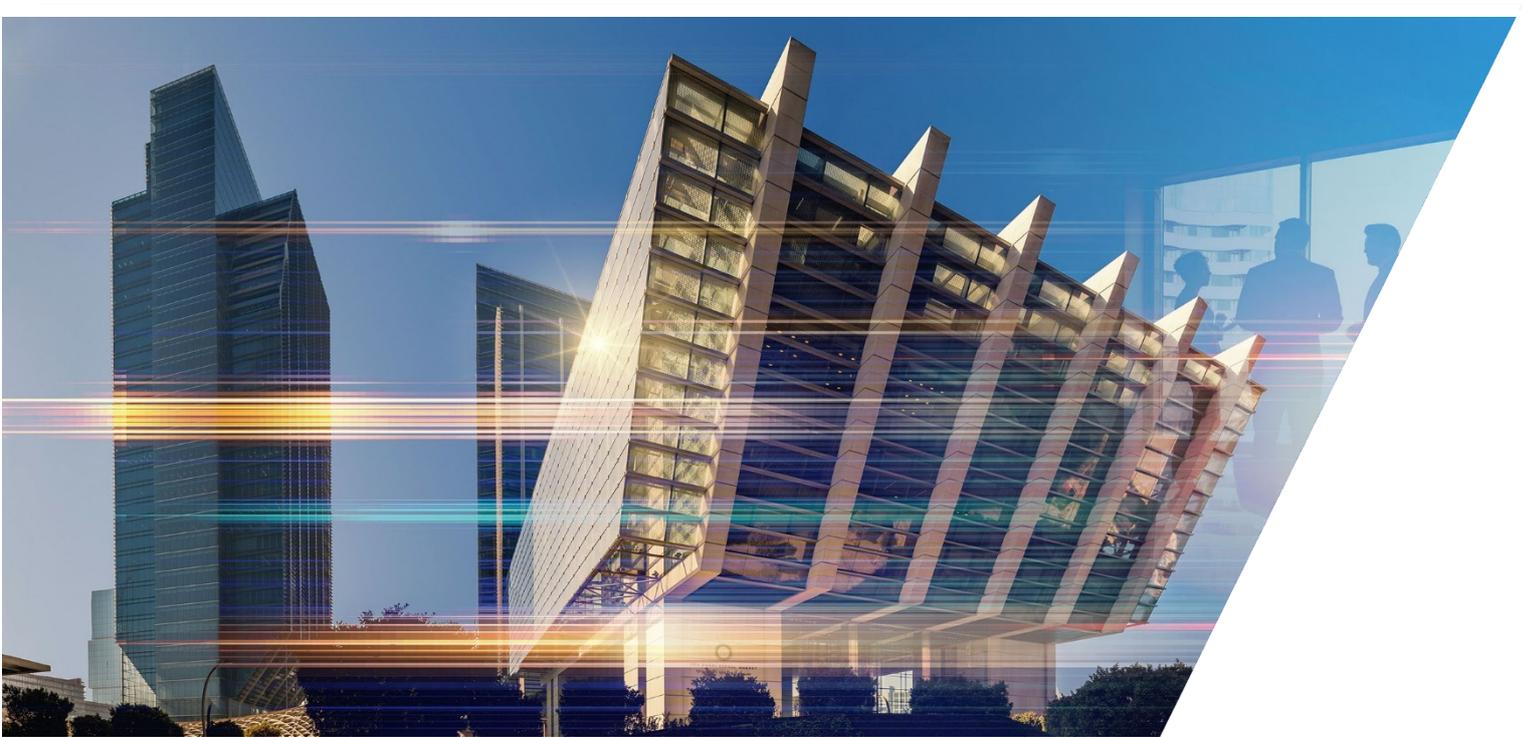




ADGM COURTS
محاكم سوق أبوظبي العالمي



ADGM COURTS
PRACTICE DIRECTION 3
SMALL CLAIMS

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SMALL CLAIMS

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PRACTICE DIRECTION 3

SMALL CLAIMS

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This Practice Direction is to be read with, and subject to, the ADGM Court Procedure Rules 2016 (“CPR”) and the Divisions and Jurisdiction (Court of First Instance) Rules 2015. Except as provided otherwise in this Practice Direction, terms have the meanings set out in the CPR and a reference to a Rule is a reference to the CPR.

