

# MARITIME ARBITRATION IN NUMBERS CHARTING THE LEADERS AND CHALLENGERS IN GLOBAL MARITIME ARBITRATION: LONDON LEADS, ASIA SURGES AND NEW HUBS EMERGE

**HFW is pleased to present the 6th edition of our Maritime Arbitration in Numbers report — a high level analysis of global maritime arbitration activity based on data either self-published or provided to us upon request. This year reflects our widest survey to date: 19 responses from 29 arbitral bodies<sup>1</sup> across 18 jurisdictions. While methodologies differ across arbitral bodies, the data below offers a unique perspective on today's maritime arbitration landscape. We are grateful to all contributors.**

This report should be read alongside our explanation of the statistics in the linked document: [THE MARITIME ARBITRATION UNIVERSE IN NUMBERS: MORE ON THE STATISTICS](#).

Maritime arbitration remains a cornerstone of dispute resolution in the global shipping industry, offering parties a flexible, confidential and expert-led alternative to court litigation. Its effectiveness is underpinned by a widely recognised framework for the enforcement of arbitral awards.

London in particular has long been regarded as the leading hub for maritime dispute resolution. However, recent years have seen the emergence of other jurisdictions as attractive alternatives. Our previous report<sup>2</sup> highlighted Singapore's increasing maritime and non-maritime arbitration caseload between 2020 and 2022, with Hong Kong following closely

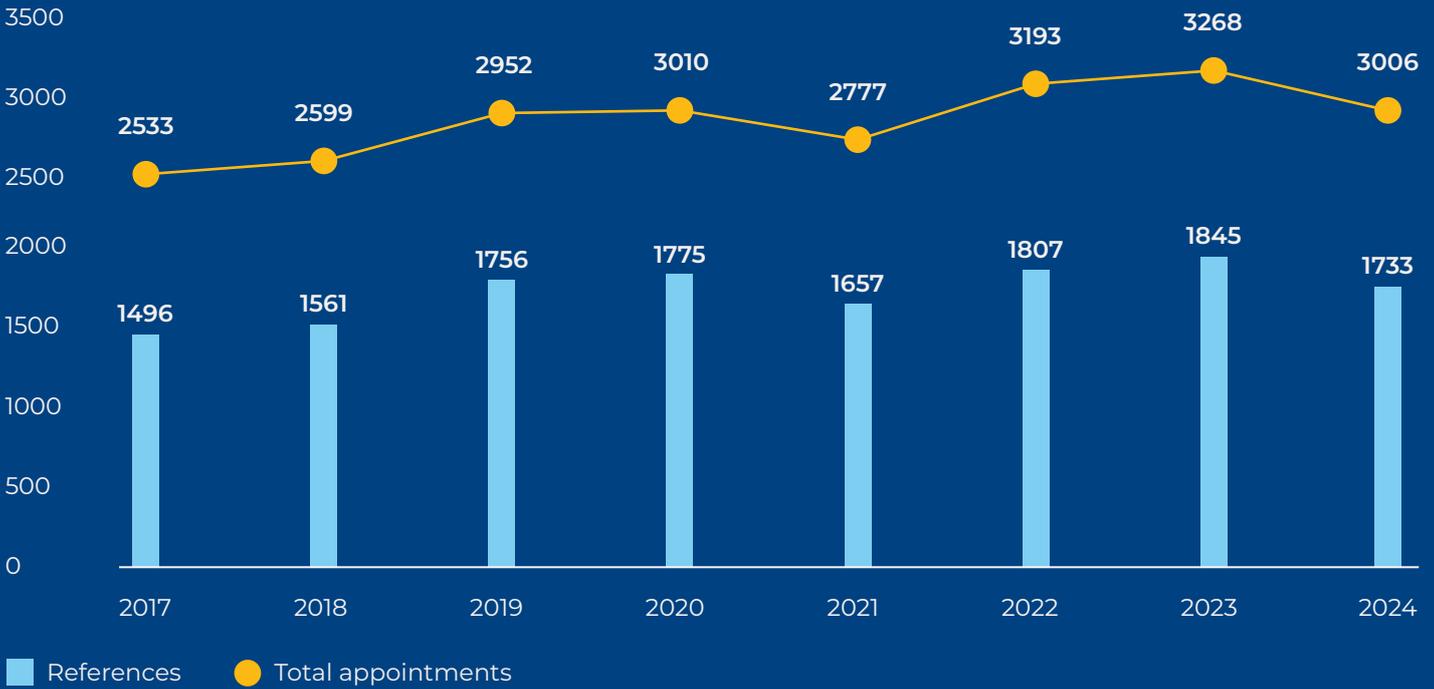
behind, although both had some way to go to draw a more significant maritime caseload compared to London. New international arbitration statistics released in June 2025 by Queen Mary University,<sup>3</sup> indicates a similar global trend for *all* international arbitration, with London remaining the leading venue followed by Singapore and Hong Kong jointly occupying second place.

