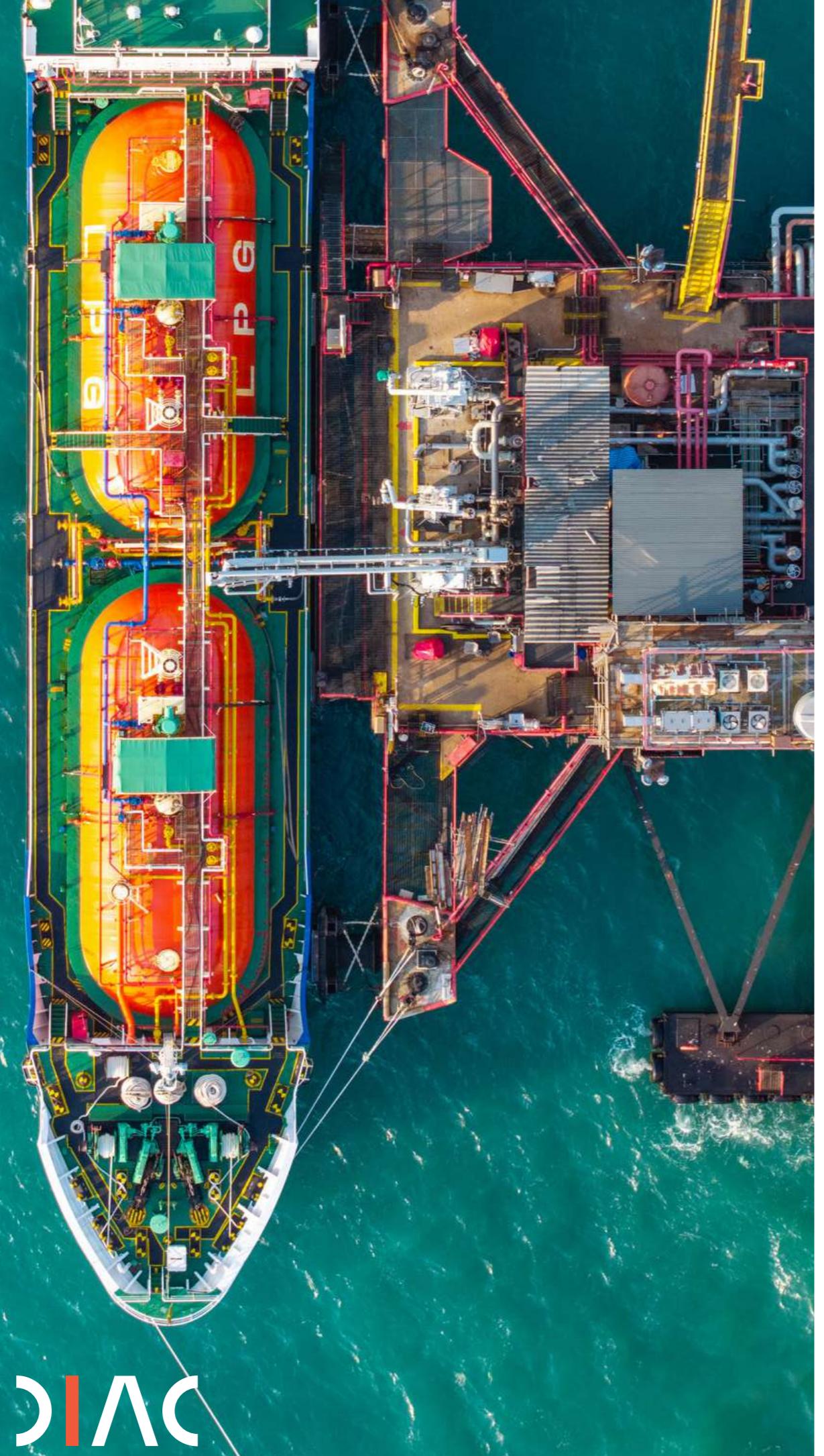


DIAC

The background of the slide features a large, abstract organic shape in a light orange or yellow hue, resembling a stylized flower or a brain. This shape is overlaid by a smaller, more detailed organic shape in a light green or teal color, also with a brain-like or floral structure. The two shapes overlap, with the green shape appearing in the foreground and the orange shape behind it. The overall effect is organic and modern.

Statistics

Defined by excellence



## Executive summary

In the past five years, the Centre has administered more than 1,300 arbitrations.

2024 was another good year for the Centre, with a total of 295 cases registered, broken down as 262 arbitrations, and 33 appointing authority cases. This was the third consecutive year that the Centre has registered more than 250 administered arbitrations.

Although the number of cases registered in 2024 was lower than in 2023, the total aggregate amount in dispute increased to AED 9.7 billion (from AED 5.5 billion in 2023) with an average amount in dispute of AED 37 million (up from AED 17 million in 2023).

Despite global economic challenges, the construction sector in the MEASA region continues to show remarkable resilience. It is no surprise therefore that the construction and real estate sector continued to dominate the Centre's caseload in 2024, representing almost 60% of all DIAC arbitrations.

The leading construction and real estate industries in 2024 were commercial and residential construction, followed by real estate development.

It follows that construction contracts were the most common contract type in 2024, accounting for 41% of all underlying contracts in DIAC arbitrations.

DIAC arbitrations in the energy sector represented almost 10% of the Centre's caseload in 2024 (overtaking the banking and finance sector, which was the second largest sector represented in the DIAC caseload in 2023).

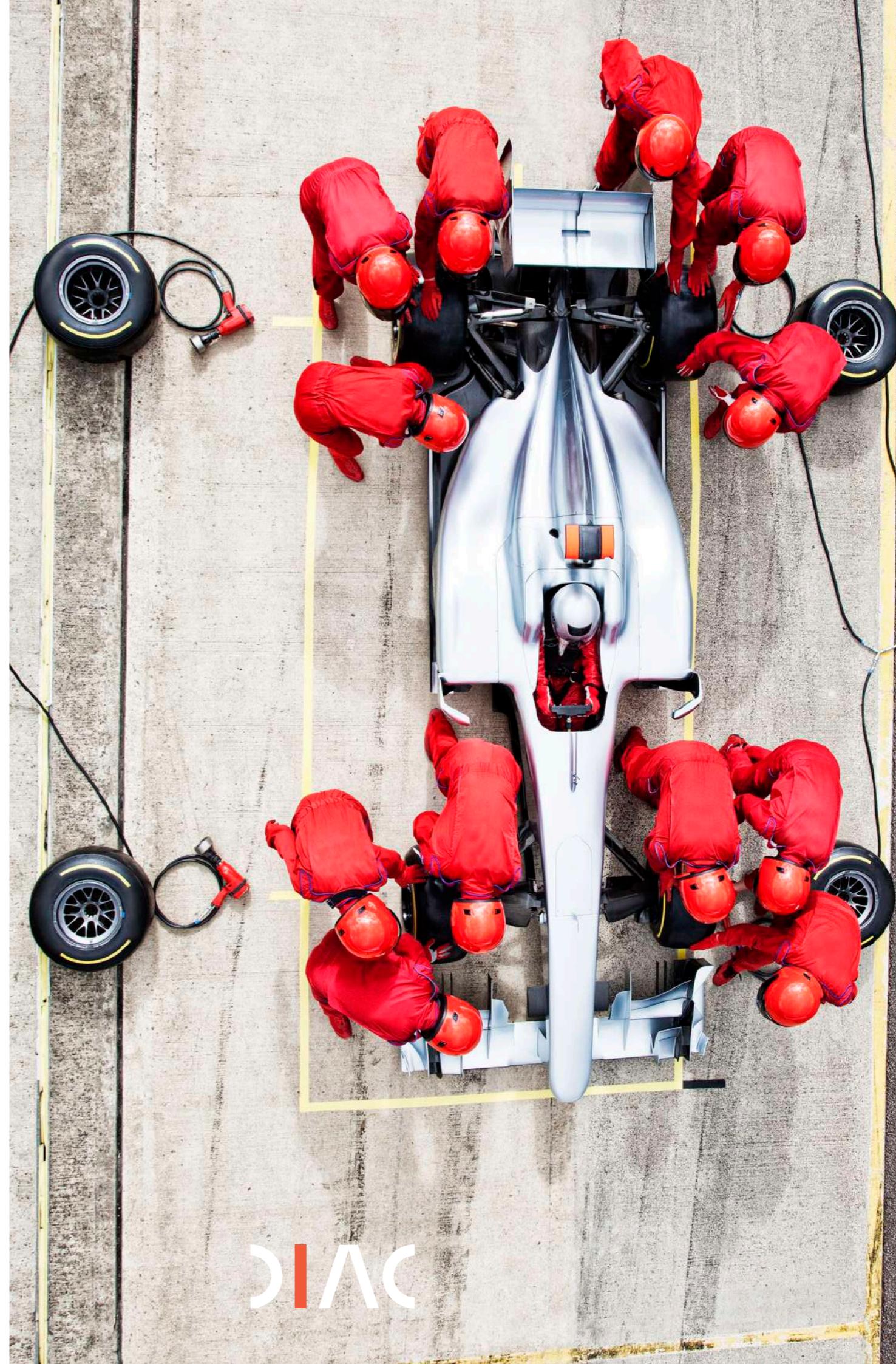
Almost three quarters of the contracts out of which disputes arose in DIAC arbitrations registered in 2024 were concluded within the past six years. Interestingly, more than 36% arose from contracts concluded in the last three years (up from 25% in 2023), reaffirming that parties continue to recognise the Centre's unique strengths and services.

The DIAC Arbitration Court appointed significantly more arbitrators in 2024 than the previous year. In 2024, the Arbitration Court constituted 242 tribunals in administered arbitrations (up from 83 in 2023). In constituting these tribunals, the Arbitration Court appointed a total of 388 arbitrators (up from 143 in 2023). This marked a steep increase in the number of arbitrator appointments of 170%.

The Arbitration Court continued to lead the way with diversity in appointments, with the selection of female arbitrators again reaching near parity at 47% of all Arbitration Court appointments in 2024. The Centre was shortlisted for the GAR Equal Representation in Arbitration Pledge Award at the 15th annual GAR Awards in Paris on 10 April 2025 for the Arbitration Court's remarkably consistent representation of women. There is still more to be done by parties and co-arbitrators to improve the overall percentage of appointments of women (33% in 2024 up from 31% in 2023).

Only 15% of the arbitrators appointed following party nomination were women while 38% of the tribunal chairs nominated by co-arbitrators were women.

The Centre continued to improve its international reach with arbitrators from 46 different countries (up from 29 different countries in 2023) appointed by the Arbitration Court in 2024.





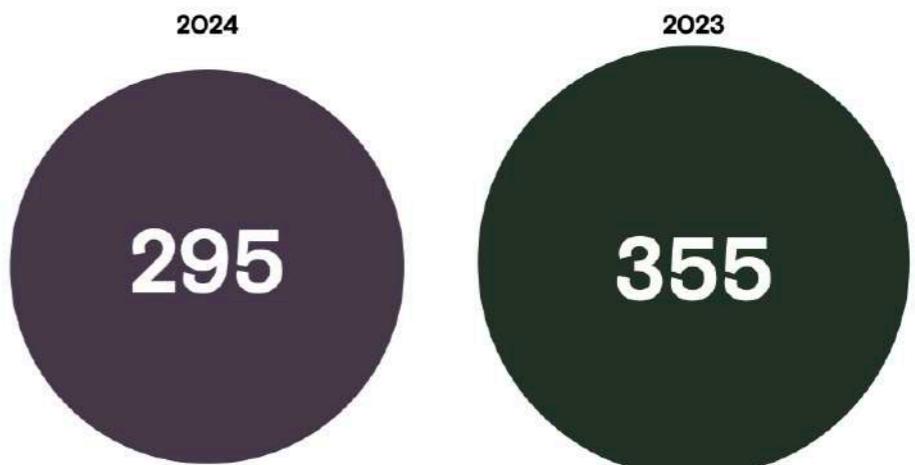
# Caseload

The Centre's performance in 2024 was strong, with a total of 295 cases registered, broken down as 262 arbitrations, and 33 appointing authority cases being registered. Although the number of cases registered in 2024 was lower than in 2023 (down from 355 cases of which 323 were administered arbitrations), this marks the third consecutive year of the Centre registering more than 250 administered arbitrations per year.

The total aggregate amount in dispute increased in 2024 to AED 9.7 billion (from AED 5.5 billion in 2023) with an average amount in dispute of AED 37 million (up from AED 17 million in 2023). Most of the cases registered in 2024 were administered arbitrations, with the parties having agreed to an application of the DIAC Rules.

