

THE HIGHLY EXPEDITED  
ARBITRATION PROVISIONS -  
ICC RULES 2026

**Factsheet**



On 1 June 2026, the latest version of the ICC Rules of Arbitration (the “**2026 Rules**”) came into effect, implementing a substantive overhaul to the previous rules which were laid down in 2021. One of the novel concepts in the 2026 Rules is the conception of the ‘Highly Expedited Arbitration Provisions’ (“**HEAP**”), which can be found in Appendix VI of the 2026 Rules.

HEAP puts speed at the forefront of the arbitration; offering parties a forum in which they can obtain an award swiftly. With that speed, inevitably comes the sacrifice of many characteristics which are common within the arbitral procedure and a limitation to the submissions that can be advanced. This note will provide a brief overview of key elements of HEAP.

## 1. Opt-in / Opt-out

As laid down in Article 33 of the 2026 Rules, for HEAP to apply, all parties must agree that the arbitration proceeds as a highly expedited procedure, meaning that there is no automatic application of HEAP (unlike with the 'Expedited Procedure Provisions' in Appendix V), it is entirely an opt-in procedure. Parties can, after opting into HEAP, agree that HEAP should no longer apply and effectively opt-out (Article 1(2)(a), Appendix VI) if, for example, it becomes clear that the arbitration is no longer suitable for HEAP.

## 2. Accelerated Timetable

HEAP requires much of the substantive work required to be completed early in the arbitral process and for submissions to be front-loaded. The Claimant's Request for Arbitration must contain its Statement of Claim, and the Respondent must include a Statement of Defence and/or Counterclaim with its Answer. The Answer and Statement of Defence must be submitted within 30 days from receipt of the Request and Statement of Claim from the Secretariat (see Article 2, Appendix VI). The effect is that the procedure is accelerated considerably when compared to the standard offering.

## 3. Expedited Initial CMC

The initial Case Management Conference must be held within seven days of the tribunal receiving the file. This is much faster than under the standard procedure, and even the Expedited Procedure. Again, the purpose being to shorten the time between the Request and rendering of an award as much as possible.

## 4. Sole Arbitrator

The tribunal will consist of a sole arbitrator. The parties may jointly nominate the sole arbitrator within 20 days from receipt of the Request and Statement of Claim, or such longer period as may be agreed between the parties. In the absence of agreement, the Court will appoint any person it considers suitable as the sole arbitrator (Article 4, Appendix VI).

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## 5. Final award within three months

The tribunal is required to render its award within three months from the initial CMC (Article 7(1), Appendix VI), which is half the length of time allowed under the Expedited Procedure and considerably quicker than the rendering of awards in practice generally. Parties are even able to agree that no reasons be given when passing a final award – which is yet another nod towards speed within HEAP.

## Meeting demand for faster dispute resolution

The implementation of HEAP within the 2026 Rules brings the ICC's offering of an efficient, high speed arbitral procedure up to date with the offerings of other institutions across the globe, such as the 'Streamlined Procedure' under the SIAC 2025 Rules. Given the number of arbitrations that have proceeded under the Expedited Procedure Provision in excess of the applicable cap, the ICC have responded to the call for parties to place a greater emphasis on speed. Time will tell how many parties 'opt-in' to HEAP, but it is likely to be a welcome addition to the ICC Arbitration offering given the inherent cost savings and will be particularly appropriate for simpler disputes and straightforward issues.

## Legal Advice

This factsheet provides a brief overview of some of the key features of the ICC's Highly Expedited Arbitration Provisions and does not seek to be an exhaustive analysis of the 2026 Rules. If you have any questions regarding HEAP, ICC arbitration, or dispute resolution more generally, please get in touch with Clarkslegal's dispute resolution team.





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