In this report, we once again delve into the latest maritime and transport statistics to assess whether global trends in international arbitration are mirrored in maritime arbitration. Since 2018, HFW has tracked and analysed global maritime arbitration caseloads from leading arbitral bodies. This latest edition examines data from the past two years, identifying key trends and jurisdictional preferences to evaluate whether London continues to hold its pivotal role — or whether the rise of alternative venues is reshaping the maritime arbitration landscape.

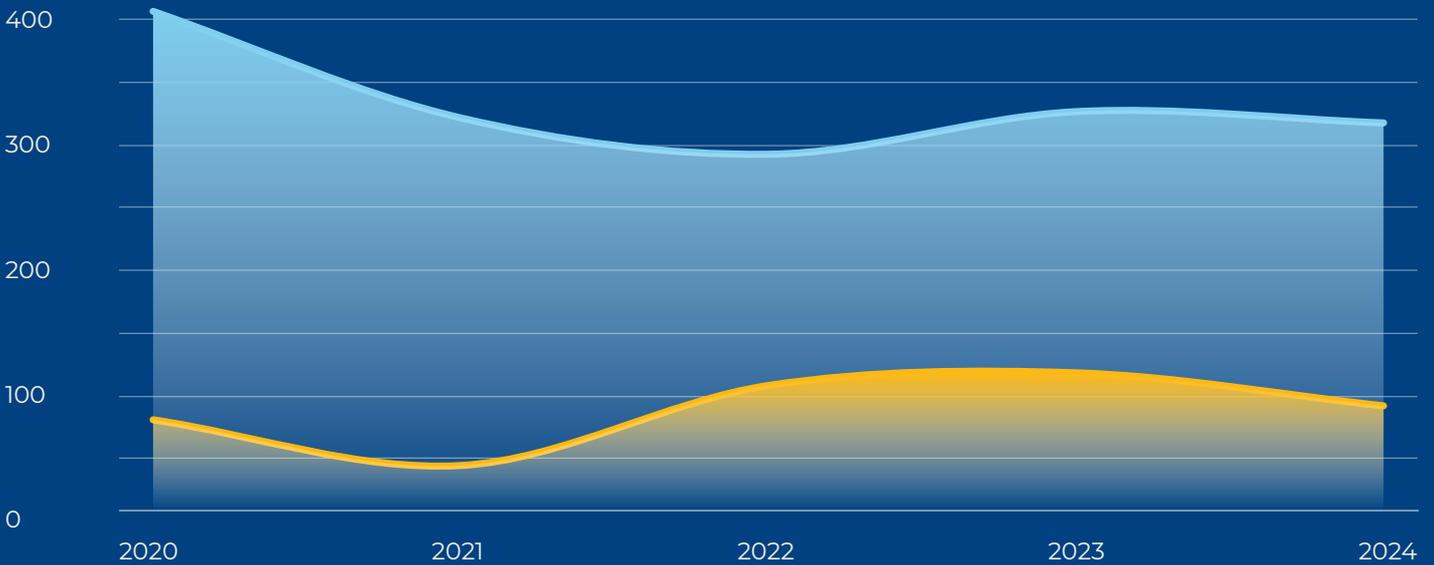
## **A recap of our previous report**

Our 2023 report showed that in 2022 London handled approximately 1,907 new international maritime<sup>4</sup> arbitrations, an increase of 12% on 2021's figures.<sup>5</sup> Singapore was the closest competitor in 2022, handling the equivalent of approximately 5% of London's maritime arbitration caseload.