A minority of the cases registered were appointing authority cases, which were referred to the Centre either on the basis of the parties having agreed to mandate DIAC to act as appointing authority pursuant to Article 4 of Appendix II to the DIAC Rules, or on the basis of an order from the Dubai Courts authorising the Centre to act in this capacity as a "Relevant Authority" pursuant to Article 11 of the UAE Federal Arbitration Law.

## NUMBER OF CASES



DIAC ADMINISTERED ARBITRATIONS - 262  
DIAC APPOINTING AUTHORITY - 33

DIAC ADMINISTERED ARBITRATIONS - 323  
DIAC APPOINTING AUTHORITY - 31  
DIAC MEDIATIONS - 1

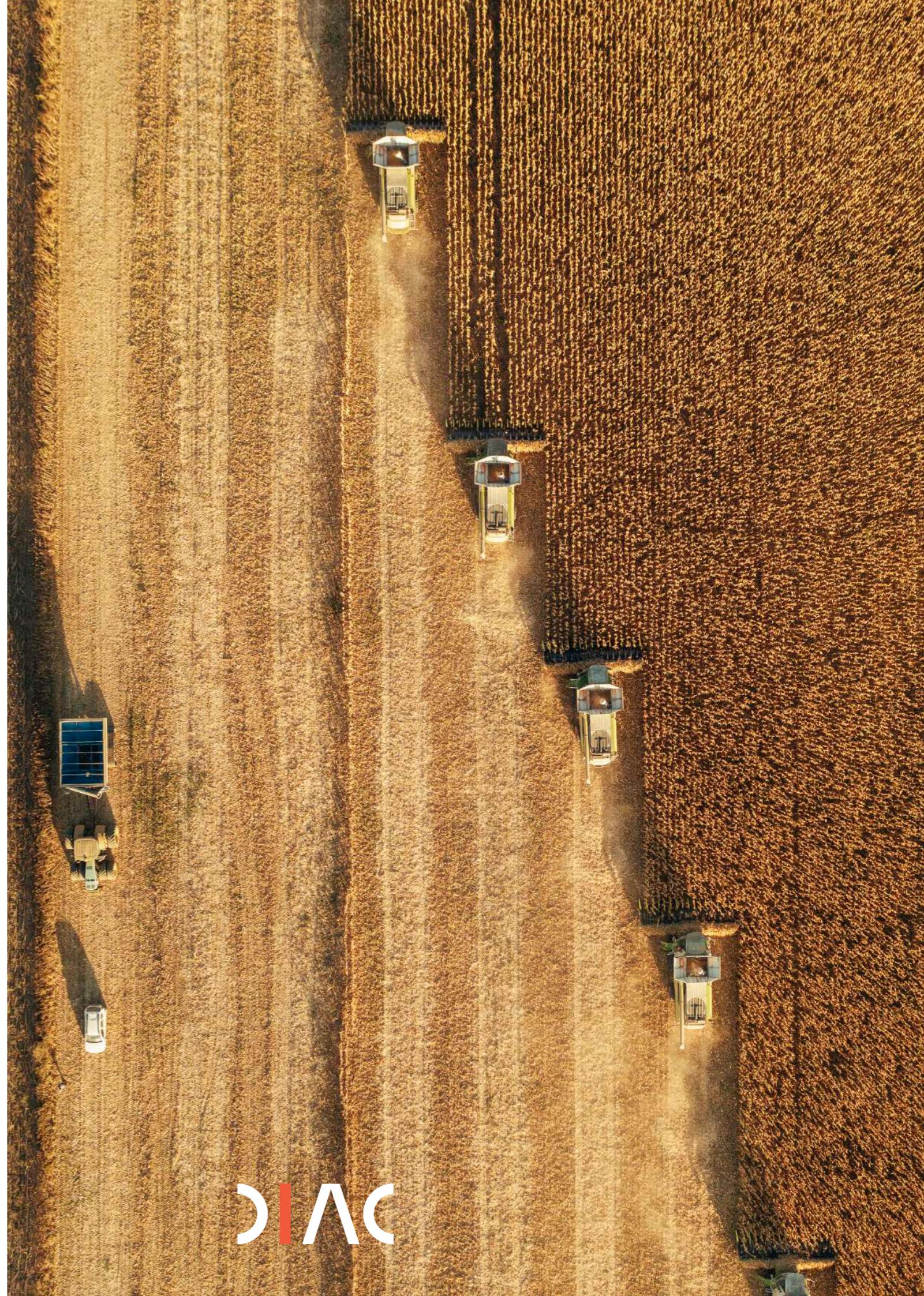
# Sector and industry of dispute

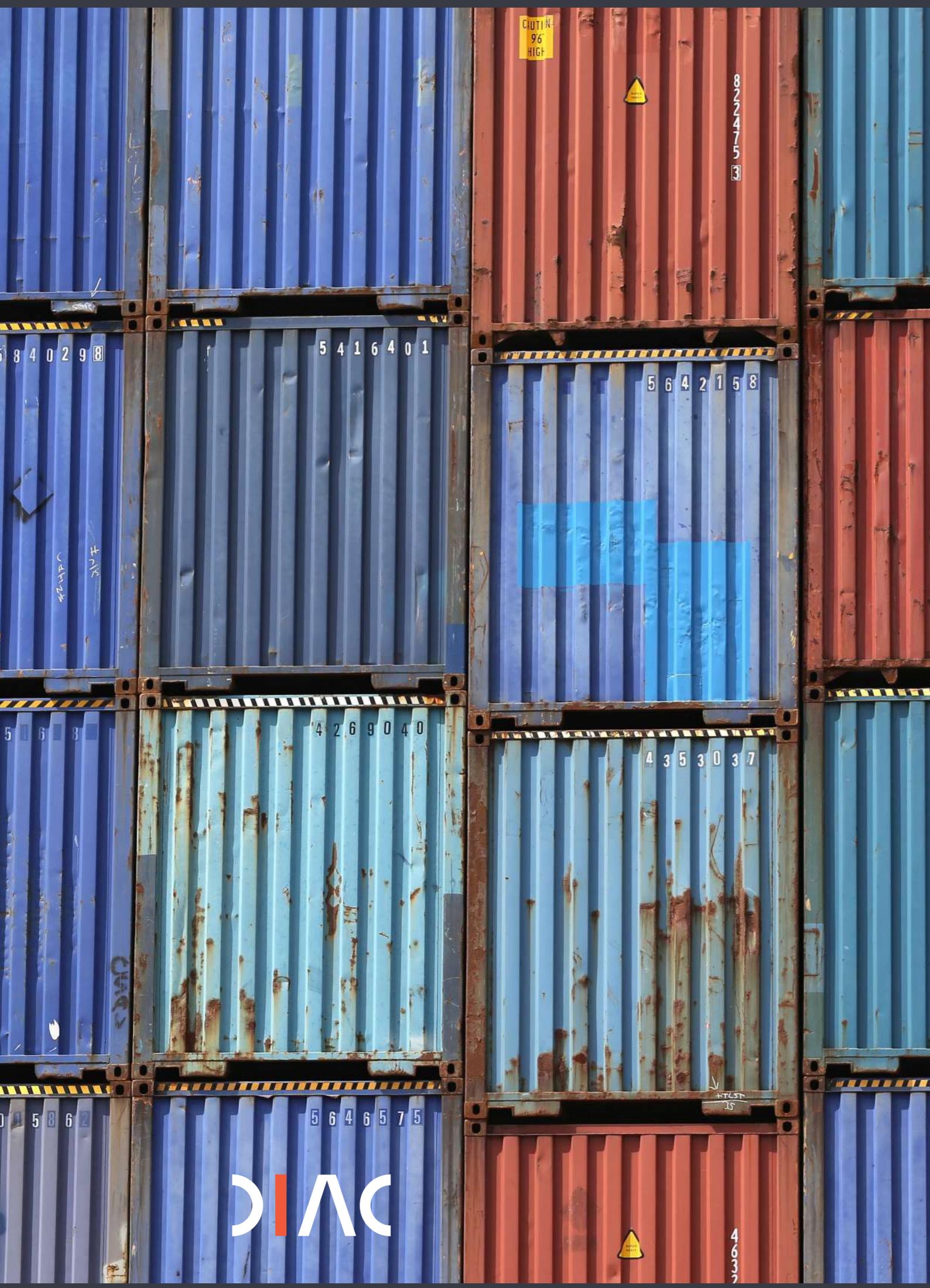
The sector and industry of dispute in cases registered in 2024 were largely consistent with those of cases registered in 2023. Disputes in the construction and real estate sector continued to make up the majority of the Centre's caseload, representing 58% of all cases administered. As in the previous year, the leading construction and real estate industries were commercial and residential construction, followed by real estate development. Outside of the construction and real estate sector, the Centre's caseload involved administered cases in the energy (26 or c. 10%); retail and consumer goods (20 or c. 8%); transport and logistics (19 or c. 7%); manufacturing and industrial (14 or c. 5%); banking and finance (10 or c. 4%); professional services (7 or c. 3%); and technology and telecommunications (4 or c. 2%) sectors.

## SECTOR AND INDUSTRY OF DISPUTE



- CONSTRUCTION AND REAL ESTATE - 153
- ENERGY - 26
- RETAIL AND CONSUMER GOODS - 20
- TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS - 19
- MANUFACTURING AND INDUSTRIAL - 14
- BANKING AND FINANCE - 10
- PROFESSIONAL SERVICES - 7
- TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMS - 4
- TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY - 3
- HEALTHCARE - 3
- AGRICULTURE - 2
- GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR - 1





# Contract types

The Centre also records the contract type for all administered arbitrations registered.

Considering that construction and real estate was the leading sector for administered arbitrations registered in the first quarter, it is no surprise that construction contracts was the most common contract type, accounting for 41% of all underlying contracts in these cases. This remains consistent with the 2023 statistics, where construction contracts accounted for 40% of all underlying contracts.

In 2023, the second largest contract type was real estate and property contracts, whereas sale and purchase agreements only accounted for 9%. For the arbitrations registered in 2024 however, 66 (or 25%) of cases were brought on the basis of sale and purchase contracts whereas disputes only arose out of real estate and property contracts in 16 (or 6%) cases. This could potentially indicate that DIAC clauses are being written into more diverse commercial agreements. Other common types of contracts for disputes registered in 2024 include service and provider contracts (31 or c. 12%); partnership and ownership contracts (11 or c. 4%); lease and rental contracts (7 or c. 3%); marketing and advertising contracts (4 or c. 2%); and financial contracts (5 or c. 2%). The 14 or c. 5% of contracts classified as "Other" in 2024 include bills of lading; charterparties, earn-out agreements; framework agreements and settlement agreements.