APPLICATION

This Practice Direction must be read in conjunction with the following Practice Directions:

- **Practice Direction 1 – General**
- **Practice Direction 6 – Service of Documents**
- **Practice Direction 7 – Applications**
- **Practice Direction 9 – Costs**
- **Practice Direction 10 – Offers to Settle**
- **Practice Direction 13 – Court-annexed Mediation**

To the extent to which the provisions of this Practice Direction differ from or are inconsistent with provisions of other Practice Directions, the provisions of this Practice Direction prevail in relation to all claims that are, or are dealt with as, small claims.

Unless the Court orders otherwise, the following provisions shall apply.

A. **SMALL CLAIMS**

Definition

- 3.1. A “small claim” is a claim or dispute for US\$100,000 or less except for employment claims, all of which must be commenced in the Employment Division.

Making a claim [r.27]

- 3.2. A claim form which commences proceedings in the Small Claims Division shall be in accordance with **Form CFI 2**.
- 3.3. The claim form must:
- (a) state what final orders the claimant seeks; and
 - (b) include particulars of the claimant’s case in numbered paragraphs within the form, which shall include:

- (i) particulars of the factual matters relevant to the claim;
 - (ii) any relevant calculations for the amount or amounts claimed;
 - (iii) particulars of any sum sought by way of interest from a date earlier than the date of judgment;
 - (iv) the propositions of law which entitles the claimant to the final orders sought.
- 3.4. As a general rule, a claim form should not exceed 10 pages (excluding attachments).
- 3.5. A copy of any document referred to in the claim form must be attached to the claim form.
- 3.6. Part 4 of the CPR prescribes how a claim form may be served.

Service out [r.24, r.25 and r.28]

- 3.7. A claimant who serves a claim form on a defendant out of the jurisdiction must first file and serve with the claim form a copy of a notice containing a statement of the grounds on which the claimant is entitled to serve the claim form out of the jurisdiction.
- 3.8. The notice shall be in accordance with **Form CFI 32**.

Answering a claim and making a counterclaim [r.35, r.36, r.37, r.42, r.43, r.44 and r.50]

- 3.9. The Rules require that a defendant must file and serve an acknowledgement of service within 14 days after service of the claim form.
- 3.10. An acknowledgment of service shall be in accordance with **Form CFI 7**.
- 3.11. The defendant may file and serve an admission in accordance with Rule 42, together with any request for time to pay in accordance with Rule 43, in accordance with **Form CFI 34**.
- 3.12. The Rules also require that a defendant who wishes to defend all or part of a claim must file and serve a defence within 28 days after service of the claim form.
- 3.13. The defence must set out the defendant's answer to the particulars of the claim and the propositions of law advanced by the claimant. A defence shall be in accordance with **Form CFI 8**.
- 3.14. A defendant who wishes to make a counterclaim must:
- (a) state what final orders the defendant seeks by counterclaim;
 - (b) include particulars of the counterclaim in numbered paragraphs within the form, which shall include:
 - (i) particulars of the factual matters relevant to the counterclaim;
 - (ii) any relevant calculations for the amount or amounts claimed;
 - (iii) particulars of any sum sought by way of interest from a date earlier than the date of judgment; and

- (iv) the propositions of law advanced by the defendant; and
 - (c) state whether the defendant sues in person, by authorised officer or, if represented by a lawyer, the name, address and email address of that lawyer.
- 3.15. As a general rule, a counterclaim should not exceed 10 pages (excluding attachments). If the counterclaim is of such complexity that it is necessary to exceed this page limit, the defendant must include an index of topics within the particulars of claim.
- 3.16. A counterclaim shall be in accordance with **Form CFI 9**.
- 3.17. A copy of any document referred to in the defence or a counterclaim must be attached to the defence or the counterclaim unless that document has previously been uploaded to the eCourts Platform.