## London Maritime Arbitrators Association (LMAA) Statistics



## London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) activity – All Transport & Commodities



	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>All LCIA international arbitrations</b> (including maritime-related)	407	322	293	327	318
<b>LCIA "Transport and Commodities" arbitrations</b> (including maritime-related)	81	45	108	118	92

## The latest maritime arbitration numbers

### London — A modest decline in 2024 references reflects a return to pre-pandemic norms

The London Maritime Arbitrators Association (LMAA) had a bumper year in 2023, recording approximately 1,845 new individual maritime references, an increase from 1,807 in 2022.<sup>6</sup> This figure marked the highest annual total since 2014, when 2,049 references were reported. A dip in references followed in 2024; small but noteworthy — a 6.07% reduction or 112 references. However, for the third consecutive year, the LMAA recorded over 3,000 appointments.<sup>7</sup> The LMAA does not administer arbitrations directly and relies on members reporting appointments. Some arbitrations under LMAA Terms may not have been reported, so the apparent decline could partly reflect under-reporting, not an actual fall in activity. Nevertheless, we would expect the exceptional caseload driven by Covid-19 related disruptions and volatile freight markets to have largely worked through the disputes process at this point, leading to a slight reduction in caseload statistics.

The London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) statistics for 2024 follow a similar pattern, with the percentage of referrals for LCIA arbitration in the transport and commodities sector falling to 29%, down from 36% the previous year (representing approximately 92 of the 318 referrals for arbitration under LCIA Rules). It should be noted, however, that this sector still remained the most active of all LCIA sectors within 2024, followed by banking and finance.<sup>8</sup> London was the chosen seat in 89% of LCIA arbitrations, which would suggest that approximately 82 of the 92 LCIA transport and commodities arbitrations were seated in London, down from 101 London arbitrations in 2023.<sup>9</sup>

We were able to confirm with the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) that its global maritime caseload also saw a slight drop in 2024, down from 11 in 2023 to 8, with 3 seated in London (the highest number in all jurisdictions reported).

Based on the LMAA's 2024 caseload,<sup>10</sup> together with LCIA transport and commodities data and ICC maritime figures for the same period, we estimate that approximately 1,818 new maritime<sup>11</sup> arbitrations were seated in London in 2024 — representing an almost 7% decrease compared with 2023, when the total number of new arbitrations in London was approximately 1,949.

### Singapore — 9% of London's total, fuelled by a surge at SCMA

In 2024, the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) recorded 72 claims in the maritime and shipping sector, accounting for 11.5% of its 625 new cases.<sup>12</sup> This represents a slight decline from 2023, when 85 maritime claims were filed, making up 12.8% of the overall caseload.<sup>13</sup>

The Singapore Chamber of Maritime Arbitration (SCMA) saw a sharp increase in activity in 2024, recording 95 new case references,<sup>14</sup> representing an increase of around 73% on the 55 cases reported in 2023. According to its Year in

Review, this figure is also 112% higher than the five-year average caseload. Singapore remains the default seat for SCMA arbitrations unless the parties agree otherwise.

According to the LCIA, Singapore was selected as the seat in two arbitrations in 2024, representing approximately 0.63% of its total caseload. There is no indication that these cases involved the maritime, transport, or commodities sectors, and it is therefore not appropriate to apply the 29% sector-specific figure to these Singapore-seated arbitrations. The ICC had 1 maritime arbitration (down from 3 in 2023) seated in Singapore in 2024.

When statistics from the above arbitral bodies are combined,<sup>15</sup> they indicate that 168 maritime-related arbitrations were seated in Singapore in 2024. This represents roughly 9% of London's maritime transport arbitration caseload for the same year. By comparison, Singapore's share was around 7% in 2023<sup>16</sup> and 5% in 2022, demonstrating exceptionally strong growth and reinforcing its position as the leading alternative to London for Asia-focused maritime disputes.