## CONTRACT TYPES



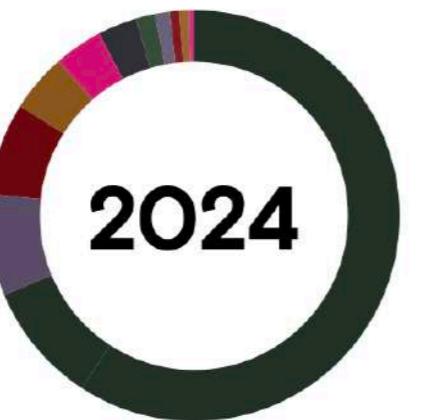
- CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT - 107
- SALES AND PURCHASE CONTRACT - 66
- SERVICE AND PROVIDER CONTRACT - 31
- REAL ESTATE AND PROPERTY CONTRACT - 16
- OTHER - 14
- PARTNERSHIP AND OWNERSHIP CONTRACT - 11
- LEASE AND RENTAL CONTRACT - 7
- FINANCIAL CONTRACT - 5
- MARKETING AND ADVERTISING CONTRACT - 4
- EMPLOYER AND WORKER CONTRACT - 1

# Sector and industry of contract

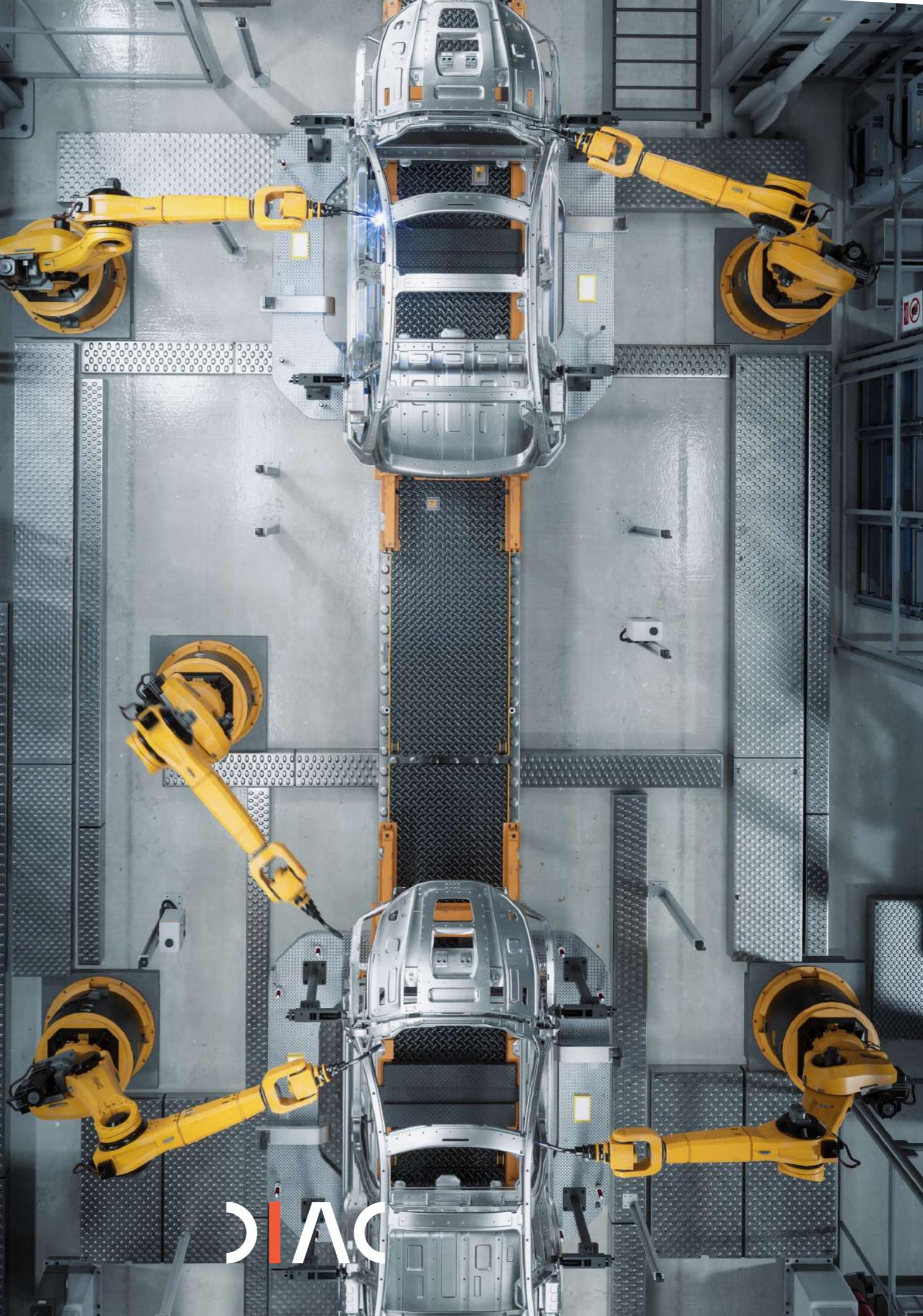
Recognising that the sector and industry of the parties' contract can be different to the sector and industry of the parties' dispute in some cases, the Centre records data on the sector and industry of the parties' contract.

For the cases registered in 2024, the sector and industry of the parties' contract were very similar to the sector and industry of the parties' dispute, with these being different in only 11 cases. We expect this to diversify over time.

## SECTOR AND INDUSTRY OF CONTRACT



- CONSTRUCTION – 155
- ENERGY – 25
- RETAIL AND CONSUMER GOODS – 21
- TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS – 19
- MANUFACTURING AND INDUSTRIAL – 12
- BANKING AND FINANCE – 10
- PROFESSIONAL SERVICES – 8
- TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS – 4
- TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY – 3
- AGRICULTURE – 2
- HEALTHCARE – 2
- GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR – 1





DIAC

# Nationality of Parties

In 2024, parties to arbitrations commenced under the DIAC Rules originated from 53 different countries (up from 49 in 2023). Consistent with cases registered in 2023, the percentage of parties from the United Arab Emirates continued to be significant at 71% or 416 (as compared to 72% or 510 in 2023). 29% or 166 parties were from countries other than the United Arab Emirates (as compared to 28% or 195 in 2023). These statistics are based on the parties' nationality or country of incorporation. The true number of international parties in DIAC cases is likely higher than the statistics presented as many international companies conduct commercial activities in the UAE and wider MENA region through UAE corporate entities or branches.

Despite the continued trend of most parties being from the Middle East, it is notable that in cases registered in 2024, 0.9% or 5 were from China (as compared to 0.6% or 4 in 2023); and 3.4% or 20 were from India (compared to 2.4% or 17 in 2023). In the past 18 months, we have seen a growing interest from China, India and Russia in the Centre's services and the above numbers could be an early indication that DIAC clauses are increasingly being written into contracts involving parties from these countries. We expect the share of parties from the abovementioned countries to increase over time.

Other than the United Arab Emirates, parties from Saudi Arabia, India, Qatar, China, Lebanon, the Marshall Islands and Oman were the most common users of the Centre in 2024. Of these, and consistent with cases registered in 2023, the most significant was the number of parties from Saudi Arabia, at 23 or 4% in 2024.

## NATIONALITY OF PARTIES



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES - 416	KUWAIT - 3
SAUDI ARABIA - 23	TURKEY - 3
INDIA - 20	AFGHANISTAN - 2
UNITED KINGDOM - 14	BRAZIL - 2
QATAR - 9	BULGARIA - 2
CHINA - 5	HONG KONG - 2
GERMANY - 5	IRAN - 2
LEBANON - 5	IRELAND - 2
MARSHALL ISLANDS - 5	ISRAEL - 2
OMAN - 5	PANAMA - 2
RUSSIA - 4	SLOVENIA - 2
SOUTH AFRICA - 4	TANZANIA - 2
BAHRAIN - 3	AZERBAIJAN - 1
BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS - 3	CANADA - 1
EGYPT - 3	COLOMBIA - 1
FRANCE - 3	ETHIOPIA - 1
IRAQ - 3	FINLAND - 1
JORDAN - 3	GEORGIA - 1
	ISLE OF MAN - 1
	ITALY - 1
	JAPAN - 1
	LIBYA - 1
	MALI - 1
	PALESTINE - 1
	POLAND - 1
	ROMANIA - 1
	SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS - 1
	SPAIN - 1
	SUDAN - 1
	SWITZERLAND - 1
	SYRIA - 1
	UGANDA - 1
	UKRAINE - 1
	USA - 1
	UZBEKISTAN - 1

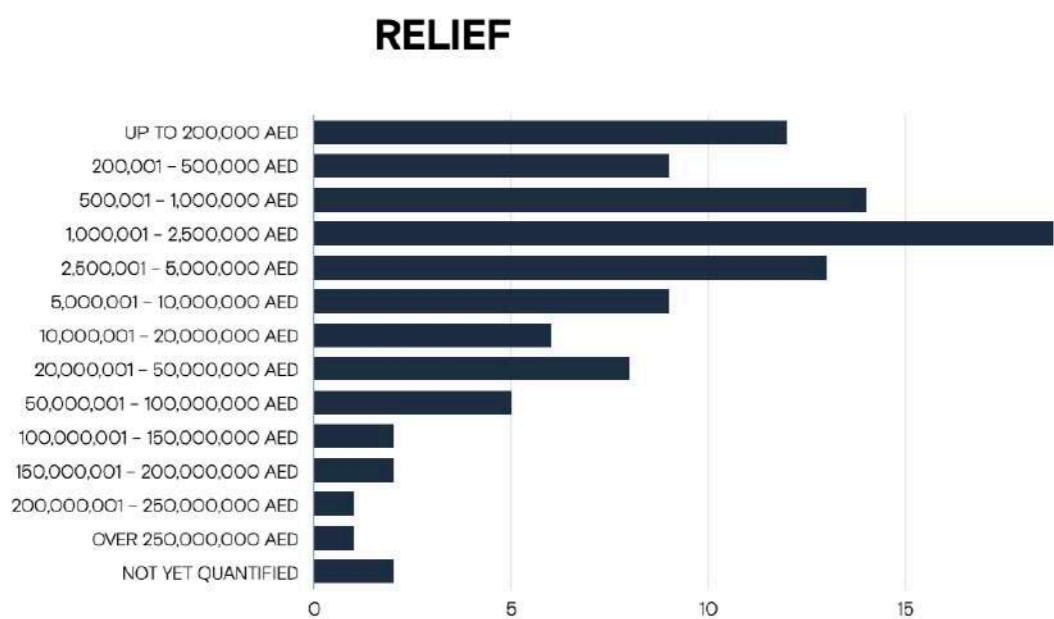
# Relief

In total, the DIAC arbitration cases registered in 2024 had an aggregate amount in dispute of more than AED 9.7 billion (USD 2.647 billion). This marked an increase in the aggregate amount in dispute compared to cases registered in 2023, for which the total amount in dispute was AED 5.5 billion (USD 1.497 billion).

The lowest amount in dispute in 2024 was AED 24,978 (USD 6,801). The highest amount in dispute in 2024 was AED 3,532,440,920 (USD 961,862,742). The average amount in dispute for administered arbitration cases registered in 2024 was AED 37,108,914 (USD 10,104,537) and the median was AED 1,743,961 (USD 474,870). The average amount in dispute for administered arbitrations registered in 2023 was significantly lower at AED 17,133,733 (USD 4,665,412) while the median amount in dispute was marginally higher at AED 1,982,013 (USD 539,690).

As some of the quantified claims were accompanied by claims for unquantified damages the amount of the claims advanced by parties will under represent the amount sought.

In addition, many of the sums claimed will increase by the value of counterclaims sought by Respondents or change because of the parties subsequently amending their claims.



# Arbitrator appointments



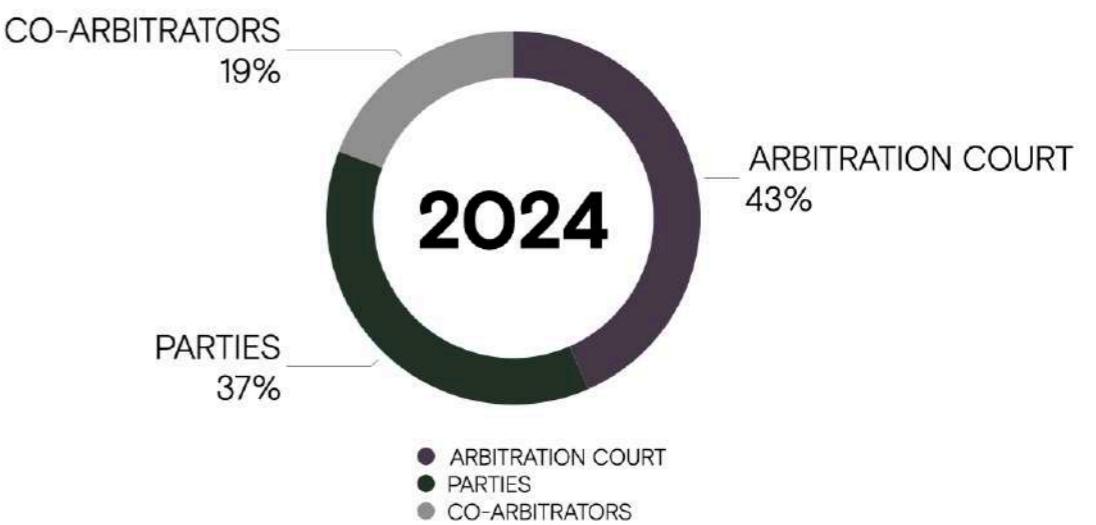
DIAC

Pursuant to the DIAC Rules, parties and co-arbitrators may (and often do) select their own arbitrators. Formal appointment by the DIAC Arbitration Court is contingent on the Arbitration Court's approval of the candidate following a review of the candidates' independence and impartiality, and of their availability. The Arbitration Court appointed significantly more arbitrators in 2024 than in the previous year. In 2024 administered arbitrations, the Arbitration Court constituted 242 Tribunals (up from 83 in 2023). In constituting these Tribunals, the Arbitration Court appointed a total of 388 arbitrators (up from 143 in 2023). This marked an increase in the number of appointments of 170%. In addition, 29 appointments (up from 18 in 2023) were made in appointing authority cases during 2024.

