

# Kluwer Arbitration Blog

## Countdown To RIDW24: New Year, New Arbitration Hub: KSA's Impressive Delivery On Its Promise to Create an Attractive Environment for Investors

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The inaugural [Riyadh International Disputes Week](#) (“**RIDW**”), commencing on 3 March 2024, is a milestone event for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (“**KSA**”) and the disputes field, uniting key players in the field to explore the alternative dispute resolution landscape in the KSA and beyond. RIDW, the first event of its kind in the KSA, attests to the remarkable progress made by the KSA on the journey it set out on a few years ago to establish a robust arbitration regime, aligned with its broader [Vision 2030](#) commitment to foster an investor-friendly environment. In 2023 alone, this included reforms in national legislation, international instruments, and institutional rules.

On the national legislation front, the flagship reform is the enactment in June 2023 of the new [Saudi Civil Transactions Law](#), which came into force on 16 December 2023. This landmark legislation marks the KSA's first codification of its contract and property law, garnering [praise](#) as providing domestic and foreign investors with a “clear, consistent and modern” legal framework for conducting business in the KSA. The KSA's Government Tenders and Procurement Law also received an important update in June 2023 with the issuance of [Resolution No. 1321/1444](#), which approved a model arbitration agreement in government contracts, designating the [Saudi Center for Commercial Arbitration](#) (“**SCCA**”) as the administrating body for disputes arising out of such contracts. This reform built on the groundbreaking promulgation of the new Government Tenders and Procurement Law in 2019, which allowed for the first time for the use of arbitration in government contracts.

On the international front, the KSA [announced](#) its accession to the United Nations Convention on Contracts for International Sale of Goods (“**CISG**”), becoming the [96th](#) party to the Convention. The KSA's accession to the CISG, which will come into effect on 1 September 2024, will introduce legal certainty in international trade involving the KSA and thereby simplify the resolution of resulting disputes.

Institutionally, the SCCA has showcased its potential as a world-class dispute resolution center by [opening its doors](#) at the Dubai International Financial Centre (“**DIFC**”) in February 2023 and publishing its new [Arbitration Rules](#) in May 2023. The new Arbitration Rules feature streamlined Online Dispute Resolution (“**ODR**”) procedures, environmentally conscious provisions favoring electronic submissions (Arts. 25, 27, and 36), and an express emphasis on efficiency and economy (Art. 27). They also feature the establishment of the SCCA Court (Art. 3), complemented by new [Internal Rules](#), in effect since 1 July 2023, in an effort to further promote transparency and

efficiency. Most recently in November 2023, the SCCA [signed](#) a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aimed at promoting institutional arbitration in the KSA and providing for the inclusion of SCCA arbitration clauses in Ministry-related contracts. The MOU envisages cooperation between the Ministry and the SCCA to promote the KSA as a safe arbitration seat.

The KSA's steadfast efforts to promote arbitration are also reflected in its track record of enforcement of arbitral awards. In 2021 alone, the Saudi courts enforced 204 domestic and foreign awards. An SCCA study of Saudi arbitration-related case law between 2017-2022 revealed that out of 131 annulment applications brought in Saudi courts, [92%](#) were denied and only [3.8%](#) were granted (for violations of Shari'a and public policy).

White & Case are proud sponsors of RIDW and look forward to celebrating the KSA's remarkable progress to date and its bright future through panels on the new Civil Transactions Law, defending constructions claims on giga projects, and investor-State arbitration, with colleagues and friends from the KSA and beyond.



*We look forward to attending the [SCCA24 Conference!](#)*

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