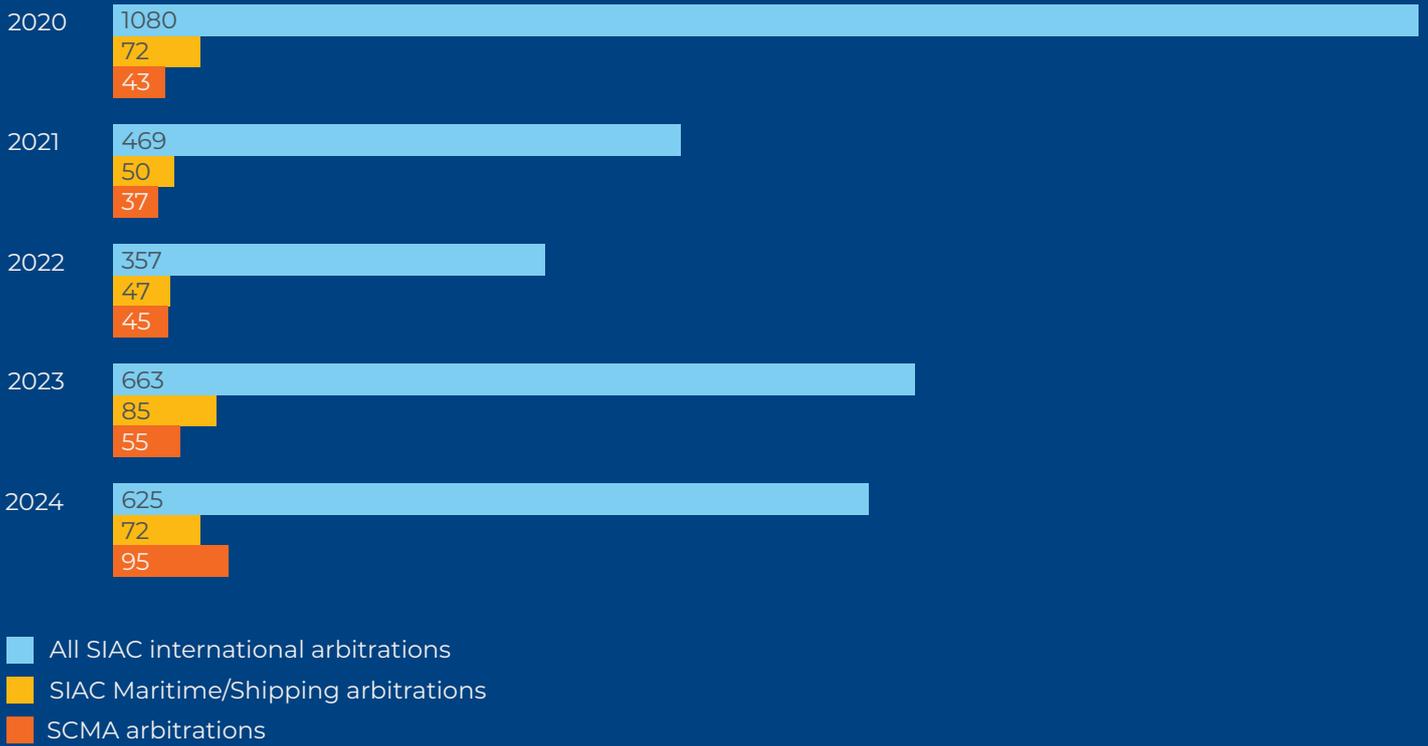
### Hong Kong — steady growth since 2020

Hong Kong has become a strong rival to Singapore as a regional maritime arbitration hub, with rising caseloads at both the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC) and Hong Kong Maritime Arbitration Group (HKMAG). As noted earlier in our report, the latest Queen Mary University survey ranks Hong Kong joint second globally as a preferred seat, chosen by 31% of respondents.