Of the Tribunals constituted in the administered cases, 127 or 59% (compared to 53 or 64% in 2023) were Tribunals consisting of a sole arbitrator and 87 or 41% (up from 30 or 36% in 2023) were three-member Tribunals. One possible explanation for the proportion of sole arbitrator Tribunals being bigger than three-member Tribunals can be that the default position under the DIAC Rules is that the Tribunal shall consist of a sole arbitrator in the absence of party agreement on the number of arbitrators, and unless the Arbitration Court determines that a three-member Tribunal is appropriate, pursuant to Article 10.2 of the DIAC Rules. Out of the 28 appointing authority cases, 24 concerned the appointment of a sole arbitrator while four concerned the appointment of arbitrators in three-member Tribunals. In total, the Arbitration Court made 29 appointments due to the Centre being mandated to appoint two arbitrators in one of the appointing authority cases.

Of the 388 arbitrators appointed in 2024, 168 or 43% (up from 57 or 40% in 2023) were selected by the Arbitration Court. The Arbitration Court selected 120 of the 127 or 94% of the sole arbitrators (up from 85% in 2023); 34 out of 174 or 20% of co-arbitrators (up from 13% in 2023), of which 10 were on behalf of Claimants and 24 were on behalf of Respondents; and 13 out of 87 or 15% of presiding arbitrators (up from 7% in 2023). Of the remaining sole arbitrators, three (or 2%) were jointly nominated by the parties, three (or 2%) were nominated unilaterally by a party pursuant to the parties' arbitration agreement and one (or 1%) was nominated by the Executive Director. The co-arbitrators nominated 74 of the 87 (or 85%) presiding arbitrators (down from 85% in 2023). This shows that selection of arbitrators is driven in significant part by the parties, directly or indirectly.

## SELECTION OF ARBITRATORS

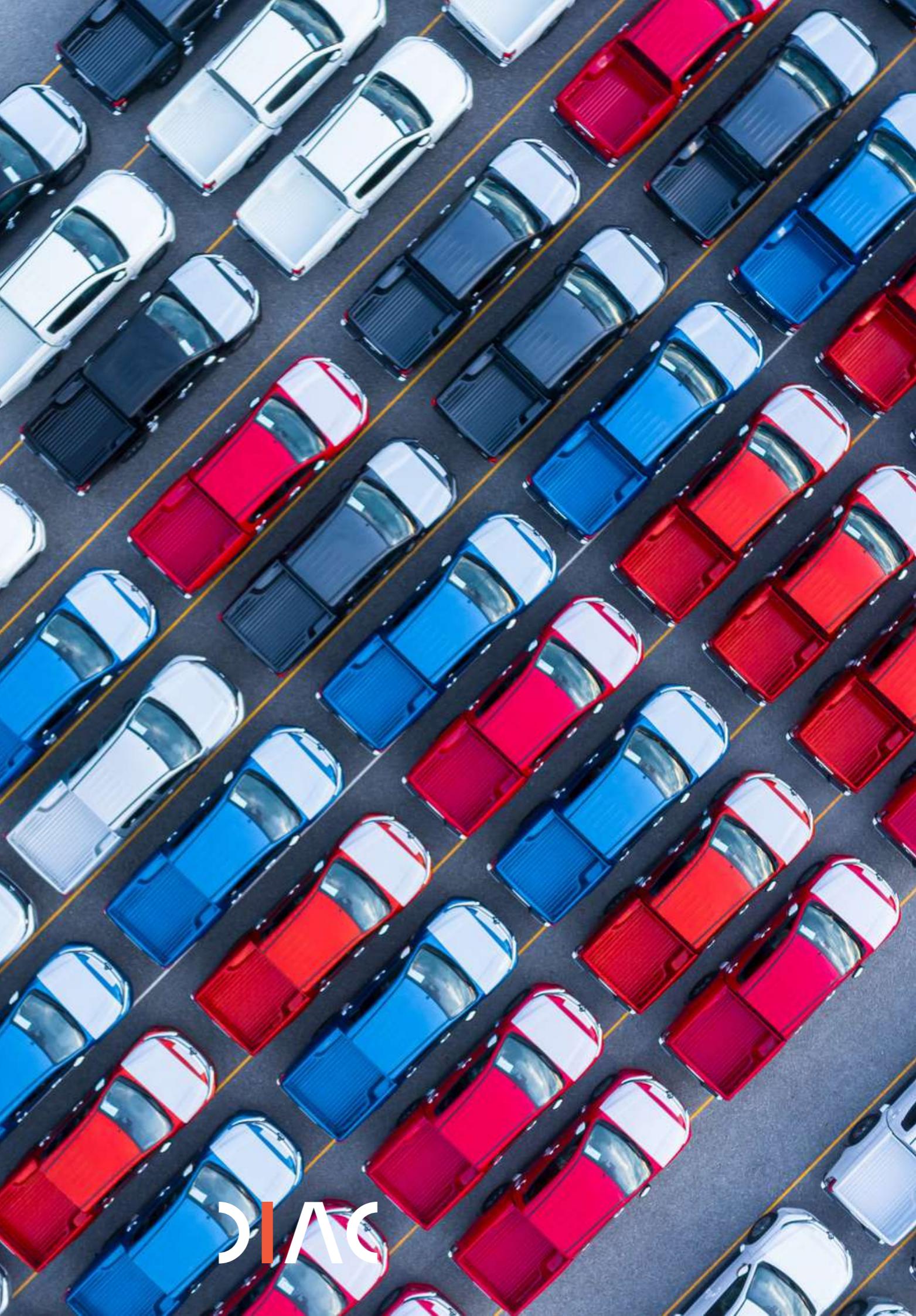
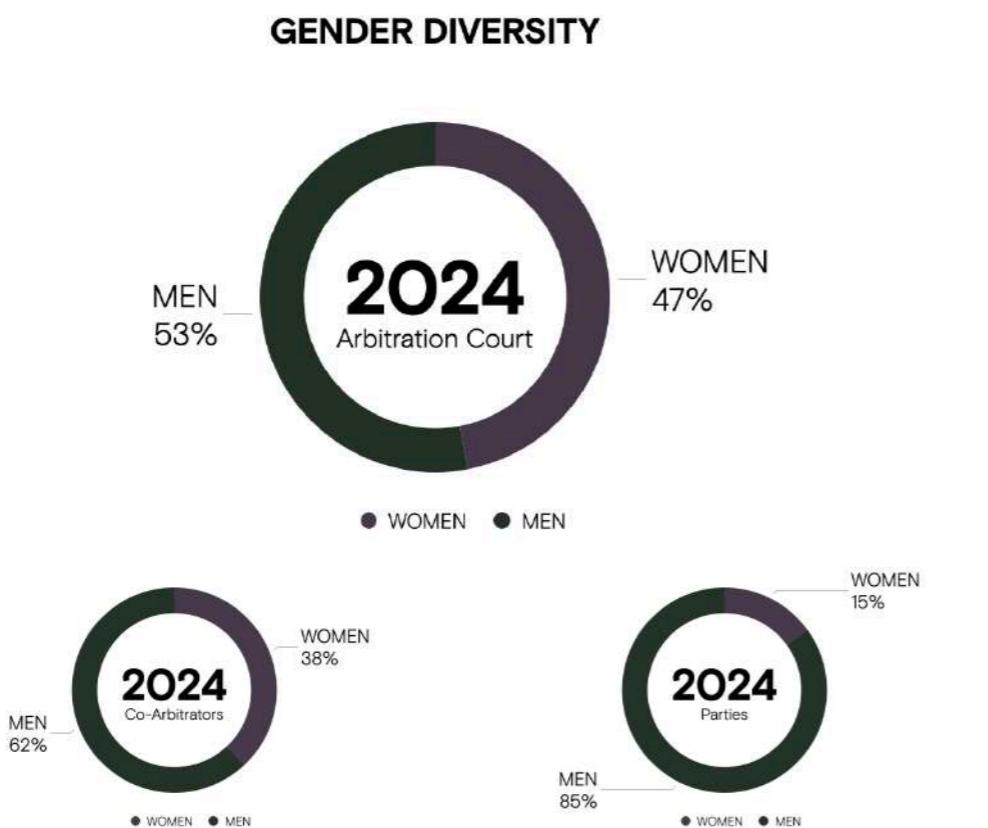


# Diversity

The Centre is committed to appointing diverse candidates as arbitrators. When the Arbitration Court is tasked to appoint arbitrators, it works hard to ensure that it appoints as many different arbitrators as possible, and achieves diversity in its appointments in different ways, including nationality, gender, and first-time appointments where possible and appropriate, and avoiding repeat appointments.

Often, the Arbitration Court is asked to appoint sole arbitrators or presiding arbitrators, where prior DIAC experience generally is preferred, and nationality restrictions apply. The prevalence of UAE parties means that Article 11.1 of the DIAC Rules necessarily precludes the selection and appointment of a sole arbitrator or presiding arbitrator with UAE nationality. Despite these limitations, the Arbitration Court achieves a remarkable level of diversity and notably outperforms the parties and/or arbitrators in this respect.

In 2023, the Arbitration Court's appointment of women as arbitrators reached near parity at 47% of all Arbitration Court appointments. Remarkably, the Arbitration Court's selection of female arbitrators in 2024 was also 47% of all Arbitration Court appointments. Of the 388 arbitrators appointed in 2024, 129 or 33% (up from 44 or 31% in 2023) were women. Of the 146 party-nominated arbitrators, 22 or 15% (compared to 60 or 22% in 2023) were women, and of the 74 presiding arbitrators nominated by the co-arbitrators, 28 or 38% (up from four or 15% in 2023) were women. These numbers are a testament to the Arbitration Court's consistent commitment to diversity in arbitral appointments.





# Nationality of arbitrators

Arbitrators from all over the world are appointed in DIAC arbitrations. In 2024, arbitrators from 46 different countries were appointed (up from 29 in 2023), broken down as follows.

## NATIONALITY OF ARBITRATORS



-  ALGERIA
-  ARMENIA
-  AUSTRALIA
-  BAHRAIN
-  BELGIUM
-  BRAZIL
-  CANADA
-  EGYPT
-  FRANCE
-  GERMANY
-  GREECE
-  HONG KONG
-  INDIA
-  IRAQ
-  IRELAND
-  ITALY

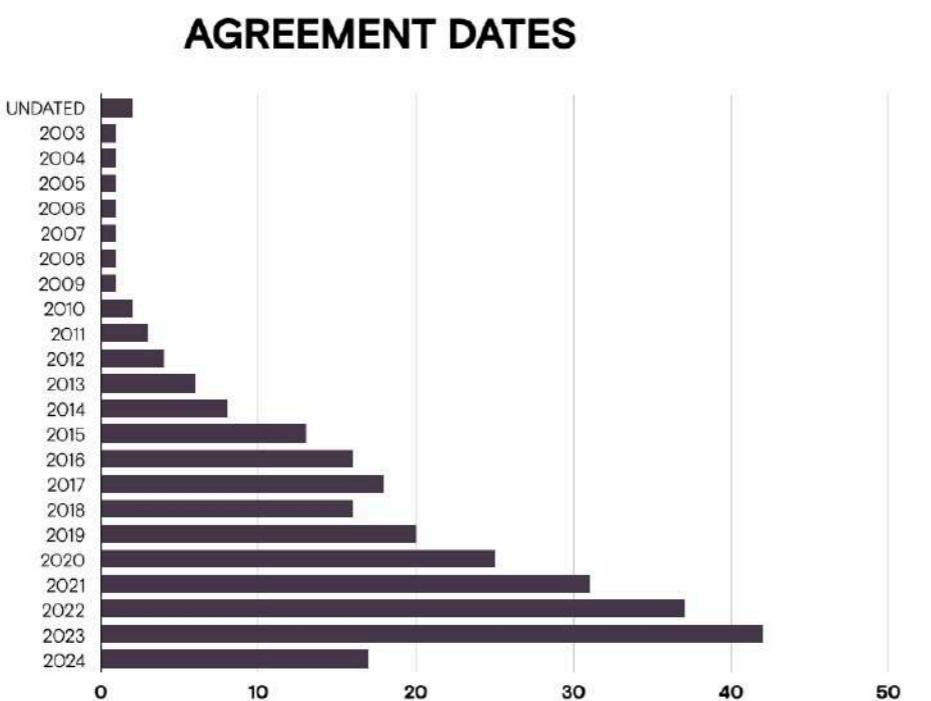
-  JORDAN
-  KENYA
-  LATVIA
-  LEBANON
-  MAURITIUS
-  MALAYSIA
-  MOROCCO
-  NETHERLAND
-  NEW ZEALAN
-  NIGERIA
-  OMAN
-  PALESTINE
-  POLAND
-  QATAR
-  ROMANIA
-  RUSSIA

-  SAUDI ARABIA
-  SINGAPORE
-  SOUTH AFRICA
-  SPAIN
-  SUDAN
-  SWITZERLAND
-  SYRIA
-  TUNISIA
-  TURKEY
-  UKRAINE
-  UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
-  UNITED KINGDOM
-  USA
-  YEMEN

# Agreement dates

To assess the potential impact of external developments on the make-up of the Centre's caseload, we assess the time-lag between the date of the agreements out of which disputes arise and the year in which the disputes are referred to the Centre.

