MARLUC

CASE STUDY · MARLUC SYNOPSIS

AAA AI Arbitrator

IMPLEMENTED 2025 ONWARDS · PROFESSIONAL SERVICES · US · BAND C · CLAIMED ONLY

VERSION 1.0 · PUBLISHED 15 NOVEMBER 2026 · UPDATED 15 NOVEMBER 2026 · FACTS CHECKED 15 NOVEMBER 2026

The American Arbitration Association released an AI arbitrator in November 2025 for documents-only construction disputes, built with QuantumBlack, AI by McKinsey. The AI drafts the award and a human arbitrator reviews, revises and issues it. In November 2026 the association extended it to commercial cases.

ABOUT THIS SYNOPSIS

This is MarLuc's summary and grading of publicly available sources, for information only. It is not investment, legal, financial or professional advice, and should not be relied on for any decision. Readers must validate it against the original sources and, where appropriate, challenge its conclusions.

Facts and figures are as reported by the sources listed below, which may be incomplete, self-reported or out of date. Check the original source before relying on any figure.

The impact band, proof marker and SEAM view are MarLuc's opinion. The organisation is not a MarLuc client and has not reviewed or endorsed this synopsis. Names and trademarks belong to their owners.

NOTICE WORDING LAST UPDATED 16 NOVEMBER 2026

AT A GLANCE

AI used: Generative AI that summarises submissions, analyses claims and drafts awards for a human arbitrator.

Implemented: 2025 onwards. Grade: band C, Process change, Claimed only.

Headline result, as reported: AI drafts the award and a human arbitrator issues it; time and cost savings are the association's own figures

1 · The case

The facts, as reported by the 5 sources listed at the end. Where a source is silent, the field says "Not reported".

Organisation

American Arbitration Association (AAA-ICDR). Not-for-profit alternative dispute resolution provider founded in 1926, with offices across the United States and Singapore, per its release. Its international division is the International Centre for Dispute Resolution. Canvas block: 4. Operations and process. Also 3. Customers and proposition.

Business challenge

The challenge. The AAA's chief executive said the legal industry has long been cautious about new technology while demand for fair, efficient and accessible justice grows. By her account, an AI arbitrator could cut the cost and time of arbitration and open dispute resolution to parties who cannot afford the traditional process.

Who implemented it

QuantumBlack, AI by McKinsey (Consultancy): Developed the digital dispute resolution centre and AI arbitrator in collaboration with the association..

Technology (SEAM pillar E)

SEAM types: T5 Custom / fine-tuned models. Deployment: Not reported. Vendors and products: QuantumBlack, AI by McKinsey, AAA AI Arbitrator.

Where it was built in: A digital dispute resolution platform for filing, submissions and arbitrator review, with an interface for the human arbitrator that shows case summaries, claims analysis and a draft award.

What changed

Before: documents-only arbitrations decided and drafted by a human arbitrator. After: for parties who opt in, the AI prepares summaries, analysis and a draft award, and a human arbitrator reviews and issues the final award. Results in live cases: Not reported. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

What it cost

Not reported

What it saved

By the association's account: early savings of 20 to 25% in time and 35 to 45% in cost against traditional documents-only construction arbitration, per Quinn Emanuel and Miller Canfield. Before launch its chief executive projected 30 to 50% on cost and 25 to 30% on time. Arbitrators in testing reported reviewing case materials 30 to 50% faster, per LawNext. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Governance and control

A human arbitrator reviews every draft award and issues the final award, and parties must opt in, by the association's account. A general counsel statement says safeguards remain central as the scope widens. Independent testing, appeals or court review of AI-assisted awards: Not reported.

S2 · Accountable owner · Claimed
A human arbitrator from the association's panel is appointed to each case and issues the final award, by the association's account. [1] [2] [5]

A1 · Safe use · Claimed
The association's technology chief said it placed ethics at the centre, supported by strict governance, AI standards and validation frameworks. [1]

A2 · Human in the loop · Claimed
A human arbitrator reviews the AI's reasoning and the party feedback and may revise the draft award before it is finalised. [1] [2] [3] [5]

A3 · Monitoring and assurance · Claimed
Draft awards are benchmarked to keep alignment with human legal judgement, and the system was tested on over 1,000 simulated cases; ongoing monitoring of live cases is not reported. [1] [2]

A4 · Vendor AI · Not reported
Not reported. QuantumBlack is named as a development collaborator; the underlying model supplier is not named in these sources. [1]

A5 · Agent controls · Claimed
Scope is limited to documents-only cases with no live witnesses, both parties must opt in, and the AI does not issue the award, by the association's account. [2] [4] [5]

A6 · Standards and regulation · Claimed
The association says the tool operates within established safeguards; no court or regulator review of AI-assisted awards is reported, and Miller Canfield lists court scrutiny as an open question. [4] [5]

What worked, what did not, what is unproven

WORKED

– Parties and arbitrators were involved in testing, including over 1,000 simulated cases, by the association's account.