Reply to a Defence [r.45]

- 3.18. The claimant may, if invited by the court to do so, file and serve a reply to a defence within 14 days after service of the defence and must set out the claimant's reply to the particulars of the defence and the propositions of law advanced by the defendant.
- 3.19. A copy of any document referred to in the reply must be attached to the reply unless that document has previously been uploaded to the eCourts Platform.
- 3.20. A reply shall be in accordance with **Form CFI 10**.

Defence to any Counterclaim and subsequent Reply [r.44 and r.45]

- 3.21. A party who wishes to defend all or part of any counterclaim must file and serve a defence within 28 days after service of the counterclaim and must set out, that party's answer to the particulars of the counterclaim and the propositions of law advanced by the defendant.
- 3.22. A copy of any document referred to in the defence to counterclaim must be attached to the defence unless that document has been previously uploaded to the eCourts Platform.
- 3.23. A defence to counterclaim shall be in accordance with **Form CFI 8**.
- 3.24. A party, if invited by the Court to do so, may file and serve a reply to a defence to counterclaim. Such reply shall be in accordance with **Form CFI 10** and must attach a copy of any document referred to in the reply unless that document has previously been uploaded to the eCourts Platform.

Timetables

- 3.25. If or when the Court sets a timetable for the taking of procedural steps in a case, the parties must comply with it.
- 3.26. If the parties agree that the timetable should be adjusted the claimant (unless otherwise agreed by the parties) must file a written consent to the adjusted timetable using **Form CFI 22**.
- 3.27. If the parties cannot agree to make an adjustment which is sought by either party, and the adjustment sought will not affect or have a consequential impact on the dates fixed for a hearing or a trial, the party seeking the adjustment should file and serve a

statement using **Form CFI 36** setting out its justification for the adjustment it seeks. The other party or parties shall file and serve any response using **Form CFI 36** within 4 days of receipt of such statement. The Court will ordinarily resolve that dispute on the papers.

- 3.28. If the parties cannot agree to make an adjustment which is sought by either party, and the adjustment as sought will affect or have a consequential impact on the dates fixed for a hearing or a trial, the party seeking the adjustment must make an application in accordance with Practice Direction 7 using **Forms CFI 12** and **CFI 15**.

Order for specific disclosure [r.86]

- 3.29. Where a party has good reason to believe that documents held by the other party would be likely to support their case or adversely affect the other party's case, they may seek an order from the Court for the specific disclosure of such documents, and the Court may make an order for specific disclosure of those documents if it is satisfied that disclosure is necessary in order to dispose fairly of the claim or to save costs.
- 3.30. An application for specific disclosure must be made by application notice in accordance with Practice Direction 7 using **Forms CFI 12** and **CFI 15**.

Order for disclosure against non-party [r.88]

- 3.31. Any application made to the Court for disclosure by a person who is not a party to the proceedings must be made in accordance with paragraphs 2.93 - 2.98 of Practice Direction 2.

Case Management [r.8]

- 3.32. The Court may make any order, give any direction or take any step it considers appropriate for the purpose of managing the proceedings.

Court-ordered mediation [r.306]

- 3.33. The Court may, of its own initiative or upon the request of any party, make an order referring the dispute or any part of the dispute to court-annexed mediation, where in the opinion of the Court such order appears appropriate.

Allocation of hearing date

- 3.34. A small claim will be given a hearing date as soon as reasonably possible.
- 3.35. The Court will inform the parties of the amount of time allowed for the hearing.

Preparation for the hearing

- 3.36. The parties shall, not less than 14 days before the day fixed for the commencement of the hearing, exchange and file the following documents in accordance with **Form CFI 11**:
- (a) a written summary of the evidence to be given by each witness that a party intends to call at the hearing;

- (b) a copy of every document that the party will rely upon unless that document has previously been uploaded to the eCourts Platform; and
- (c) an outline of the legal arguments to be relied on, including details of any statutory provisions, cases or text book authority.

Experts [r.142(2)]

3.37. No expert may give evidence, whether written or oral, at a hearing without the permission of the Court.

Conduct of the hearing [r. 8, r.175]

- 3.38. The Court may adopt any method of proceedings at a hearing that it considers to be fair.
- 3.39. The Court may, if all parties agree, decide the claim without a hearing.
- 3.40. The Court may give permission to a party who is not a natural person to be represented by an employee or director who is not a lawyer, on being satisfied that the person is likely to be able to present the party's case efficiently and to assist the Court in reaching a just result in accordance with the overriding objective set out in Rule 2(2).