The following chart shows the time-lag for DIAC arbitrations in 2024. Continuing the trend seen in cases registered in 2023, 71% (down from 73% in 2023) of agreements in DIAC arbitrations were dated within the previous six years. Interestingly, more than 36% arose from contracts concluded in the last three years, 2022-2024, (up from 25% in 2023). Reaffirming that parties continue to recognise the Centre's unique strengths and services.





# Applications

## Applications for appointment of an Emergency Arbitrator

The Centre received five applications for the appointment of an Emergency Arbitrator under Article 2 of Appendix II to the DIAC Rules in 2024. In all cases, the applications were made without notice to the Respondents in accordance with Article 2.2 of Appendix II to the DIAC Rules.

In one case, the Arbitration Court was not *prima facie* satisfied that it was reasonable to allow the emergency proceedings in accordance with Article 2.5 of Appendix II to the DIAC Rules. The applicant's request for the appointment of an Emergency Arbitrator therefore did not proceed and the Centre went on to appoint the Tribunal instead. In the other four cases, the Emergency Arbitrator was appointed within one day of receipt of a complete application in accordance with Article 2.5 of Appendix II to the DIAC Rules.

The Emergency Arbitrator decided to grant emergency interim relief in all four cases that proceeded to the appointment of an Emergency Arbitrator. In the first case, a preliminary order was issued 14 days after the appointment of the Emergency Arbitrator. In the second case, a preliminary order was issued the same day as the appointment of the Emergency Arbitrator. In the third case, a preliminary order was issued within 12 days after the appointment of the Emergency Arbitrator. Subsequent preliminary orders were issued in all three cases. In the fourth case, a virtual hearing was held, and the timetable was extended on the request of the parties. The preliminary order was issued 35 days after the appointment of the Emergency Arbitrator.

## Jurisdictional objections

Respondents filed 16 preliminary jurisdictional objections pursuant to Article 6.2 of the DIAC Rules in administered arbitrations registered in 2024 (compared to six in cases registered in 2023). The higher number of jurisdictional challenges in 2024 is likely due to the fact that

the Centre's data collection processes and case management has improved, meaning that jurisdictional objections are now properly dealt with and reported on, rather than a substantive increase of jurisdictional objections.

The Arbitration Court decided on the Centre's *prima facie* jurisdiction in 34 other cases for the purpose of determining whether they could be registered and administered under the DIAC Rules, either at all or against all parties mentioned in the Request for Arbitration (compared to 44 in 2023).

## Applications for joinder, consolidation and claims under multiple contracts

Parties requested that a third-party be joined to the arbitration under Article 9 of the DIAC Rules in five cases registered in 2024 (up from four applications for joinder in cases registered in 2023).

Twelve requests for consolidation under Article 8.2 of the DIAC Rules were made by parties in cases registered in 2024 (up from ten in 2023).

Claims were brought on the basis of multiple contracts under Article 8.1 of the DIAC Rules in 20 cases registered in 2024 (compared to 33 in 2023).

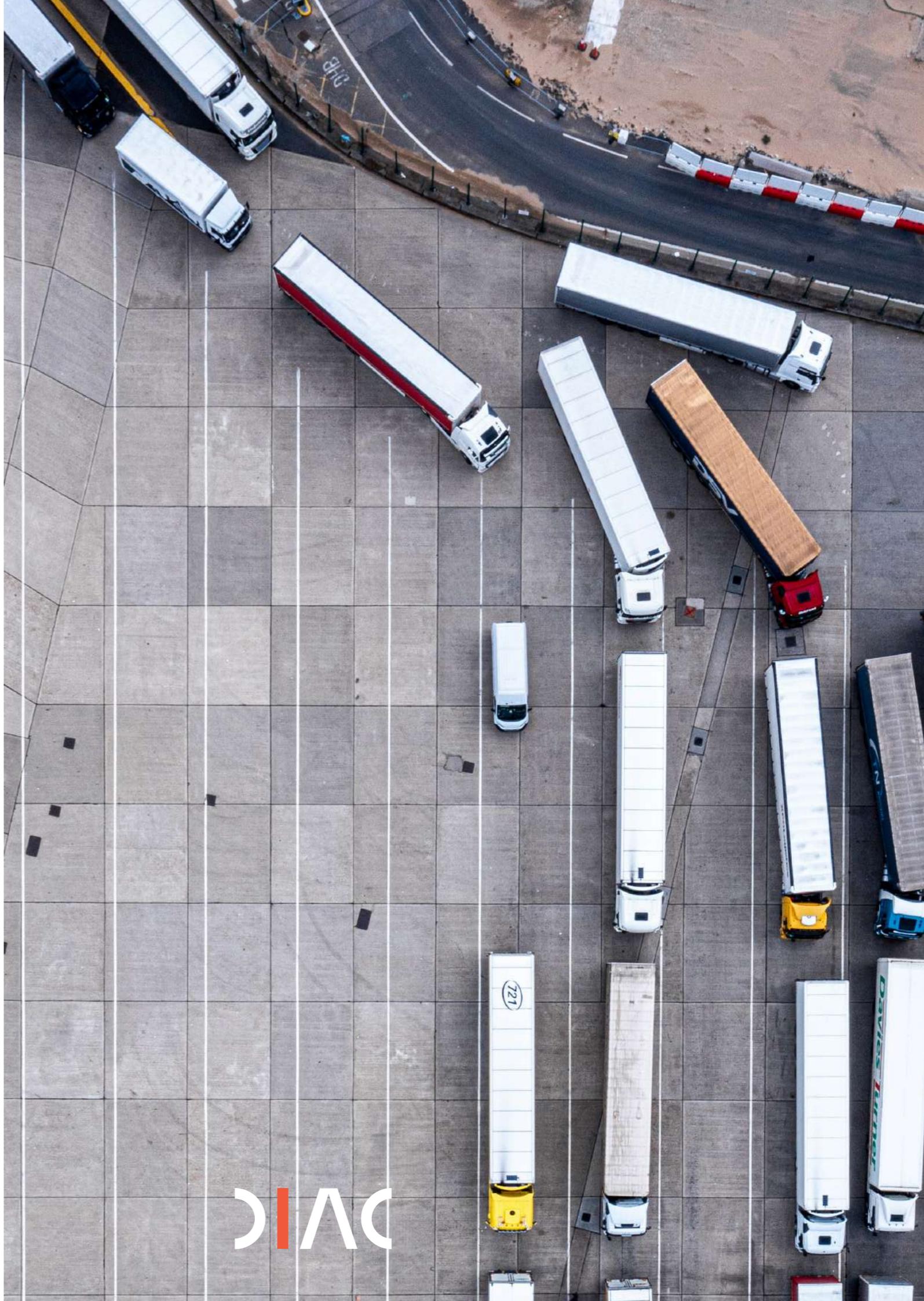
## Challenges

The Centre received four challenges to arbitrators in 2024 (up from three in 2023). Two challenges were rejected by the Arbitration Court and two were upheld. This is a testament to the Centre's robust appointment and disclosure procedures and the robust and transparent challenge procedures introduced with the 2022 DIAC Arbitration Rules. The Arbitration Court also decided on two related challenges received just before the end of 2023 in 2024. One of the challenges was upheld and one was rejected.

# Arbitration agreements

Under Article 2.1 of the DIAC Rules, the DIAC Rules are applicable where parties have agreed to submit existing or future disputes to Dubai International Arbitration Centre/DIAC or the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI). Further, the Centre has jurisdiction under the DIAC Rules to administer arbitrations brought under arbitration agreements referring to the DIFC-LCIA Arbitration Centre (DIFC-LCIA) or Emirates Maritime Arbitration Centre (EMAC).

Of the cases registered in 2024, 171 or 65% of cases were brought on the basis of a DIAC arbitration agreement (compared to 178 or 55% in 2023); 69 or 26% of cases were brought on the basis of a DIFC-LCIA arbitration agreement (compared to 102 or 32% in 2023); 21 or 8% of cases were brought under arbitration agreements referring to the DCCI (compared to 33 or 10% in 2023); and like in 2023, one case was brought on the basis of an EMAC arbitration agreement. The number of DIAC arbitration agreements also include cases where claims were brought on the basis of other arbitration agreements, but the Arbitration Court determined, on a *prima facie* basis, that the Centre had jurisdiction to register the arbitration and administer the parties' dispute. These numbers illustrate the expected shift in the Centre's caseload to arbitrations brought on the basis of DIAC agreements with DIFC-LCIA arbitration agreements being phased out over time.





## Seats and applicable law

Dubai (UAE) was selected as a seat in 135 or 51% of the 262 arbitrations registered by the Centre in 2024 (compared to 162 or 50% in 2023). DIFC was selected as a seat in 126 (or 48%) arbitrations (compared to 158 or 49% in 2023), and Abu Dhabi (UAE) and Istanbul were selected as a seat in one arbitration each registered by the Centre in 2024.

It should be noted that the number of DIFC seats includes cases where the seat is yet to be determined by the Tribunal absent party agreement. In accordance with Article 20.1 of the DIAC Rules, the initial seat in these cases shall be the DIFC.

### SEAT OF ARBITRATION



DIFC  
48%

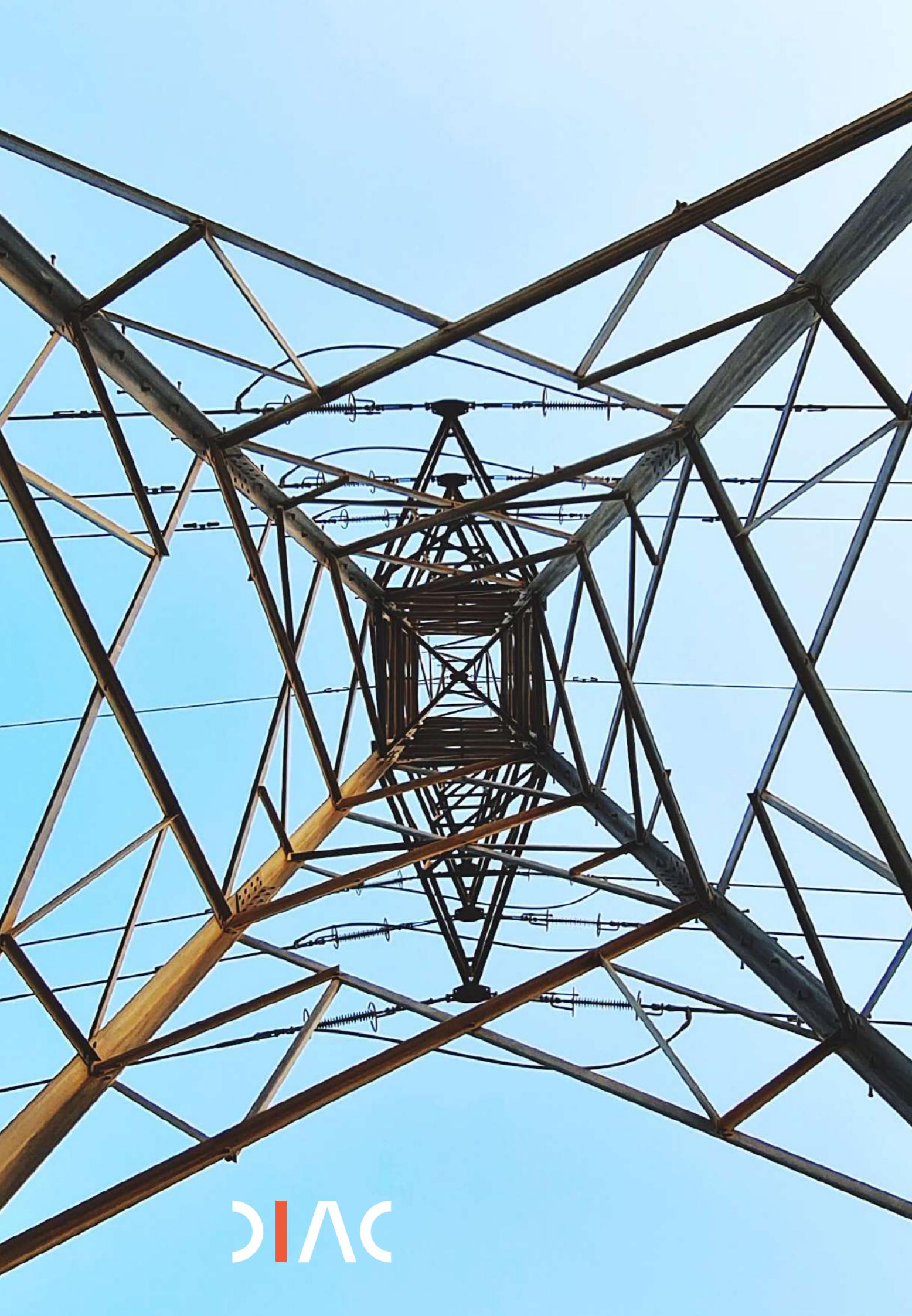
**2024**

DUBAI (UAE)  
51%

- DUBAI (UAE)
- DIFC
- ABU DHABI (UAE)
- ISTANBUL

The laws of Dubai and the United Arab Emirates were the most frequent contractual choices of law by parties to arbitrations under the DIAC Rules in 2024. However, notably, the laws of England and Wales applied in 39 (15%) of cases. The proportional increase of cases with the laws of Saudi Arabia governing the underlying contract, from 5 or 1.5%, in 2023 to 10 or 3.8% in 2024, is also notable.