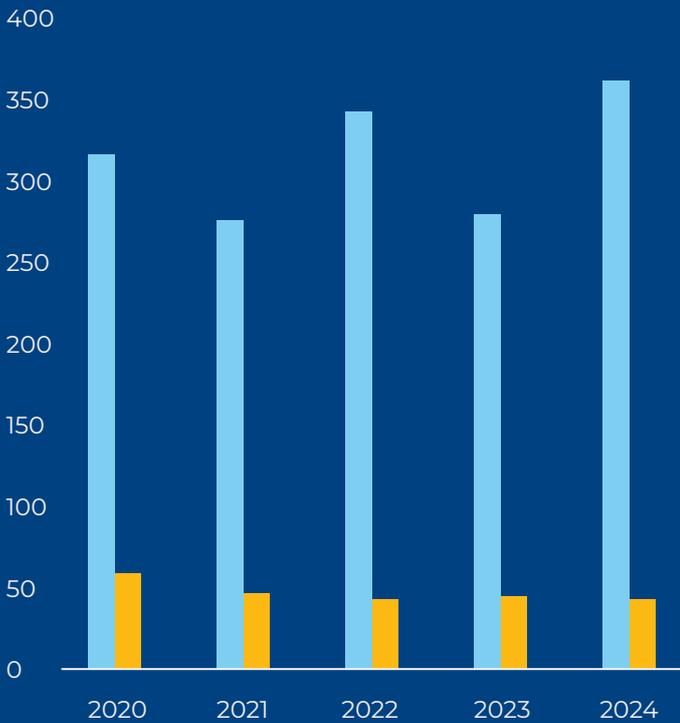
In 2024, 43 of the 352 arbitrations submitted to the HKIAC were maritime cases (12.3%).<sup>17</sup> This is a slight decrease from 2023, when 45 maritime cases accounted for 16% of HKIAC's 281 filings, but still higher than the 32 and 31 cases recorded in 2022 and 2021 respectively — evidence of a steady upward trend over recent years. HKIAC confirmed that all maritime arbitrations in 2024 were seated in Hong Kong, except for one which was seated in London.

Most maritime disputes handled by HKMAG are *ad hoc*, making precise statistics difficult to obtain. The group records appointments rather than caseload data, relying on members to report the number of appointments they receive each year, and full responses cannot be guaranteed. While reported arbitral appointments rose from 107 in 2023 to 146 in 2024 (an increase of about 36%), this figure may not accurately reflect the number of cases, as data is incomplete and multiple appointments can relate to a single arbitration.<sup>18</sup> It is therefore not possible to combine HKIAC and HKMAG maritime statistics to produce figures that can be accurately compared with other jurisdictions. However, the available data shows a marked rise in Hong Kong maritime arbitration activity, with appointments increasing significantly between 2023 and 2024 and continuing an upward trend since 2020, when only 85 appointments were recorded — representing an increase of around 75% over that period.

## Singapore Arbitration Statistics

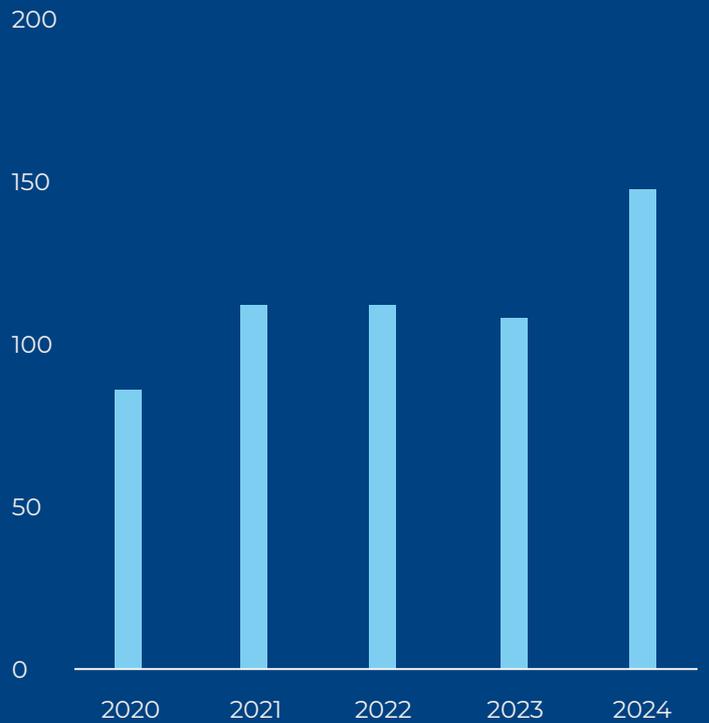


## Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC) – Caseload volume



■ All caseload including Maritime/Shipping  
■ Maritime/Shipping caseload only

## Hong Kong Maritime Arbitration Group (HKMAC) – Appointment volume



## China — positioning itself as a key player in global arbitration with soaring case numbers

A recent Oxford University report (Arbitration Lab)<sup>19</sup> has reported that China hosts the busiest and fastest growing arbitral bodies, with the Beijing Arbitration Commission and Shenzhen Court of International Arbitration each handling over 12,000 cases in 2023 — up 45% year on year. Most of these disputes are domestic, and not maritime specific, and we have therefore only provided limited coverage of Chinese maritime arbitration in our previous reports.

