

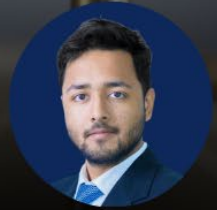
An Analysis of the 7th Edition of the SIAC Rules 2025: Key Changes



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Introduction

After extensive public consultation over the draft 7th Edition of the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (“SIAC”) Rules published in 2023, the official 7th edition of the SIAC Rules came into force on 1 January 2025. The new edition of the rules seeks to introduce mechanisms and procedures aimed at consistently achieving: a) fairness of the proceedings; b) efficiency in the conduct of the arbitration relative to the amount and complexity of issues in dispute; and c) enforceability of the award. This article will cover the key changes made in contrast to the old 2016 Rules and the new measures introduced to achieve the aims set out above.

Expedited Procedure (now Rule 14, Schedule 3)

Under the 2016 Rules, an application for expedited procedure can be filed for disputes not exceeding S\$6m or in cases of “exceptional urgency”. The Tribunal may also, in consultation with the parties, decide that a hearing is required for the examination of any witness as well as for any oral argument.

Under the new 2025 Rules, the scope for the expedited procedure has been widened. Under the new rules, the application for expedited procedure can now be filed for disputes not exceeding S\$10m (but must exceed S\$1m, see the section on Streamlined Procedure below) or in cases where “the circumstances of the case warrant the application of the Expedited Procedure”. Furthermore, a hearing must now be held if any party requests for it or if the Tribunal decides that a hearing is appropriate.

Emergency Interim Relief and Protective Preliminary Orders (now Rule 12, Schedule 1)

Under the 2016 Rules, an application for emergency interim relief (which if accepted, would appoint an emergency arbitrator) must be filed with or following the filing of a Notice of Arbitration.

Under the new 2025 Rules, an application for emergency interim relief can now be filed prior to filing of a Notice of Arbitration. However, if the Notice of Arbitration is not filed within 7 days from the Registrar’s receipt of the application, the application for emergency interim relief will be considered withdrawn unless an extension of time is granted. Furthermore, parties can also now apply for a protective preliminary order (together with their application for emergency interim relief) to be considered by the emergency arbitrator. The purpose of the protective preliminary order is to direct a party to not act in a manner that frustrates the purpose of the emergency interim measures.

Timeframe for issuing awards (now Rule 53)

Under the 2016 Rules, the Tribunal must submit their draft Award to the Registrar not later than 45 days from the date which the Tribunal declared the proceedings as “closed”. The Tribunal would only declare proceedings as “closed” if they were satisfied that the parties had not further relevant and material evidence to produce or submission to make with respect to the matters decide in the Award.

Under the new 2025 Rules, the timeframe for submitting the draft Award has become more certain and definite. The Tribunal must now submit their draft Award to the Registrar not later than 90 days from the date of submission of the last directed oral or written submission in respect of proceedings to which the Award pertains.



Streamlined Procedure (Rule 13, Schedule 2)

We will be covering the new measures under the 2025 Rules next. There are no similar provision to these new measures under the 2016 Rules.

The new Streamlined Procedure is designed for non-complex low value disputes (not exceeding S\$1 million). In addition, parties may also agree to resolve their dispute via Streamlined Procedure. The procedure requires an award to be made within 3 months from the date of constitution of the tribunal and the SIAC has set out guidelines on procedural mechanisms that tribunals may adopt to issue the award within that timeframe. Importantly, the tribunal's fees and SIAC administrative fees in arbitrations under the Streamlined Procedure are capped at 50% of the maximum limits under the Schedule of Fees.

Preliminary Determination (Rule 46)

Rule 46 of the 2025 Rules provides for the tribunal's powers to make a final and binding determination of any issue in an arbitration at a preliminary stage. This enables parties to resolve their dispute efficiently by applying for determination of key issues that may prove to be dispositive at an early stage.

An application for preliminary determination may be made if both parties agree. Alternatively, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that the determination would save time and costs or expedite the resolution of the dispute, or where the tribunal determines that the circumstances warrant it.

Disclosure of Third-Party Funding (Rule 38)

Rule 38 of the 2025 Rules also now require parties to disclose the existence of any third-party funding agreements, including the identity and contact details of the funder. According to the SIAC, the purpose of this rule is to assist arbitrators in complying with their duty of disclosure and to preserve the high standards of impartiality and independence of arbitrators and the integrity of proceedings.

Furthermore, tribunals are also empowered to order such disclosures, and take into account any third-party funding agreement in apportioning costs. It is also mandates that following the constitution of the tribunal, a party may not enter into a third-party funding agreement which may give rise to a conflict of interest with any member of the tribunal.

Coordinated Proceedings (Rule 17)

In the context of multi-party and multi-contract disputes, the existing provisions under the 2016 Rules provides for consolidation of multiple arbitrations and joinder of parties to arbitrations. The new 2025 Rules additionally introduce a new procedural mechanism to specifically provide for the coordinated resolution of multiple arbitrations involving common legal or factual issues where the same tribunal has been appointed.

Pursuant to this new procedural mechanism, a party may request that multiple arbitrations be either conducted concurrently or sequentially, be heard together with aligned procedural steps, or that one of the arbitrations be suspended pending the determination of any of the other arbitrations. According to SIAC, this new procedural mechanism seeks to provide an additional avenue to streamline the resolution of multiple complex arbitrations, reduce the risk of conflicting outcomes across multiple arbitrations, and avoid duplication of costs across multiple arbitrations.



Promotion of Amicable Dispute Resolution (Rules 32.4 and 50.2)

The new 2025 Rules also now explicitly encourage the use of amicable dispute resolution methods (such as mediation) at various stages of an arbitration. Parties are now encouraged to consider such amicable dispute resolution methods at the inception of the arbitration. Furthermore, tribunals are now empowered to raise the prospect of adopting such methods at the first case management conference and to make any directions including a suspension of proceedings to allow parties to adopt such amicable dispute resolution methods at any stage of the arbitration.

Key Takeaways

The abovementioned changes are merely highlights of the key overhauls brought by the new 2025 Rules. Other additional features include a provision for the integration of SIAC Gateway (SIAC's digital cloud-based case management platform) into case management procedures and the codification of the power of tribunals to appoint tribunal secretaries. Overall, these changes are aimed at bolstering the efficiency of the arbitration process by reducing unnecessary costs and delays.

The changes also reflect a heightened awareness of contemporary societal issues that have arisen in the

past 9 years since the 2016 Rules. For example, Rule 61 of the 2025 Rules encourage parties and tribunals to consider and propose effective security measures and relevant best practices on information security, including cybersecurity and cyber resilience. This is in recognition of the critical nature of sensitive data in today's digital world. Similarly, Rule 32.4(b) of the 2025 Rules encourage tribunals to consult with parties on whether it would be appropriate to adopt environmentally sustainable procedures for the arbitration.

This article was authored by our Partner and Head of Shipping [Prakaash Silvam](#), Senior Associate [Ng Guang Yi](#), and Foreign Lawyer [Vedanta Vishwakarma](#). The authors thank Brandon Lim from the University of Cambridge for his valuable assistance with the article.

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The firm is also experienced in Arbitration related court proceedings and is routinely involved in setting aside and enforcement application proceedings for arbitration awards before the Singapore courts. You may visit our [International Arbitration](#) page to learn more about our practice.

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