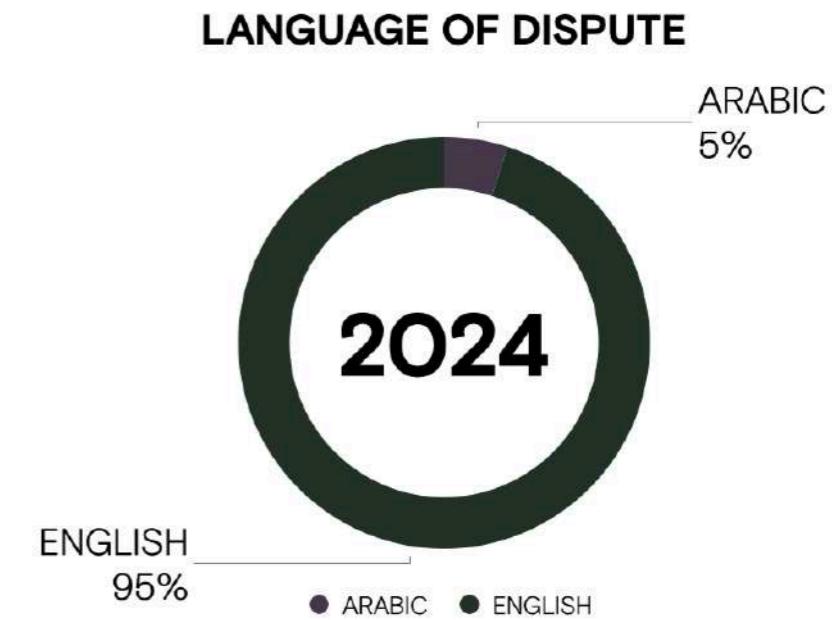
DIAC

# Languages

English was the language of choice in 248 (or 95%) of the DIAC arbitrations registered in 2024 (compared to 303 or 94% in 2023). Arabic was the language of choice in 13 (or 5%) of the DIAC arbitrations and the languages were both English and Arabic in one case registered in 2024.

These numbers include cases where the language of the arbitration was agreed by the parties or the Tribunal, or where the initial language of the arbitration was determined pursuant to Article 21 of the DIAC Rules.

Arabic was the language in 21 or 64% of the appointing authority cases registered in 2024 (compared to 23 or 74% in 2023), with English being the language in the remaining 12 or 36% appointing authority cases in 2024 (compared to 8 or 26% in 2023).



Events and Courses

Defined by innovation





## Exploring the latest trends and insights

### Events

In 2024, our people travelled throughout the United Arab Emirates and overseas to promote the Centre and connect with the international dispute resolution community. We attended London International Disputes Week and participated in GAR Live: Energy Disputes in London and the CEIA International Congress in Madrid.

Our team also spoke at GAR Live—Abu Dhabi, the India—MENA Arbitration Summit in Hyderabad, the Ho Chi Minh City International Construction Arbitration Conference, the Asia ADR Summit in Kuala Lumpur, and Doha Arbitration Day, among many others.

Our people were also delegates at major arbitration congresses and events, including the XXVI ICCA Congress in Hong Kong, Hong Kong Arbitration Week, Riyadh International Disputes Week, Singapore Convention Week, Istanbul Arbitration Week, to name a few.

To engage with our international users and the wider dispute resolution community, we organised events around the world, in India, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Turkey and Egypt.

The Centre again supported Dubai Arbitration Week by providing strategic support to the organising committee in planning, promoting, and executing the week. One of the highlights of Dubai Arbitration Week was the Centre's flagship symposium co-hosted with HKIAC, titled “Shaping the future of dispute resolution – how technology is changing arbitration”, which was attended by more than 350 lawyers, arbitrators, practitioners, and stakeholders.

We hosted several networking events locally and organised a series of events including an Arbitration Community Suhoor, which coincided with the Centre's 30th anniversary celebration at the iconic Burj Al Arab.

We also participated in several events virtually and sponsored key events to support the ADR community and contribute to the development of the field.

## Learning from the best legal experts

### Courses

A core focus in 2024 was expanding professional development and capacity-building within the arbitration community. We introduced new training initiatives to enhance the skills of arbitrators, tribunal secretaries, and legal professionals managing complex disputes under the DIAC Rules.

These initiatives provided practitioners with a structured pathway to develop their expertise, reinforcing the Centre's commitment to fostering a highly skilled arbitration ecosystem.

We also expanded our sector-specific training, delivering specialised training with a construction, finance and technology focus.

Recognising the need to develop the next generation of arbitrators, mediators, and dispute-resolution professionals, we teamed up with the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) and Silicon Valley Arbitration & Mediation Center (SVAMC) to deliver courses that build subject-matter expertise and provide strategic insight into the emerging trends in alternative dispute resolution.

Throughout the year, the Centre ran its popular DIAC Three-Stage Arbitration Training Programme, culminating in the award of a Professional Diploma in International Arbitration. The training was successfully led by Ahmed Ibrahim, Chair of the Professional Diploma, Advisory Committee member and independent arbitrator.





Business Development  
and Marketing

Defined by partnerships





## Making meaningful connections

### **Business Development and International Engagement**

Building on its strategic outreach in previous years, the Centre sustained a high level of international engagement in 2024, ensuring consistent institutional visibility and reinforcing Dubai's position as a global hub for arbitration and dispute resolution.

Through sustained participation in global conferences and forums, we maintained strong relationships with arbitration stakeholders, law firms, and institutional partners across multiple regions. These engagements reflect our focus on quality-driven outreach, prioritising targeted, high-impact participation over volume.

In addition to its event participation, we enhanced our institutional communication strategy through public visibility initiatives, including a street ad campaign during Dubai Arbitration Week, which projected our leadership role to a global professional audience.

The Centre also deepened its cooperation with professional networks and academic institutions, contributing to discussions on international arbitration policy, procedural harmonisation, and emerging areas such as digital transformation, ESG-linked disputes, and technology-driven arbitration. This multidimensional engagement ensures that the Centre's institutional presence remains relevant to the evolving landscape of global dispute resolution.

## Partnerships to meet the challenges facing business and the arbitration community

### Strategic Partnerships and Institutional Growth

Partnerships and strategic alliances remained central to our institutional development in 2024. The Centre formalised five key Memoranda of Understanding, including with the Swiss Arbitration Centre, the Vietnam International Arbitration Centre, and leading universities and regional institutions. These collaborations focused on training, capacity-building, knowledge-sharing, and the joint promotion of best practices in arbitration and mediation.

In collaboration with CEDR, we continued to deliver specialised courses aimed at bridging international and regional perspectives on dispute resolution, reinforcing the Centre's commitment to knowledge exchange and professional advancement.

On the digital front, we entered a strategic partnership with Opus 2 to design and implement a new case-management platform. This initiative supports our broader goal of operational excellence and positions the Centre as one of the few regional centres investing in end-to-end digital arbitration infrastructure.

Further cementing our institutional credibility, we gained whitelist status in GAR's Regional Arbitration Guide, one of just three institutions in the region and the only institution in the United Arab Emirates.

Looking ahead, we plan to continue advancing our strategic objectives by expanding our presence in India, China, and Russia, promoting wider adoption of DIAC arbitration clauses globally, and completing our digital transformation to ensure greater efficiency, transparency, and user accessibility.





Responsible Business

Defined by community

### **Inclusion, diversity, and equality**

By embracing and celebrating different perspectives and backgrounds, and fostering an inclusive culture, we recognise that we can be a more collaborative, innovative, and positive organisation, and make a difference for our people, and all the businesses, governments, lawyers, and arbitrators that use our services.

We have taken an active stance on inclusion, diversity, and equality, and we have committed to support global commitments on the fair representation of women and equal opportunity.

We are a signatory and active supporter of the Equal Representation in Arbitration Pledge (ERA); the Equal Representation for Expert Witnesses Pledge (ERE); and Racial Equality for Arbitration Lawyers Initiative (REAL).

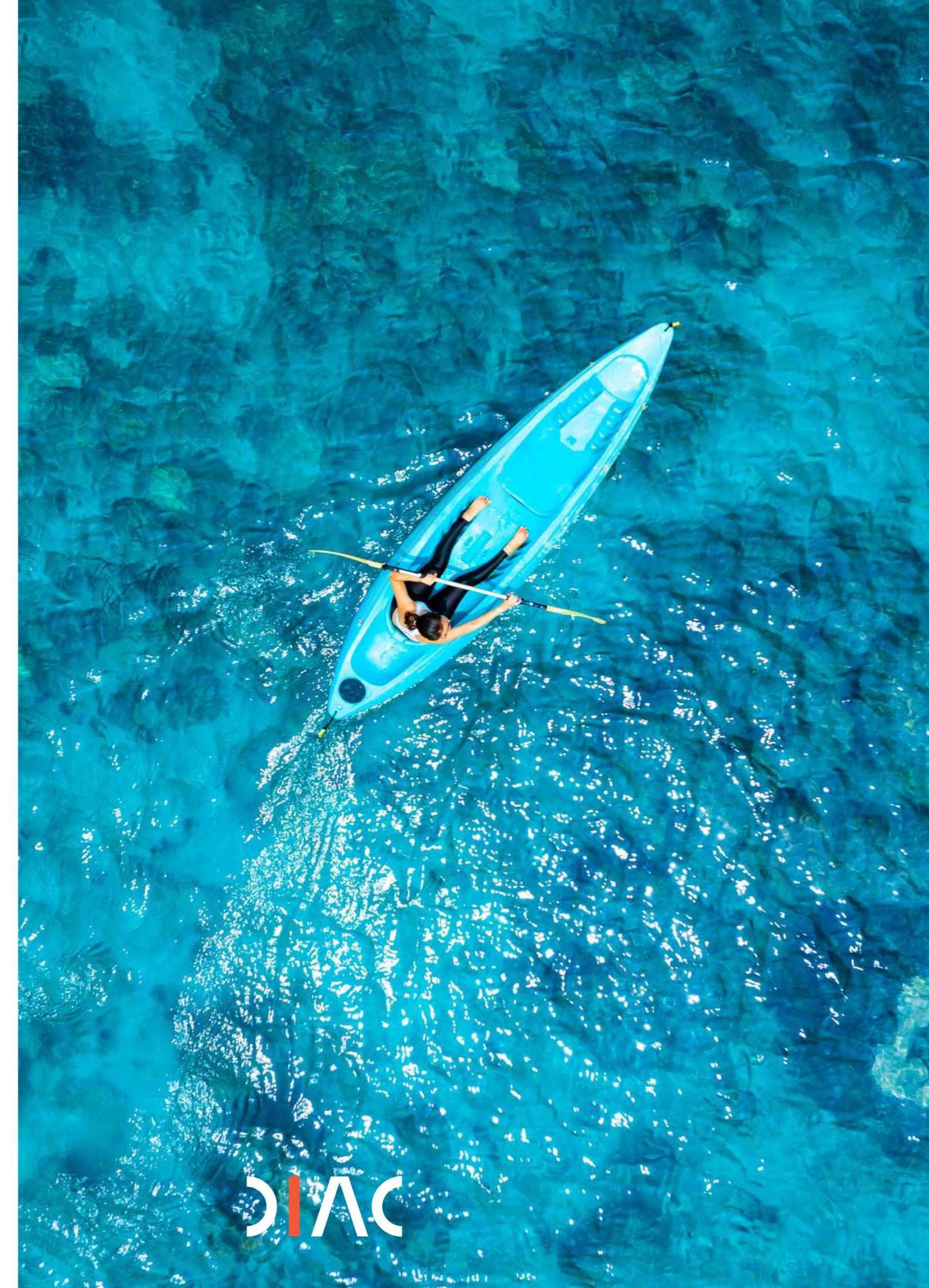
We proactively consider diversity of gender, age, and national origin when we recruit our people, select candidate arbitrators and mediators and host conferences, events, and training.