However, since the publication of our 2023 report, and following the introduction of new *ad hoc* rules in 2022, the China Maritime Arbitration Commission (CMAC) reported a record 1,124 filings in 2023 (up nearly 492% on 2022), of which 94% were domestic and 3% foreign related.<sup>20</sup> In 2024, the CMAC recorded 239 filings, 79% maritime, with foreign related cases rising sharply to 38.9% (93 cases), almost all maritime, involving parties from 40 jurisdictions.<sup>21</sup> In future reports we hope to provide more maritime-focused data, tracking China's growing influence in the global maritime arbitration landscape.

## Dubai — The DIAC emerges as Dubai's leading arbitration centre with growing maritime focus

Following the dissolution of the Emirates Maritime Arbitration Centre and the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Arbitration Institute, the Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC) has become Dubai's primary arbitration body. In 2023, the DIAC expanded its international reach by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with arbitral bodies across Asia, Europe, and the US with the aim of establishing connections to encourage and promote the development of arbitration in dispute prevention and resolution procedures.

The DIAC has published annual reports for 2022<sup>22</sup> and 2023.<sup>23</sup> While the 2024 report is yet to be released, the DIAC has confirmed to HFW that it registered 295 cases in 2024, of which 262 were arbitrations. This marks the third consecutive year in which DIAC has administered over 250 arbitrations.

Of the 262 arbitrations registered in 2024, twelve (4.6%) fell within the “maritime and shipping” category under the broader transport and logistics sector, with four of these cases seated in Dubai. Notably, the DIAC has reported an uplift in maritime and shipping cases in the past two years, with a particular increase in the number of disputes related to the shipment of Russian oil products.

## United States of America — The SMA demonstrates steady and diversified growth

Maritime arbitration in the United States has shown steady growth across several arbitral bodies, particularly in the years 2023 and 2024. The Society of Maritime Arbitrators (SMA), which is based in New York and known for *ad hoc* arbitration, recorded 155 arbitral appointments in 2024. This is an increase of 18% since 2023, when

132 appointments were recorded.<sup>24</sup> Reflecting this growth, the SMA also reported a rise in awards issued: 21 in 2024 compared to 14 in the previous year. Comparing appointment statistics for the SMA in New York and the LMAA in London (3006 in 2024) suggests that the SMA's caseload equates to approximately 5% of the LMAA's. A similar comparison in 2023, which also included the LCIA's London transport and commodities appointments, suggested 3% — indicating the expansion of the maritime arbitration sector in the United States.

The Houston Maritime Arbitrators Association (HMAA) has also reported a rise in arbitration activity, although empirical data remains limited. While the number of maritime proceedings was described as “steady” until 2023, last year saw an increase in ongoing arbitrations under HMAA rules along the US Gulf Coast — particularly in connection with offshore wind-related disputes on the East Coast. The HMAA expects 2025 to be a busy year, with updated arbitration rules due to be published in the autumn.

In addition to the statistics noted above, the International Centre for Dispute Resolution (ICDR)<sup>25</sup> reported 17 “transportation” disputes in 2024,<sup>26</sup> many of which are likely to be maritime in nature. Popular US seats for ICDR-administered arbitration include New York, Miami and Los Angeles, although the number of maritime-specific cases in these cities remains unconfirmed. It is also likely that both the Miami International Arbitration Council and the United States Maritime Arbitration Association have handled a significant number of maritime arbitrations this year, although their data has not been made available.

