

ADGM Courts and Dubai Courts Sign Memorandum on Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments

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On 14 January 2025, the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) Courts and onshore Dubai Courts signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) (MoU) for the reciprocal enforcement of judgments. The MoU, which is publicly available, took effect the day it was signed and the mechanism it sets forth is available for parties seeking to utilize its reciprocal enforcement mechanisms.

The MoU, which follows approximately seven years after a similar MoU was signed between the ADGM Courts and the onshore Abu Dhabi Courts in February 2018, is designed to facilitate judicial cooperation between the ADGM and Dubai relating to mutually enforceable judgments.

Prior to the enactment of the MoU, parties seeking to enforce an ADGM Courts judgment in Dubai had to either go through the onshore Abu Dhabi Courts and then seek to rely on Federal Law No. 10 of 2019 (known as the Judicial Relations Law), which provides for reciprocal judgment enforcement between the onshore courts of the seven emirates, or seek recognition and enforcement directly in Dubai without the benefit of a streamlined process.

Highlights of the MoU

- **Extends to various executory instruments:** The MoU applies to “judgments.” However, it defines the term to include all final judgments, decisions, orders, ratified or recognized arbitral awards, certified memoranda of composition, as well as any other paper that is defined as a judgment or executory instrument by law.
- **No re-examination of judgments:** The MoU makes clear that the court requested to enforce the judgment will not re-examine judgments on their merits.
- **Framework for reciprocal enforcement:** The MoU sets out a clear framework for enforcement, either by direct application or deputization.

Enforcement Under the MoU

A party can either enforce a judgment by direct application or deputization.

Enforcement of ADGM Courts Judgments in Onshore Dubai

As a first step, parties must apply to the ADGM Courts for a certified copy of the judgment, enclosing an Arabic translation. The ADGM Courts will then affix an executory formula on the judgment. For the direct application procedure, the judgment creditor must apply directly to the onshore Dubai Courts' enforcement division, submitting a certified copy of the judgment translated into Arabic and affixed with the executory formula.

If seeking enforcement through deputization, the judgment creditor must first file an application. The ADGM Courts enforcement judge will then deputize an enforcement judge of the onshore Dubai Courts to enforce the judgment by providing the court with a letter enclosing, among other materials, an order indicating the enforcement measures or actions to be taken.

Enforcement of Dubai Courts Judgments in the ADGM

A similar process applies to enforcing onshore Dubai Courts judgments in the ADGM, save that such judgments must be translated from Arabic into English.

Conclusion

The process outlined in the MoU seeks to align judicial processes across the UAE. It signals a commitment to enhancing justice, transparency, and efficiency within the UAE's diverse legal systems, while also aiming to integrate the nation's common law and civil law courts.

Chady Deeb also contributed to this article.

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