Women are employed at all levels of our organisation, including the most senior, and in 2024, 33% of all arbitrators appointed by the Arbitration Court were women, with the selection of female arbitrators by the Arbitration Court reaching near parity at 47%.

### **Wellbeing**

We are committed to supporting our people and their mental and physical health and wellbeing both inside and outside work through our working practices and attitude as an employer. We have implemented internal initiatives to help increase awareness of the importance of wellbeing and the support available to our people. Our leaders are role models for these commitments and foster an environment where our people can thrive and openly discuss their mental and physical health without judgment.

We recognise that our people increasingly want greater flexibility in their decisions about how, when and where they work. We have implemented agile working policies and offer parents and carers flexibility to integrate their work with their lives, access to tools, resources and advice from colleagues.





#### Community

We take our responsibilities to our community and the businesses, governments, lawyers, and arbitrators that use our services seriously. We are passionate about ensuring that our stakeholders receive a fair, transparent and efficient experience each and every time they come into contact with us.

We seek to engage and promote awareness with our stakeholders on inclusion, diversity, equality, wellbeing, and sustainability, having organised conferences and events, and contributed to global initiatives on these issues.

We are an international arbitral institution, but we are rooted in the local community in which we live and work. We are committed to improving social mobility and inclusion.

We work with local education providers to provide young people with an opportunity to see possibilities, motivate, and provide skills and experiences that help them reach their maximum potential, regardless of their personal circumstances.

#### Sustainability

We strive to be sustainable and have a low carbon footprint, and we continuously seek to improve the sustainability of our operations as well as those of our suppliers and partners. We are a signatory of the Green Pledge and a supporter of the Campaign for Greener Arbitrations, and we have implemented the Green Protocols.

A recommended clause prepared by the Campaign for Greener Arbitrations intended to help the users of our services to reduce the carbon emissions and other environmental impacts associated with managing and resolving disputes is available on our website.

We travel responsibly, we have adopted and encourage the use of technology, we minimise printing and the use of paper, we encourage recycling, and we promote sustainable practices.

Our head office is a LEED-certified green building, and we have adopted measures in our branch office to reduce our carbon footprint.



Message from the Executive  
Director and Registrar

Defined by people

## Jehad Kazim Executive Director



DIAC celebrated 30 years of service to the international dispute resolution community strengthening its role as a trusted leader in delivering quality and efficient dispute resolution services worldwide.

Both Dubai and DIAC are leading the way and setting new standards, and their exceptional performances have earned widespread acclaim throughout the global arbitration community. In the first edition of the GAR 100 “data report” that analysed data from more than 11,200 unique cases submitted to GAR by the world’s leading arbitration practices over a nine-year period, Dubai ranked 5th most popular seat of arbitration in terms of caseload and 9th based on value of cases, while DIAC ranked 9th most prominent arbitral institution based on value of cases and 10th in terms of caseload. Notably, Dubai is the only seat of arbitration and DIAC is the only institution ranked among the top ten from the MEASA region.

To continue building on our achievements and to take on new challenges, we expanded our team to better serve our vision, support our users and meet the evolving demands of the global arbitration community. Bringing new talent on board has strengthened our capabilities and introduced fresh perspectives that are driving innovation across DIAC. Each new team member brings unique value, and together, we are well-positioned to set new benchmarks and deliver excellence in all that we do. The Centre is a proud signatory to the Equal Representation in Arbitration Pledge and we are committed to bringing this pledge to life with our everyday actions. With more than 60% women employed at all levels of DIAC, including the most senior, we are demonstrating the talent, vision and perspective women bring to the Centre.

Our technology partnership with Opus 2 reflects our commitment to drive transformative changes across DIAC.

We are developing a state-of-the-art digital case management system that integrates hearing technologies, streamlines communication, and improves our service delivery. Our new case management system is more than a system—it will be a shift in how our users experience arbitration.

Alongside this, we also invested in the development of a digital learning management system—DIAC Academy—in 2024. The Academy is a flexible platform for the Centre to offer practical courses, training and qualifications to students and arbitration professionals.

Relatedly, we also invested in ideas and the people behind them, launching several initiatives internally to offer space for creative thinking on the future of dispute prevention and resolution. One such initiative, led to the recent launch of the DIAC ADR Lab—an incubator for innovation in practice and policy, procedural enhancements, the use of AI and technology, and new services. Our investment in our people and their ideas, reflects our belief that the future of ADR lies in collaboration, experimentation, and inclusivity. Throughout the year, we continued prioritising capacity-building efforts by empowering practitioners with the knowledge and skills needed in international arbitration. We appreciate the ongoing support from our expert trainers and participants from around the globe for their continued engagement. We remain committed to offering tailored, relevant and hands-on programmes to support professional growth within the arbitration community.

DIAC’s strategic role in the ever-bigger Dubai Arbitration Week reflects our steadfast commitment to continue delivering excellence, building connections and contributing meaningfully to global dispute prevention and resolution.

Looking ahead, we will continue building bridges through meaningful dialogue and unlocking new opportunities for growth and collaboration.

## Robert Stephen Registrar



2024 was a busy year for the Centre. We pushed ahead with recruitment and welcomed five new counsel to the team. We now have a sizeable and experienced Case Management Team, comprised of lawyers from and qualified in more than 12 different jurisdictions and speaking 16 languages. At any point in time, they directly administer somewhere in the region of 550 active proceedings under the DIAC Rules.

In 2024, the DIAC Arbitration Court conducted a review of our fees and charges, and we introduced a new Table of Fees and Costs (effective for all proceedings commenced after 1 January 2025). We also announced the launch of additional services and reconfirmed that we offer services to administer disputes under the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules, and can assist in appointing arbitrators, adjudicators, and experts in ad hoc proceedings.

Our administered arbitrations have steadily increased in the past five years, and 2024 was another good year, with a total of 295 cases registered, broken down as 262 arbitrations, and 33 appointing authority cases. This was the third consecutive year that the Centre has registered more than 250 administered arbitrations.

Although the number of cases registered in 2024 was lower than in 2023, the quality of the cases significantly improved with the aggregate amount in dispute increasing to AED 9.7 billion (from AED 5.5 billion in 2023) with an average amount in dispute of AED 37 million (up from AED 17 million in 2023).

Of note, almost three quarters of all DIAC arbitrations in 2024 were brought on the basis of a DIAC arbitration agreement or an arbitration agreement referring to DCCI (up from 65% in 2023) concluded within the past six years. Interestingly, more than 36% arose from contracts concluded in the last three years (up from 25% in 2023), reaffirming that parties continue to recognise the Centre’s unique strengths and services.

As widely acknowledged, the DIAC Arbitration Court has been leading the way with diversity in appointments, with the selection of female arbitrators reaching near parity at 47% of all Arbitration Court appointments in 2023. We were shortlisted for the GAR Equal Representation in Arbitration Pledge Award at the 15th annual GAR Awards in Paris in recognition of this and our other equality, diversity and inclusivity initiatives.

At the close of the first half of 2025, we had registered a total of 134 cases, broken down as 121 Requests for Arbitration, 10 requests for the Centre to act as an appointing authority, two Requests for Mediation, and one request for the Centre to act as an appointing authority in an UNCITRAL case. In total, the administered arbitrations registered in the first half of 2025 had an amount in dispute of more than USD 3 billion (c. AED 11 billion) —significantly higher than the amount in dispute for cases registered in the same period in 2024 and higher than the total amount in dispute for all cases registered in 2024 (USD 2.6 billion).

Our international programme of events and courses continued in 2025, and we look forward to capping off 2025 with our largest ever Dubai Arbitration Week.

We are thankful for your support.

An aerial photograph of a park in Dubai. The park is filled with numerous palm trees, their fronds creating a dense, green pattern. A long, light purple walkway or road cuts through the park, lined with more palm trees. The walkway leads towards a large body of water on the right side of the image. The water is a vibrant blue-green color. The overall scene is a mix of natural beauty and urban planning.

Why Dubai?

Defined by vision

DIAC

**Dubai balances tradition and Arabic culture with modernity. A city punctuated by gleaming towers and iconic structures, it is regarded as the economic and travel hub of the Middle East. Situated on the shores of the Arabian Gulf, Dubai is centrally positioned between East and West and home to more than 200 nationalities speaking more than 140 languages.**

Dubai cultivates a tolerant and inclusive society. Gender inclusivity is high on the agenda, with women playing a prominent role in the city's socioeconomic fabric and occupying leadership positions in both the government and the private sectors. Religious freedom is protected, with dedicated places of worship including mosques, churches, temples and gurdwaras, and religious and cultural holidays are openly celebrated.

Dubai is at the heart of trillions of dollars of business and investment into the Middle East, Europe, Africa, India, Asia and beyond. Its strategic global location, combined with business-friendly policies and future-forward infrastructure, have shaped it into a leading global trade, finance, and e-commerce powerhouse – and the fourth most-visited city on the planet.

It is home to half of all Fortune 500 companies; 17 of the top 20 global banks; a plethora of domestic, regional, and international law firms with dedicated international arbitration practices; a large number of expert and other professional services firms that support international arbitration practices; specialist university programmes that teach courses on arbitration practice and procedure; professional organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators; the region's largest arbitral institution; and one of the largest regular international arbitration gatherings.

#### **Arbitration hub**

The city is now considered to be the leading arbitration hub for the MEASA region and has made considerable strides in recent years to bolster its arbitration infrastructure and credentials as a safe and increasingly popular seat of arbitration. The United Arab Emirates passed a new UNCITRAL Model Law-based federal arbitration law in 2018 and repealed other provisions of its law that were viewed as unfriendly to arbitration.

An executive regulation was passed in 2019 to facilitate and streamline the enforcement of arbitral awards, and in 2023 an Amendment Law to the 2018 Federal Arbitration Law was passed to codify recent developments in UAE case law and to further solidify the UAE as a global hub for arbitration. DIFC – a common law financial free zone – has its own arbitration law based on the UNCITRAL Model Law and specialist judiciary, as does the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM), a short drive south of Dubai.





#### Active users and community

Dubai has an active and growing arbitration community that is made up of practitioners from both civil and common law traditions.

Parties in the United Arab Emirates are active users of international arbitral institutions, with year-on-year increasing caseloads reported at most of the arbitral institutions operating in and through the United Arab Emirates. Indicative of the growth of arbitration in the United Arab Emirates, DIAC alone has recorded five consecutive years of growth with 295 new cases registered in 2024.

#### Conferences and events

The annually held Dubai Arbitration Week attracts an arbitration community from far and wide. The 2024 edition was the largest to-date and the second largest event of its kind in the world with more than 140 events attracting over 1,500 delegates from across the world.

Dubai regularly features as a venue on the international arbitration events calendar, hosting the annual Legal Plus International Arbitration and ADR Summit; the annual Legal 500 Middle East Disputes Summit; and the annual GAR Live-Dubai conference.

In 2023, DIAC successfully hosted the Inter-Pacific Bar Association Annual Meeting and Conference in March 2023, and the XXII International Congress of Maritime Arbitrators in November 2023.

#### Vision

Dubai is a city built on vision. In just over 50 years, the city has come from being a desert landscape peppered with a few small buildings to a leading commercial and investment hub.

Dubai has bold visions for its future as the city establishes itself as a sustainability and technology leader in areas such as solar power, vertical farming, blockchain, 3D printing and artificial intelligence.

