

محاكم DIFC COURTS

Commercial Mediation Scheme 2026

A six-month initiative of the DIFC Courts Mediation Service Centre

Helping businesses resolve commercial disputes quickly, confidentially and cost effectively

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The DIFC Courts Mediation Service Centre has launched the Commercial Mediation Scheme, a six-month initiative that helps businesses resolve disputes quickly, confidentially and cost-effectively.

Delivered in collaboration with The Mediation Hub, the scheme helps businesses resolve disputes early, before they escalate into litigation, while preserving valuable commercial relationships.

One of the key features of the scheme is a free one-hour conflict management consultation for qualifying parties, delivered by The Mediation Hub registered mediators and arranged by The Mediation Hub on a case-by-case basis.

The scheme supports businesses facing contractual or commercial challenges that want to preserve valuable commercial relationships and reach a practical settlement.

The scheme is open to eligible commercial parties across a broad range of sectors, both within the UAE and internationally, reflecting the DIFC Courts' ability to support eligible parties beyond traditional jurisdictional boundaries.

The scheme will initially run from 1 July 2026 until 31 December 2026, subject to community interest.

About the scheme

Commercial disputes increase costs, consume management time and can damage valuable business relationships.

The Commercial Mediation Scheme gives eligible businesses a faster, confidential and cost effective way to resolve disputes before they escalate into litigation.

Mediation is a voluntary process in which an independent mediator helps parties reach a mutually acceptable settlement.

Through the DIFC Courts Mediation Service Centre and in collaboration with The Mediation Hub, the scheme provides access to experienced mediators, a free one-hour consultation for qualifying parties and a clear, practical process for resolving commercial disputes.

Key benefits

Start with a free consultation

Qualifying parties may access a free one-hour consultation with a Mediation Hub registered mediator. The consultation helps parties understand the issues, consider their options and decide whether mediation may be the right next step.

Resolve disputes faster

The scheme helps parties address disputes at an early stage and avoid prolonged proceedings. Mediation can often be arranged and completed more quickly than formal litigation or arbitration.

Reduce dispute costs

Qualifying parties may access a free one-hour conflict management consultation through The Mediation Hub. Eligible parties who proceed to mediation also receive a 50% reduction in DIFC Courts Mediation Service Centre fees during the scheme period.

A full list of fees is available at:

https://www.difccourts.ae/difc-courts/services/mediation-service-centre/mediation-service-fees

Keep discussions confidential

Mediation is a private and confidential process. This allows parties to discuss the issues openly and explore possible settlement options without prejudicing their wider legal position.

Preserve commercial relationships

The scheme is particularly suitable where parties wish to continue working together, complete an ongoing contract, renegotiate commercial terms or avoid the cancellation of a valuable business relationship.

Reach practical commercial solutions

Mediation allows parties to explore flexible outcomes that may not be available through formal court proceedings, including revised payment terms, adjusted delivery obligations, amended contract timelines or other practical commercial arrangements.

Access experienced mediators

The scheme is supported by The Mediation Hub and its network of experienced mediators, including mediators with experience in complex commercial and sector-specific disputes. The Mediation Hub assigns mediators for the free one-hour consultation on a case-by-case basis.

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to eligible commercial parties across a broad range of sectors, both within the UAE and internationally, reflecting the DIFC Courts' ability to support eligible parties beyond traditional jurisdictional boundaries.

The scheme is available where:

- the dispute is commercial or contractual in nature;
- both parties are willing to participate in mediation;
- the parties wish to preserve, continue or restructure their commercial relationship;
- the dispute has arisen from current market pressures, supply chain disruption, rising costs, payment issues or related commercial challenges;
- the matter is suitable for mediation and capable of settlement by agreement between the parties.

The scheme is not limited to one sector. It may be suitable for disputes across a range of industries, including construction, logistics, supply contracts, services, trading relationships and other commercial arrangements.

Types of disputes that may be suitable

The scheme may assist with disputes involving:

- price adjustments under long-term supply contracts;
- increased costs relating to energy, freight, raw materials or supply chains;
- payment term adjustments;
- delayed or disputed payments;
- renegotiation of fixed-quantity or long-term commercial contracts;
- delay-related disputes;
- contract performance issues;
- disputes where parties wish to avoid termination or cancellation;
- construction-related commercial disputes;
- logistics and supply chain disputes;
- other commercial disputes where both parties wish to explore settlement.

Each enquiry will be considered on its own facts.

Eligibility criteria

The scheme is suitable where:

1. **Commercial dispute**

   The dispute should relate to a commercial, contractual or business relationship.

2. **Mutual willingness to mediate**

   Mediation is voluntary. Both parties must be willing to participate in good faith.

3. **Intention to preserve the relationship**

   The scheme is for parties who wish to explore settlement and, where possible, preserve or continue their commercial relationship.

4. **Dispute suitable for mediation**

   The dispute must be capable of resolution by agreement between the parties.

5. **Scheme Period**

   The scheme is available for eligible enquiries received between 1 July and 31 December 2026, subject to community interest.

The DIFC Courts, The Mediation Hub and/or the scheme administrator may request further information to determine whether a dispute is suitable for the scheme, including whether the matter qualifies for the free one-hour consultation and any subsequent mediation.

