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USAID/MACEDONIA JUDICIAL STRENGTHENING PROJECT

END OF YEAR QUARTERLY REPORT: JANUARY TO MARCH 2013



Galičnik Wedding Festival

April 16, 2013

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USAID/MACEDONIA JUDICIAL STRENGTHENING PROJECT

END OF YEAR QUARTERLY REPORT: January – March 2013

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABMS	Automated Budget Management System
ACCMIS	Automated Court Case Management and Information System
AO	Administrative Office of the Court Budget Council
CAA	Court Administration Association
CBC	Court Budget Council
CBR	Court Book of Rules
CIRa	Center for Institutional Development (Macedonia)
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CSC	Court Services Council
CSO	Civil society organization
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DCM	Differentiated case management
ELSA	European Law Students' Association
EU	European Union
GOM	Government of Macedonia
HAC	High Administrative Court
IDEAS	Investment Development and Export Advancement Support Project
IR	Intermediate Result
IT	Information technology
JC	Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia
JSP	Judicial Strengthening Project
JTA	Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors (also known as Judicial Training Academy)
LPA	Legal Professional Association
MJA	Macedonian Judges' Association
MLA	Macedonian Lawyers' Association
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MYLA	Macedonian Young Lawyers' Association
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RFP	Request for proposal
STA	Senior Technical Advisor
Tt DPK	Tetra Tech DPK
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

I. INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Macedonia Judicial Strengthening Project (JSP) is an ambitious four-year endeavor that started in November 2011. The overarching objective of the project is to help the Macedonian judiciary to evolve as an independent, self-governing, effective, and accountable branch of government capable of meeting the needs of citizens, businesses, and organizations for prompt and impartial protection of their rights and adjudication of their legal disputes.

This quarterly report focuses on the progress and implementation of programmatic activities and tasks aimed at delivering the results required under the Tetra Tech DPK (Tt DPK) contract with USAID. A brief description of the objectives, areas of work, project activities, and expected results follow.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The overarching objectives of the project are to strengthen the role of the judiciary in the separation of powers and to develop broad-based support for rule of law and judicial-sector reform. More specifically, the project focuses on supporting the development of professional associations in the justice sector, developing effective court governance systems and practices, and improving the efficiency and quality of justice.

1.2 AREAS OF WORK

The project's main components are outlined below.

1.2.1 Advocacy and Citizen Participation in Judicial Sector Reforms

Support the development of the capacities of professional associations in the justice sector to play a leadership role in efforts to reform the justice system and to advocate for the interest of their members; and increase public awareness and participation in the justice-sector reforms and rule-of-law issues.

1.2.2 Independent, Efficient, and Consistent Application of Judicial-sector Policies and Practices

Develop effective court governance systems and practices; increase the role of the judiciary in preparing laws and policies governing the branch; and establish regular coordination and consensus-building on key issues among judicial institutions; promote more effective and accountable operation of judicial-sector institutions and courts; improve court operations through innovation and technology; and design and apply performance standards.

1.2.3 Effective Legal Personnel and Efficient Processes

Improve efficiency and quality of justice by providing specialized trainings to judges, and by developing and applying national time standards for case processing; build capacities of court personnel to provide efficient services to court users.

I.3 PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The project provides technical and managerial experience to key counterparts in the judiciary; legal professional associations (LPAs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) active in the judicial sector.

The range of support includes a combination of targeted long-term technical assistance, advisory services, project initiatives, and other forms of assistance identified as necessary for each of the results prescribed. Key activities and tasks include the following:

- Identifying and supporting key civil society and professional associations in their efforts to promote civil society support for the rule of law and an independent judiciary
- Building capacity of designated LPAs
- Assist designated LPAs and CSOs in supporting laws, policies, and practices that support judicial independence
- Identifying gaps and/or idiosyncrasies in policies and practices of judicial administration and management and support reform
- Building leadership and management capacities
- Supporting the development of needs-based budgets for the courts
- Supporting education for various sectors of the judicial sector, including president judges, court administrators, and court staff to enhance efficiency and timeliness.