## A round up of other growing maritime arbitration hubs

While London and Singapore remain key hubs for maritime arbitration, regional arbitral bodies are contributing to a more diverse and expanding global arbitration landscape, and for the first time we are able to report on statistics from some of these centres, institutions and associations.<sup>27</sup> In 2024, the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce (SCC) Arbitration Institute reported 204 new cases, with 16% linked to delivery and transportation disputes, including maritime.<sup>28</sup> The Swiss Arbitration Centre (SAC) registered 100 cases, with six categorised under transportation.<sup>29</sup> The Netherlands Arbitration Institute (NAI) maintained an 8% maritime<sup>30</sup> share despite a drop in total filings,<sup>31</sup> while the Danish Institute of Arbitration (DIA) reported a 1% share of maritime and transport cases from an overall caseload of 142 in 2024.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, sector-focused bodies like UNUM Transport Arbitration and Mediation (UNUM) and the Nordic Offshore & Maritime Arbitration Association (NOMA) are gaining traction. UNUM registered 16 maritime arbitrations in the first half of 2025, nearing its annual estimate, with a broad definition that includes shipbuilding and logistics. NOMA continues to handle an estimated 2–3 maritime cases annually, reinforcing its niche role in Nordic offshore and shipping disputes.<sup>33</sup>

# >1800

Maritime arbitrations were seated in London in 2024.

# 36%

Arbitral appointments at HKMAG rose by 36% between 2023 and 2024.

# 75%

Singapore's maritime-related arbitration references rose from 96 in 2022 to 168 in 2024, representing a 75% increase.

# 7%

In 2024, London experienced a 7% decline in new maritime arbitration cases compared to the previous year.

These figures highlight the growing relevance of regional and specialised arbitral bodies in shaping the future of maritime arbitration.

## Commentary

The data in this 6th edition of *Maritime Arbitration in Numbers* confirms that London remains the preferred seat for maritime arbitration, with its established reputation and legal framework. The Arbitration Act 2025, which came into force on 1 August, is likely to strengthen London's appeal as an arbitration hub by introducing key reforms such as clearer rules on governing law, early dismissal of weak claims, and enhanced disclosure duties.

At the same time, Singapore has seen a steady rise in popularity as a centre for arbitral dispute resolution and has firmly established itself as Asia's leading alternative, closely followed by Hong Kong with steady regional

growth. Emerging hubs including Dubai and the United States are carving out niches in sectors such as energy and sanctions-related shipping. Specialist and regional arbitral bodies are also gaining momentum, reflecting a broader trend toward diversification and specialisation in maritime dispute resolution.

While London's slight dip in new references suggests a return to pre-pandemic norms, the increasing activity in Asia and beyond signals a more competitive market for maritime dispute resolution. This may lead to a shift from dominance by a few traditional hubs to a more even global distribution — one where London remains at the forefront, but in a far more competitive arena.

As global trade patterns evolve and parties seek efficiency, flexibility and neutrality, these developments will continue to shape the future of maritime arbitration.