Non-attendance of parties at hearing [r.174]

- 3.41. If a party who does not attend a hearing:
 - (a) has given written notice to the Court and the other party at least 7 days before the hearing date that the party will not attend; and
 - (b) has, in a written notice, requested the Court to decide the claim in that party's absence and has confirmed that party's compliance with paragraph 3.36 of this Practice Direction,

the Court will take into account that party's statement of case and any other documents that party has filed and served when it decides the claim.

- 3.42. If a claimant neither attends the hearing nor gives notice under paragraph 3.41 of this Practice Direction, the Court may strike out the claim.
- 3.43. If a defendant neither attends the hearing nor gives notice under paragraph 3.41 of this Practice Direction, but the claimant either attends the hearing or gives notice under paragraph 3.41, the Court may decide the claim on the basis of the evidence of the claimant alone.
- 3.44. If neither party attends or gives notice under paragraph 3.41 of this Practice Direction, the Court may strike out the claim and any defence and counterclaim.

Interest [r.179]

- 3.45. Where interest is payable on a judgment debt and there is no agreed rate, it shall be at the rate of 9 per cent from the date that judgment is given until payment.
- 3.46. Subject to any ADGM enactment, where interest is payable on all of any part of a debt or damages in relation to a period prior to, or as at, the date of judgment and there is no agreed rate, it shall be at the rate of 9 per cent.

Setting aside judgment and re-hearing [r.174(3)]

- 3.47. A party who was not present at the hearing of the claim may apply for an order that a judgment be set aside and the claim re-heard.
- 3.48. A party who applies for an order that a judgment be set aside must file an application notice in accordance with Practice Direction 7 using **Forms CFI 12 and 15** not more than 7 days after the day on which notice of the judgment was served on him.
- 3.49. The Court may grant such application only if the applicant:
- (a) had a good reason for not attending the hearing; and
 - (b) has a real prospect of success at the hearing.
- 3.50. If a judgment is set aside:
- (a) the Court will fix a new hearing date for the claim; and
 - (b) the hearing may take place immediately after the hearing of the application to set aside the judgment.
- 3.51. A party may not apply to set aside a judgment:
- (a) if the Court dealt with the claim without a hearing under paragraph 3.39 of this Practice Direction; or
 - (b) if a party provided written notice under paragraph 3.41 of this Practice Direction.

Remission or deferral of fees [r.10]

- 3.52. Where a party applies for full or part remission, or deferral of payment, of any court fees:
- (a) that party must set out in the relevant application form a statement of the grounds on which that party seeks full or part remission, or deferral of payment, of the court fees;
 - (b) a person appointed by the Registrar to decide on a party's application for remission or deferral of court fees shall decide without any hearing whether to grant that party's application;
 - (c) if a party wishes to dispute a decision on any such application, the party may apply to have the decision reviewed by the Registrar; and
 - (d) the Registrar's decision on review shall be final and not subject to further administrative review.

B. APPEALS TO THE COMMERCIAL AND CIVIL DIVISION OF THE COURT OF FIRST INSTANCE

Form of notice [r.205]

3.53. A notice of appeal must:

- (a) be filed and served within 21 days of the date of final judgment or order;
- (b) be in accordance with **Form CFI 19**;
- (c) not exceed 10 pages;
- (d) attach a copy of the reasons given for the judgment or order against which the appeal is brought;
- (e) state the question or questions of law which the appellant alleges arise;
- (f) state in summary form why the appeal should be allowed; and
- (g) state what judgment or order the appellant alleges should have been given or made.

Response to notice of appeal

3.54. A party who seeks to respond to a notice of appeal may file and serve on the other parties to the proceedings a written response within 21 days of being served with the notice.

3.55. Any response to a notice of appeal must:

- (a) be in accordance with **Form CFI 20**;
- (b) not exceed 10 pages; and
- (c) set out the grounds on which the appeal should be refused.

3.56. The Court may give written directions to the parties about the further conduct of the appeal.