The SICC, Mediation and the Singapore Convention

Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland and Germany),
Solicitor (England & Wales and Hong Kong)
Of Counsel, KGP Legal LLC
alexander.ressos@kgplegal.com.sg
www.ressos.com.sg

A financial centre needs more than banks, funds and family offices. It needs a place where the disputes that its transactions generate can be decided fairly, quickly and in a form that the losing party's assets will respect. The previous chapter examined the arbitration side of this infrastructure, which has made Singapore one of the leading seats in the world. This chapter turns to the two other pillars that Singapore built in the decade after 2013: an international commercial court staffed partly by foreign judges and a mediation framework that carries the city's name into international treaty law. It then asks how judgments obtained in Singapore can be enforced where the assets actually are.

The three subjects belong together. The Singapore International Commercial Court, the Singapore International Mediation Centre and the Singapore Convention on Mediation were conceived within a few years of one another, by the same small group of judges, officials and practitioners. Each answers a different weakness of arbitration: its lack of appeal, its cost, its confidentiality and its difficulty with third parties. Together with the Singapore International Arbitration Centre, they allow a party to choose the form of dispute resolution that suits the transaction, while staying within one legal system, one city and one language.

© 2026 Dr Alexander Ressos. General information only, not legal, tax or investment advice. No client relationship is created. All Singapore law advice is provided by a duly licensed and regulated firm of Singapore advocates and solicitors only on the basis of an express written letter of engagement. More information at SingaporeIQ.com and ressos.com.sg.

The Geneva volume describes a city whose reputation as a place of law rests on the *Alabama* arbitration of 1872, on the international organisations and on a modern arbitration statute. Geneva has no international commercial court of its own and was still debating one in 2026. Singapore went the other way. It decided early that a financial centre with ambitions in Asia needed a court designed for foreign parties. The city was also to become the reference point for international mediation. The comparison at the end of this chapter shows what each approach offers to clients who hold assets in both places.

Essentials

The Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC) was launched on 5 January 2015 as a division of the High Court. It hears international commercial disputes that the parties submit to it in writing, cases transferred from the General Division, arbitration-related applications and cross-border insolvency matters. Its bench combines Singapore judges with 26 International Judges from common law and civil law jurisdictions. Registered foreign lawyers may appear in offshore cases and on questions of foreign law. The Singapore International Mediation Centre, founded in November 2014, offers mediation linked to arbitration (Arb-Med-Arb) and to SICC litigation (Lit-Med-Lit). The Singapore Convention on Mediation, opened for signature in Singapore on 7 August 2019, makes international mediated settlements directly enforceable in its 25 parties. SICC judgments travel through the Hague Choice of Court Convention, the Reciprocal Enforcement of Foreign Judgments Act and a network of memoranda of guidance with foreign courts.

Disclaimer

This article is provided for general information only. It is based on publicly available sources as at its date of publication. These sources have not been independently verified against licences, regulatory registers or the records of the entities concerned. It is not legal, tax, financial or investment advice. Nor is it a recommendation to invest in, transact with or use the services of any entity mentioned. Law and regulation change frequently, so the content may be incomplete or outdated. To the fullest

© 2026 Dr Alexander Ressos. General information only, not legal, tax or investment advice. No client relationship is created. All Singapore law advice is provided by a duly licensed and regulated firm of Singapore advocates and solicitors only on the basis of an express written letter of engagement. More information at SingaporeIQ.com and ressos.com.sg.

extent permitted by law, Dr Alexander Ressos and the publisher of SingaporeIQ exclude all liability for loss or damage arising from the use of or reliance on this article. Readers should obtain advice on their specific circumstances before acting or refraining from action.

Names and trademarks of the entities discussed belong to their owners and are used for identification only. Their mention implies no endorsement, affiliation or allegation of wrongdoing. All Singapore law advice is provided by a duly licensed and regulated firm of Singapore advocates and solicitors only on the basis of an express written letter of engagement. Corrections and updates: contact@ressos.com.

© 2026 Dr Alexander Ressos. This article may be quoted with attribution to SingaporeIQ (SingaporeIQ.com). Reproduction in full and any commercial use require prior written consent. The Legal Terms at https://singaporeiq.com/legal-terms apply.

Author contact: Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP · contact@ressos.com

© 2026 Dr Alexander Ressos. General information only, not legal, tax or investment advice. No client relationship is created. All Singapore law advice is provided by a duly licensed and regulated firm of Singapore advocates and solicitors only on the basis of an express written letter of engagement. More information at SingaporeIQ.com and ressos.com.sg.