To understand where Dubai is going, it is essential to understand its development. In 1833, around 800 key members of the Bani Yas, one of Southern Arabia's most prominent tribes, identified Dubai Creek as a natural harbour. Led by the Al Maktoum family – Dubai's ruling family to this day – they settled near the Creek's mouth. The township – then referred to as Al Wasl or “the connection” in Arabic – soon became a centre for fishing, pearl diving and maritime trade, attracting further settlers through trading with India, Iran, and other parts of the Gulf.

By the 1870s, Dubai had become the principal trading port of the Gulf, and by the turn of the century developed one of Arabia's largest souks (trading markets). Pearl diving remained a main staple of the local economy until the 1930s. The dredging – both widening and deepening – of Dubai Creek in 1960 was a turning point for the city, allowing much larger-size vessels to enter and strengthening Dubai's trading position still further.

### **Creating new legacies**

The city is now on track to be a global sustainability leader with an ambitious target to reach 100% energy production capacity from clean energy sources by 2050. Mohammed Bin Rashid Solar Park will be the world's largest facility on completion and by 2030, 25% of Dubai's transportation will be autonomous.

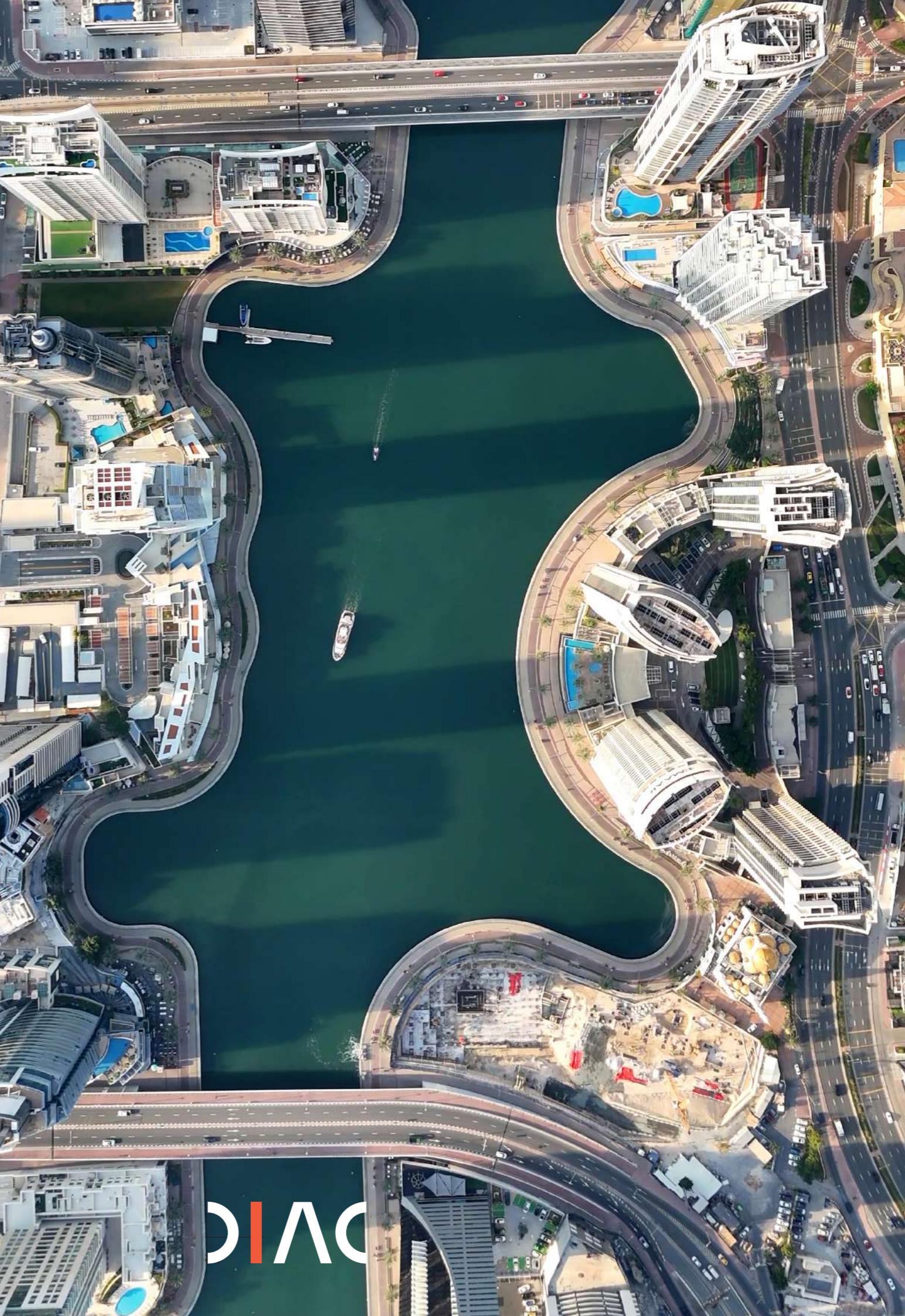
The city is also emerging as a global leader in other cutting-edge technologies:

- Dubai aims to have the world's first blockchain-powered government, ranking first globally for FDI technology transfer in AI and robotics.
- Dubai is embracing 3D printing technology, with 25% of the city's new buildings to feature 3D printing by 2030.
- Fintech Hive, at DIFC, is the Middle East's first Fintech accelerator programme.

Dubai is an influential player and a catalyst in a larger economic story in the region. The city is solidifying over a decade's worth of continuing expansion and advancement in global arbitration.

During this time, the city has experienced a notable rise in prominence on the global arbitration stage. Arbitration has flourished within specialised economic zones, such as the DIFC. The most recent manifestation of this trend has led to the establishment of fresh arbitral institutions and new facilities, as well as the revitalisation of existing ones, including DIAC.

These developments, together with the adoption of state-of-the-art arbitral rules and community advocacy for strong political and regulatory support for arbitration, reflect a serious commitment to providing world-class arbitration services and furthering the growth of arbitration as the preeminent means of dispute resolution in the region.



An aerial photograph of a coastal salt flat, likely a salt pan. The landscape is characterized by a mix of dark green vegetation on the left, a narrow strip of land with a winding waterway, and a large, light-colored, textured area representing the salt flat. Small, isolated bodies of water (lakes) are scattered across the flat. The overall scene is a mix of natural textures and colors.

Recommended Clauses

Defined by independence

A poorly drafted arbitration clause can undermine the smooth progress of proceedings and lead to disputes. Parties should always include a well-drafted arbitration clause in their contract. We encourage the use of the following recommended clauses, but independent legal advice should always be sought on the choice of a suitable clause and the applicable law.

#### **Future disputes**

For contracting parties who wish to have future disputes referred to mediation and/or arbitration under the auspices of DIAC, the following clauses are recommended. Words/blanks in square brackets should be deleted/completed as appropriate.

##### **Mediation only**

"In the event of a dispute arising out of or relating to this contract, including any question regarding its existence, validity or termination, the parties shall seek settlement of that dispute by mediation in accordance with the Mediation Rules of the Dubai International Arbitration Centre, which Rules are deemed to be incorporated by reference into this clause."

##### **Arbitration only**

"Any dispute arising out of or in connection with this contract, including any question regarding its existence, validity or termination, shall be referred to and finally resolved by arbitration under the Arbitration Rules of the Dubai International Arbitration Centre, which Rules are deemed to be incorporated by reference into this clause.

The number of arbitrators shall be [one/three]. The seat of arbitration shall be [City and/or Country\*]. The language to be used in the arbitration shall be [language]. The governing law of the contract shall be the substantive law of [State or Country]."

#### **Mediation and arbitration**

"In the event of a dispute arising out of or relating to this contract, including any question regarding its existence, validity or termination, the parties shall first seek settlement of that dispute by mediation in accordance with the Mediation Rules of the Dubai International Arbitration Centre, which Rules are deemed to be incorporated by reference into this clause.

If the dispute is not settled by mediation within [number] days of the commencement of the mediation, or such further period as the parties shall agree in writing, the dispute shall be referred to and finally resolved by arbitration under the Arbitration Rules of the Dubai International Arbitration Centre, which Rules are deemed to be incorporated by reference into this clause.

The language to be used in the mediation and in the arbitration shall be [language]. The governing law of the contract shall be the substantive law of [State or Country]. In any arbitration commenced pursuant to this clause,

- (i) the number of arbitrators shall be [one/three]; and
- (ii) the seat of arbitration shall be [City and/or Country\*]."





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#### **Ad hoc arbitration administered by DIAC under the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules**

"Any dispute arising out of or in connection with this contract, including any question regarding its existence, validity or termination, shall be referred to and finally resolved by arbitration under the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules, which Rules are deemed to be incorporated by reference into this clause. The arbitration shall be administered by Dubai International Arbitration Centre.

The number of arbitrators shall be [one/three].  
The seat of arbitration shall be [City and/or Country\*].  
The language to be used in the arbitration shall be [language].  
The governing law of the contract shall be the substantive law of [State or Country]."

#### **Ad hoc arbitration under the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules with DIAC acting as appointing authority**

"Any dispute arising out of or in connection with this contract, including any question regarding its existence, validity or termination, shall be referred to and finally resolved by arbitration under the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules, which Rules are deemed to be incorporated by reference into this clause.  
The appointing authority shall be Dubai International Arbitration Centre.

The number of arbitrators shall be [one/three].  
The seat of arbitration shall be [City and/or Country\*].  
The language to be used in the arbitration shall be [language].  
The governing law of the contract shall be the substantive law of [State or Country]."

#### **Existing disputes**

If a dispute has already arisen, but there is no agreement between the parties to mediate and/or to arbitrate, the parties may enter into an agreement for those purposes. In such cases, please contact the Centre if recommended wording is required.

#### **Modifications to recommended clauses**

The Centre will be pleased to discuss any modifications to our recommended clauses (for example, to provide for party nomination of arbitrators or for expedited procedures).

#### **Expert determination, adjudication and other forms of ADR**

Recommended clauses and procedures for expert determination, for adjudication and other forms of ADR to be administered by DIAC, or in which DIAC is to act as appointing authority, are available on request from the Centre.

## Reduction of environmental impact and waste

As a signatory of The Green Pledge and supporter of the Campaign for Greener Arbitrations, DIAC is committed to protecting the environment and tackling climate change.

The following recommended clause has been prepared by the Campaign for Greener Arbitrations and is intended to help parties to reduce the carbon emissions and other environmental impact associated with managing and resolving disputes. It can be incorporated in part or in its entirety in company guidelines or policies relating to external counsel, or for inclusion in counsel engagement letters, or adapted for inclusion in commercial contracts. Words/blanks in square brackets should be deleted/completed as appropriate.

"[Company's name] is seeking to reduce carbon emissions and other environmental impacts associated with a number of activities, including resolving disputes.

[Company's name] [has adopted/adhered to/agrees with] the principles expressed in the Green Pledge and the Green Protocol for Law Firms, available at the Campaign for Greener Arbitrations' website. Outside counsel will make efforts, consistent with [company's name]'s objectives, to minimise the impact of the resolution of disputes on the environment, including, by way of example:

### Travel

- Consider and question the need to fly or the number of people who will fly, and consider instead the use of virtual meeting and hearing technology, including for document review, witness interviews, client meetings, and hearing participation.
- Make reasonable efforts to offset the carbon emissions of any flights taken on [company's name] matters.
- Where available and appropriate, consider the use of train travel as a lower-carbon emitting alternative to flying.

\* If the intention is to choose Dubai International Financial Centre/DIFC as the seat of the arbitration, insert "Dubai International Financial Centre" or "DIFC".

### Documents

- Whenever reasonably possible, conduct correspondence through electronic means unless hard copy documents are expressly required under the circumstances.

### Hearings

- Consider whether certain issues genuinely require a hearing of any type (virtual or physical presence) to advance [company's name]'s interests in the dispute or whether one or more issues may be decided on the basis of documents and written submissions only.
- Where a hearing is considered necessary or advantageous for [company's name]'s interests, consider whether it genuinely requires the physical, in-person attendance of all participants, or whether some or all of the participants, including witnesses and experts, may participate through virtual hearing technology rather than by travelling to a hearing location.
- Whenever possible, discourage the use of hard copies of documents in arbitrations and instead encourage the use of electronic documents."





DIAC

# Contact

The Dubai International Arbitration Centre has over three decades of experience of providing dispute resolution services to parties doing business in or through the MEASA region. As an institution, we are independent and impartial, and committed to excellence, efficiency, and diversity.

For further information about DIAC and the work that we do, please visit [www.diac.com](http://www.diac.com).

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