

SIAC Issues Guidance Notes, Practice Note to Improve Efficiency of Arbitration

AUGUST 2026 | [SINGAPORE](#)



Introduction

On 20 July 2026, the Singapore International Arbitration Centre ("**SIAC**") [released](#) two Guidance Notes and a Practice Note (collectively, "**Notes**"), each directed at clarifying how SIAC arbitrations are administered.

1. The [Guidance Note on Page and Word Limits and the Management of Document Production Requests](#) ("**GN-1**") recommends the adoption of page or word limits for written submissions and document production requests in general, including for arbitrations conducted under the Streamlined Procedure and Expedited Procedure (collectively, "**Procedures**"). It guides parties on presenting their cases with greater discipline and clarity, narrowing the issues in dispute, and reducing unnecessary delay and expense.
2. The [Guidance Note on the Issuance of Awards in Summary Form under the Streamlined Procedure and Expedited Procedure](#) ("**GN-2**") addresses how tribunals may prepare awards in summary form and recommends ways to expedite the writing of such awards where the Procedures under the Arbitration Rules of the SIAC (7th Edition, 1 January 2025) ("**SIAC Rules 2025**") apply.
3. The [Practice Note on Cases Administered by SIAC under the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules](#) ("**Practice Note**") is directed at SIAC-administered arbitrations conducted under the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules ("**UNCITRAL Rules**"). It applies to any such arbitration submitted to SIAC on or after 20 July 2026 and supersedes the earlier Practice

Notes for cases under the UNCITRAL Rules 2010 and 1976. It clarifies SIAC's administrative role and implements changes to matters such as award scrutiny, tribunal fees, costs of the arbitration, and consequences of non-payment.

Taken together, the three Notes aim to facilitate quicker and more efficient dispute resolution. We look into the key aspects of each Note below.

GN-1: Page and Word Limits

GN-1 recommends that tribunals, in consultation with the parties, adopt page or word limits for written submissions and for document production requests. The recommended practices aim to narrow the issues in dispute, improve clarity in advocacy, and streamline the decision-making process. The adoption of GN-1 may be considered in all arbitrations administered by SIAC and should be adapted to suit the circumstances of each case.

1. **Setting of limits:** Tribunals are encouraged to consult the parties on appropriate limits at or before the first case management conference (or at a later appropriate juncture), and to record the limits and any related formatting directions in a procedural order.
 - Page limits are based on formatting guidelines of a 12-point font size, 1.5 line spacing, and one-inch margins.
 - Limits should be set with regard to the nature, number and complexity of the issues, the amount in dispute, and the need to ensure each party has a reasonable opportunity to present its case.
2. **Initial presumptive limits for arbitrations other than those under the Procedures:**
 - **Principal written submissions:** Tribunals are encouraged to set an initial presumptive limit for the principal written submissions (e.g. Statements of Claim and Defence, or memorials) of 20,000 words or 50 pages.
 - **Limits for other submissions:** For submissions such as replies, post-hearing briefs and written opening statements, limits should be determined at the appropriate juncture with regard to the number and complexity of the issues to be addressed.
3. **Recommended limits for arbitrations under the Procedures:** For such arbitrations, tribunals are encouraged to consider adopting the following recommended limits, albeit with full discretion to modify them as appropriate:

Submissions	Expedited Procedure	Streamlined Procedure
Primary pleadings (e.g. Statement of Claim, Defence and Counterclaim)	25 pages / 10,000 words	20 pages / 8,000 words
Short-form submissions (e.g. interlocutory applications, cost submissions)	15 pages / 6,000 words	5 pages / 2,000 words
Fact witness statements	20 pages / 8,000 words	10 pages / 4,000 words
Expert reports	30 pages / 12,000 words	15 pages / 6,000 words
Post-hearing submissions	25 pages / 10,000 words	20 pages / 8,000 words

4. **Modification of limits:** Limits may be modified by agreement of the parties with the tribunal's approval, or as directed by the tribunal on a party's application, for good cause shown.