– Early time and cost savings reported for construction cases, by the association's account.

– The association widened the scope in November 2026, after a phased start.

DID NOT

– As of March 2026 the tool had not issued its first award, per Quinn Emanuel, partly because both parties must consent.

– Commentators question how the tool will weigh witness credibility and whether parties will write human-only arbitration into contracts, per Quinn Emanuel.

UNPROVEN

– Whether time and cost savings hold in live cases and in the new commercial scope.

– Accuracy and consistency of draft awards against human-only awards.

– How courts treat awards prepared with AI assistance, which Miller Canfield lists as open.

Timeline

Sept 2025 Association announces an AI arbitrator for documents-only construction cases, developed with QuantumBlack [1]

Nov 2025 Planned first availability for construction cases [1]

Mar 2026 No award yet issued; Resolution Simulator announced [3]

May 2026 Law firms report early savings figures and a $25,000 claim limit for construction cases [4]

Nov 2026 AI Arbitrator extended to all two-party, documents-only business-to-business cases [5]

2 · Grade and SEAM assessment

MarLuc's opinion, made on the evidence above. How cases are graded: marluc.co.uk/case-studies/how-we-rate

Level of change and impact

Claimed: Not applicable. Grade: C, Process change. Proof: Claimed only. Route: Process-led.

Process change (Level 2, band C). One arbitration process redesigned around an AI draft and a human decision-maker. No operating model change is reported.

Graded C. The association redesigned one process around AI drafting with a human arbitrator issuing the award, and has widened its scope. The savings are its own early figures from testing, and no live award had been reported by March 2026, so the marker is Claimed only.

The SEAM view and lessons learnt

The design keeps a named human accountable for the award, asks the parties to confirm the AI's reading of their case, and starts with a narrow, low-value case type before widening. For a larger organisation, the transferable idea is phased scope with consent and a human decision at the end. The savings figures come from testing and the association's own FAQ, and live-case evidence is still to come.

1. Start with a narrow case type and widen only after testing.
2. Keep a named human accountable for the final decision.
3. Publish live-case results so claimed savings can be checked.

Evidence

Score 1 of 4. Self-reported: the association's announcements and interviews, repeated by law firms; no independent evaluation or issued award is reported.

Evaluation method. Self-reported company figures: early savings from testing as reported by the association; no independent check and no live-case results published.

Sources disagree. The chief executive projected cost savings of 30 to 50% and time savings of 25 to 30% before launch (LawNext, September 2025); later commentary cites 35 to 45% on cost and 20 to 25% on time (Quinn Emanuel, Miller Canfield, May 2026). Miller Canfield says claims are limited to $25,000 in construction cases; the November 2026 release gives no limit for commercial cases.

Status. Ongoing: extended to commercial documents-only cases on 9 November 2026; no issued award reported as of March 2026.

3 · Original sources

Read these in full. To challenge a fact or a grade, use the contact form at marluc.co.uk or the link on https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/aaa-ai-arbitrator

[1] American Arbitration Association: AAA-ICDR to Launch an AI-Native Arbitrator (September 2025)
https://www.adr.org/press-releases/aaa-icdr-to-launch-ai-native-arbitrator-transforming-dispute-resolution/

[2] LawSites (LawNext): AAA Readies November Launch of AI-Powered Arbitrator for Construction Disputes
https://www.lawnext.com/2025/09/aaa-readies-november-launch-of-ai-powered-arbitrator-for-construction-disputes.html

[3] Quinn Emanuel: The AI Arbitrator, How the AAA Is Reshaping Dispute Resolution (May 2026)
https://www.quinnemanuel.com/the-firm/publications/noted-with-interest-the-ai-arbitrator-how-the-aaa-is-reshaping-dispute-resolution/

[4] Miller Canfield: The AI Arbitrator Is Here (May 2026)
https://www.millercanfield.com/resources-The-AI-Arbitrator-Is-Here.html

[5] PR Newswire (American Arbitration Association): The AI Arbitrator, now available for commercial cases (9 November 2026)
https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-ai-arbitrator-from-the-american-arbitration-association-now-available-for-commercial-cases-302932444.html

American Arbitration Association (AAA-ICDR) website: https://www.adr.org

Version 1.0 · Published 15 November 2026 · Updated 15 November 2026 · Facts checked against sources 15 November 2026 · Downloaded 26 November 2026. This PDF may be out of date: the latest version, and a way to report an error or a better source, is at https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/aaa-ai-arbitrator

VERSION HISTORY

v1.0 15 November 2026 First published