How the process works

Step 1: Submit your enquiry

Enquiries and applications for the free one-hour consultation may be made directly to The Mediation Hub, who will assign registered mediators on a case-by-case basis. The enquiry should include basic information about the dispute, the parties involved, the nature of the contract and whether the other party is willing to mediate.

Step 2: The enquiry is reviewed

The enquiry is reviewed to confirm whether the dispute is suitable for the scheme and whether the matter qualifies for the free consultation or mediation pathway. Further information may be requested where needed.

Step 3: Both parties agree to participate

As mediation is voluntary, both parties must confirm their willingness to participate before a mediation can proceed. One party may, however, make an initial enquiry or request information about the free consultation.

Step 4: Free one-hour consultation

Where the matter qualifies, The Mediation Hub assigns a registered mediator to provide a free one-hour conflict management consultation. The consultation helps the parties clarify the issues, consider practical options and assess whether the matter should proceed to mediation under the scheme.

Step 5: A mediator is appointed for mediation

If the parties wish to proceed to resolve their dispute through the DIFC Courts Mediation Service Centre, a mediator can be appointed based on the nature, complexity and sector of the dispute.

Step 6: Mediation takes place

Mediation takes place either virtually through the DIFC Courts' online platform or in person at the DIFC Courts offices, depending on the parties' requirements. The mediator helps both parties explore practical settlement options.

Step 7: Settlement is recorded

The parties must agree to and submit a written settlement if an agreement is reached as a result of mediation.

The parties enter the mediation agreeing to, or opting out of, directly enforceable settlements as Mediation Orders via DIFC Courts' Enforcement Writs. Enforceable settlement agreements offer parties a secure and cost effective option to reach a mutually beneficial solution to resolve disputes while possibly maintaining business relations.

What information should be provided?

To help assess whether a matter is suitable for the scheme, parties should provide:

- names of the parties;
- contact details for each party or their representatives;
- a short description of the dispute;
- the type of contract involved;
- the approximate value of the dispute or contract;
- whether the contract is ongoing, completed, suspended or terminated;
- whether both parties are willing to mediate;
- whether the enquiry relates to the free one-hour consultation, mediation, or both;
- any urgency or relevant deadlines;
- any specific technical, construction, logistics or sector expertise required.

Parties should not submit confidential or privileged documents at the initial enquiry stage unless requested.

Important information

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process.

The mediator does not act as a judge, arbitrator or legal adviser, and does not impose a decision on the parties. The role of the mediator is to assist the parties in exploring possible settlement.

Participation in the scheme does not prevent parties from seeking independent legal advice. Parties are encouraged to obtain legal advice where appropriate.

Acceptance into the scheme is subject to eligibility, suitability and availability.

The free one-hour consultation is provided by The Mediation Hub registered mediators for qualifying parties and is subject to eligibility, suitability and mediator availability.

Contact us

For enquiries about the DIFC Courts Commercial Mediation Scheme, including the free one-hour consultation, please contact:

DIFC Courts Mediation Service Centre

Email: mediation@difccourts.ae

Telephone: +971 4 427 3333

Website: www.difccourts.ae/difc-courts/services/mediation-service-centre

The Mediation Hub

Email: Initiatives@mediationhub.ae

Website: www.mediationhub.ae

When contacting either organisation, please include “Commercial Mediation Scheme” in the subject line. For the free one-hour consultation, parties may contact The Mediation Hub directly.

The enquiry will be reviewed and the relevant team will contact you with the next steps.

Frequently asked questions

What is mediation?

Mediation is a confidential process in which an independent mediator helps parties discuss their dispute and explore possible settlement options. The mediator does not decide the case or impose an outcome.

Is mediation mandatory?

No. Mediation under this scheme is voluntary. Both parties must be willing to participate.

Is the scheme only for construction disputes?

No. The scheme is intended to be available to eligible commercial parties across different sectors. Construction, logistics and supply chain disputes may be suitable, but the scheme is not limited to those sectors.

Can parties opt in from outside the DIFC or the UAE?

Any consenting parties, anywhere in the world, can agree to opt in to mediation through the DIFC Courts Mediation Service Centre.

Can one party apply alone?

One party may make an initial enquiry or request information about the free one-hour consultation. However, mediation can only proceed if both parties agree to participate.

How long does the process take?

Mediation is generally quicker than litigation or arbitration. The timeframe depends on the complexity of the dispute and the availability of the parties and mediator.

What does it cost?

Qualifying parties may access a free one-hour conflict management consultation through The Mediation Hub. Eligible parties who proceed to mediation receive a 50% reduction in DIFC Courts Mediation Service Centre fees during the scheme period. A full list of fees is available on the DIFC Courts website.

How do I request the free one-hour consultation?

Enquiries and applications for the free one-hour consultation can be made directly to The Mediation Hub using the contact details above. The Mediation Hub will review the enquiry and assign a registered mediator on a case-by-case basis, subject to eligibility, suitability and availability.

Can the mediation take place online?

Yes. Mediation may be conducted virtually or in person, depending on the circumstances and arrangements agreed by the parties.

What happens if settlement is reached?

The parties must agree to and submit a written settlement if an agreement is reached as a result of mediation.. Parties may also seek further information on any available options for formalising settlement through the DIFC Courts, where appropriate.

What happens if settlement is not reached?

If settlement is not reached, the parties remain free to consider other dispute resolution options, including litigation or arbitration, subject to their rights and obligations.