5. **Compliance:** Tribunals are encouraged to direct the parties to include a statement of the total number of pages and/or words with each submission. If a submission exceeds the directed limits without prior approval, the tribunal may direct the party to bring it into compliance, take the non-compliance into account when apportioning costs, or issue any other appropriate directions.
6. **Management of document production requests:** GN-1 also recommends practices for the efficient and fair handling of document production, including:
 - specifying the number of requests allowed per party;
 - organising requests by claims, topics or issues;
 - formatting "*Redfern Schedules*" using horizontal rows rather than vertical columns;
 - imposing limits on the narrative portion of each request and response;
 - making justifications or objections only once, with cross-references thereafter where such justifications and objections are applicable to multiple document production requests; and
 - requiring the parties to meet and confer to resolve disputed requests before submitting them to the tribunal.
7. **Sample procedural order:** A sample procedural order illustrating the recommended practices is annexed to GN-1. It covers matters such as:
 - itemised limits for each submission;
 - portions excluded from the count (e.g. cover page, table of contents, citations);
 - formatting requirements;
 - an affirmation of compliance; and
 - requirements for document production requests as set out above.

Notwithstanding the above, GN-1 emphasises that its recommendations are non-mandatory and are not intended to replace any existing ethical standard or code of conduct. Nor does it limit a tribunal's discretion to conduct proceedings as it considers appropriate. In exercising that discretion, a tribunal is to act fairly and impartially, ensure that each party has a reasonable opportunity to present its case, conduct the proceedings so as to avoid unnecessary delay and expense, and provide fair, efficient and proportionate procedures.

GN-2: Awards in Summary Form

By way of background, the SIAC Rules 2025 allow for arbitrations to be conducted under the Procedures under certain circumstances.

1. The Streamlined Procedure applies where: (i) the amount in dispute does not exceed S\$1 million; or (ii) the parties have so agreed, unless the President of the Court of Arbitration of SIAC ("**President**") determines otherwise.
2. The Expedited Procedure applies where: (i) the amount in dispute is above S\$1 million but does not exceed S\$10 million; (ii) the amount in dispute does not exceed S\$1 million but the President has determined that the Streamlined Procedure shall not apply; or (iii) the circumstances of the case warrant its application.

Both Procedures aim to provide a quicker resolution by way of shortened timelines and deciding the dispute based on written submissions rather than a hearing. Key among their common features is for the tribunal to state its reasons for the award in summary form ("**Award in Summary Form**"), unless the parties have agreed that no reasons are to be given.

GN-2 recommends the following practices:

1. **Page or word limits on written submissions:** GN-2 encourages tribunals to set page or word limits for any written submissions under the Procedures, pursuant to GN-1 above.
2. **Early identification of issues in dispute:** Following the filing of written submissions, tribunals are encouraged to work with the parties to identify and record in a procedural order the key issues to be determined in the Award in Summary Form.
3. **Party-prepared summaries:** Once the key issues are recorded, tribunals may invite each party to submit a brief written summary of its case, similarly subject to word or page limits. Tribunals may reproduce these summaries in the Award in Summary Form, either verbatim or with amendments. The summary may describe the party's position on each issue, set out the factual and legal basis for such position, and respond to any other party's position.
4. **Award in Summary Form:**
 - To promote efficiency, an Award in Summary Form generally need not exceed: (i) 25 A4 pages for Streamlined Procedure cases; and (ii) 40 A4 pages for Expedited Procedure cases.
 - A sample draft structure of an Award in Summary Form is annexed to GN-2. The template covers matters such as the parties, the contract, the arbitration agreement, the procedural history, the issues to be decided, the parties' positions, the tribunal's findings, costs and the final orders. The template is illustrative only, and tribunals remain free to adapt it to the circumstances of each case.

GN-2 emphasises that it does not limit a tribunal's powers to conduct the proceedings in such manner as it considers appropriate. In exercising its procedural discretion, a tribunal is to act fairly and impartially, ensure that each party has a reasonable opportunity to present its case, conduct proceedings efficiently, and avoid unnecessary delay and expense.