## Endnotes

- 1 For the purposes of this publication, reference to an arbitral body shall include arbitration institutions, arbitration associations and other organisations and entities involved in maritime arbitration, whether as an administrative body or appointing authority.
- 2 [hfw.com/app/uploads/2024/04/005239-HFW-Maritime-Arbitration-Universe-in-Numbers-Sep-23.pdf](https://hfw.com/app/uploads/2024/04/005239-HFW-Maritime-Arbitration-Universe-in-Numbers-Sep-23.pdf)
- 3 The Queen Mary University of London 2025 International Arbitration Survey showed that London was again the most preferred seat for arbitration in 2024 (34%), with Singapore (31%) and Hong Kong (31%) holding joint second place.
- 4 This figure also includes transport and commodities-related disputes in the case of LCIA arbitrations, and all ICC Transportation arbitrations.
- 5 The same arbitral bodies handled 1,703 arbitrations in London in 2021.
- 6 <https://lmaa.london/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Statistics-up-to-2024-for-publication.pdf>
- 7 The LMAA recorded 3,006 appointments and 478 awards in 2024.
- 8 <https://www.lcia.org/News/Lcias-2024-annual-casework-report.aspx>
- 9 Albeit the number of referrals for arbitration administered pursuant to LCIA rules increased from 293 in 2022 to 327 in 2023
- 10 The LMAA have confirmed to us that they do not currently collect data on the seat of the arbitration, although the vast majority of the 1,733 new references in 2024 will have England as the seat of the arbitration. The LMAA Terms contain an express provision that states that unless the arbitration agreement provides to the contrary the seat of the arbitration shall be England. This provision helpfully removes uncertainty about the seat of the arbitration.
- 11 Based on LMAA and ICC maritime-specific figures and LCIA transport and commodities figures.
- 12 [https://siac.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/SIAC\\_Annual-Report-2024.pdf](https://siac.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/SIAC_Annual-Report-2024.pdf)
- 13 [https://siac.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/SIAC\\_AR2023.pdf](https://siac.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/SIAC_AR2023.pdf)
- 14 <https://www.scma.org.sg/SiteFolders/scma/387/YIR/YIR%202024-Final.pdf>
- 15 Excluding the LCIA's two Singapore-seated arbitrations.
- 16 143 case references, including the SIAC, SCMA and ICC. The LCIA recorded no Singapore-seated arbitrations in 2023.
- 17 <https://www.hkiac.org/about-us/statistics>
- 18 No information on new case filings was available.
- 19 <https://arbitrationlab.com/world-arbitration-caseload-2024-mapping-the-terrain/>
- 20 <https://www.cmac.org.cn/en/data/upload/image/20240327/1711522192966898.pdf>
- 21 <https://jsumundi.com/en/document/pdf/publication/en-cmac-china-maritime-arbitration-commission-2024-review>
- 22 <https://www.diac.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/DIAC-Annual-Report-2022-EN.pdf>
- 23 <https://www.diac.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/DIAC-Annual-Report-2023.pdf>
- 24 The SMA records self-reported appointments by members and awards issued but does not document the number of registered cases commenced.
- 25 The international division of the American Arbitration Association.
- 26 [https://go.adr.org/rs/294-SFS-516/images/2024\\_ICDR\\_Dispute\\_Resolution\\_Infographic.pdf](https://go.adr.org/rs/294-SFS-516/images/2024_ICDR_Dispute_Resolution_Infographic.pdf)
- 27 Whilst we don't have sufficient historical data to provide a comparative analysis of these regional hubs with more established maritime arbitral bodies, we hope to be able to do so in future reports.
- 28 <https://sccarbitrationinstitute.se/en/statistics-2024/>
- 29 <https://www.swissarbitration.org/update-from-the-swiss-arbitration-centre-2024/>
- 30 Including offshore.
- 31 <https://nai.nl/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/NAI-statistics-2024.pdf>
- 32 <https://voldgiftsinstitutet.dk/en/about/statistics2017/>
- 33 <https://westerberg.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025-Survey-Report-on-Nordic-Arbitral-Institutions.pdf>

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Recognised by The Times as "a disputes powerhouse", HFW handles more commercial litigation in the English Commercial Court than any other law firm and contentious work accounts for approximately 70% of our turnover. The firm's International Arbitration practice is one of the most active in the world, handling approximately 750 arbitrations at any one given time, and is recognised in the latest edition of GAR 100 as one of the world's leading arbitration practices. HFW also has the most top-tier rankings for shipping in Chambers and The Legal 500 of any law firm, and its lawyers have featured in Lloyd's List's ranking of the 100 most influential people in the shipping industry for five consecutive years.

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**About the report**

This report is based on a combination of primary and secondary research undertaken between March and August 2025. Primary research included direct engagement with arbitral bodies worldwide, who were invited to respond to a series of questions regarding maritime arbitration statistics for 2023 and 2024. In total, 29 arbitral bodies across 18 jurisdictions were contacted, and 19 responses were received, providing a rich insight and a valuable dataset. We are sincerely grateful for the contributions and engagement of these bodies.

Secondary research involved the review and analysis of publicly available reports and data relating to maritime arbitration statistics and trends.

The findings presented in this report reflect the information received, published sources, and the professional judgment, experience, and interpretation of the HFW author team and the wider HFW Shipping group. This report reflects information available as of August 2025, and subsequent developments may not be reflected.

This report is intended as a comparative and informative guide for those involved in maritime arbitration. While every care and effort has been taken to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information, it is provided for general guidance only and does not constitute legal advice. Referencing this report is permitted with appropriate attribution to HFW, and inclusion of the original url to the report from HFW's website: <https://www.hfw.com/app/uploads/2025/09/007499-Maritime-Arbitration-in-Numbers-2025.pdf>.