Practice Note: UNCITRAL Rules

The Practice Note sets out how SIAC administers arbitrations conducted under the UNCITRAL Rules where the parties have chosen SIAC as the administering institution. It supersedes the two earlier Practice Notes which applied to arbitrations conducted under two previous versions of the UNCITRAL Rules, and now applies to all (including future) versions of the UNCITRAL Rules.

Key differences include:

	Superseded Practice Notes	New Practice Note
Scrutiny of awards	Upon request by the tribunal.	Mandatory.
Tribunal-appointed experts	Not provided for.	Sets out the financial arrangements (e.g. deposits and reimbursements) for tribunal-appointed experts.
Appointment of arbitrators	No list of factors to be considered	New list of factors to be considered, namely: • the agreed qualifications of the arbitrator; • considerations of impartiality, independence, and availability; and • the nationality of the arbitrator, where the parties are of different nationalities.

	Superseded Practice Notes	New Practice Note
Obligations of arbitrators	Must make a full declaration of independence and impartiality and disclose any matter which could give rise to justifiable doubts about his/her independence and impartiality.	Requires arbitrators to undertake to conduct themselves in accordance with the applicable UNCITRAL Rules, the SIAC Code of Ethics and the applicable Practice Notes. Imposes an ongoing disclosure obligation regarding any circumstances that may give rise to justifiable doubts on the arbitrator's impartiality or independence.
Tribunal fees	Fees are subject to the maximum limits based on the amount in dispute, in accordance with the Schedule of Fees.	The Registrar may: - maintain the maximum limits calculated in accordance with the Schedule of Fees, even where the amount in dispute has been amended; and - determine that an additional fee above the maximum limits shall apply. Prior to the constitution of the tribunal, the parties may agree to alternative methods of determining the tribunal's fees.
	Specifies the per diem payable under various circumstances, such as a per diem of S\$1,000 where an arbitrator is required to travel and overnight accommodation is required.	Increases the per diem payable, e.g. from S\$1,000 to S\$1,250. It also introduces a new per diem of S\$100, payable where an arbitrator has to attend a hearing or meeting but is not required to travel outside his/her place of residence.
Interim payments of tribunal fees	A fixed percentage of tribunal fees may be payable following the completion of specified significant steps in the arbitration.	Interim payments may be made at the Registrar's discretion following the completion of significant milestones in the arbitration.
SIAC's administrative fees	Subject to the Schedule of Fees.	The Registrar may determine that an additional fee above the maximum limits prescribed in the Schedule of Fees shall apply.
Costs of the arbitration	Includes SIAC's administrative fees.	Expands the definition to include, among other matters: (i) the fees and expenses of the tribunal and any tribunal secretary; (ii) the costs of any tribunal-appointed expert; and (iii) SIAC filing fees and any other applicable fees charged by SIAC.
Consequences of non-payment	Tribunal may suspend its work until the required deposits are paid.	Specifies different consequences of non-payment for various fees or deposits. For instance, if a case filing

	Superseded Practice Notes	New Practice Note
		fee is not paid, the Registrar may terminate SIAC's administration of the arbitration. If a party fails to pay the deposits as directed, the Registrar may: • suspend the arbitration; • set a time limit for payment and thereafter consider the relevant claim, counterclaim or cross-claim as withdrawn on a without prejudice basis; and/or • hold the release of any award to the parties.

Concluding Remarks

The release of the Notes reflects SIAC's continued focus on improving the efficiency, clarity and cost-effectiveness of arbitral proceedings, while preserving procedural fairness and tribunal discretion. By encouraging more focused submissions, streamlined awards and clearer administrative processes, the Notes further strengthen SIAC's appeal to parties seeking practical and effective dispute resolution. They also reinforce Singapore's position as a leading and trusted hub for international arbitration, supported by a modern arbitral framework, strong institutional infrastructure and a pro-arbitration legal environment.

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