I.4 PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The USAID/Macedonia JSP employs a results-driven approach to its planning and programming.

I.4.1 JSP Results Area

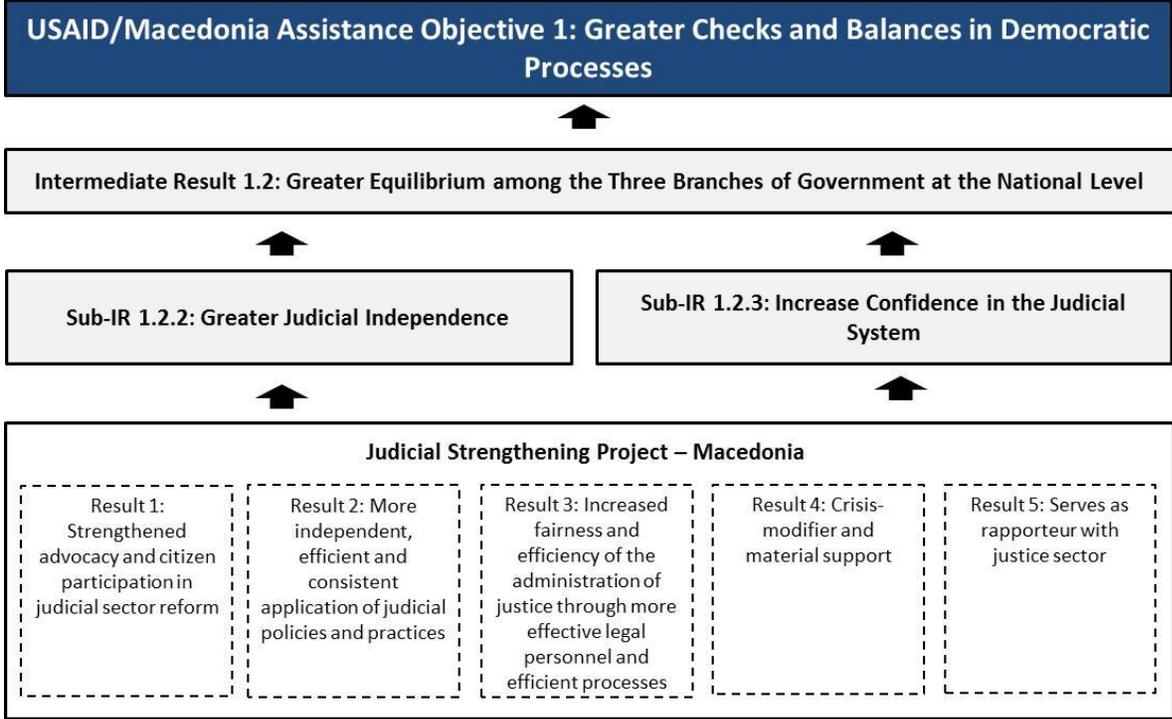
In Year II, the project will continue to focus on five key results:

- Result 1: Strengthened advocacy and citizen participation in judicial sector reform
- Result 2: More independent, efficient, and consistent application of judicial policies and practices
- Result 3: Increased fairness and efficiency of the administration of justice through more effective legal personnel and efficient processes
- Result 4: Crisis-modifier and material support
- Result 5: Serving as *rappporteur* with justice sector.

These five results areas contribute to the USAID Foreign Assistance Framework for Macedonia.

I.4.2 USAID Results Framework

The JSP supports the USAID/Macedonia Assistance Objective I: Greater Checks and Balances in Democratic Processes. Under this Assistance Objective, the project supports Intermediate Result (IR) 1.2: Greater Equilibrium among the Three Branches of Government at the National Level. Specifically, JSP works toward Sub-IR 1.2.2: Greater Judicial Independence; and Sub-IR 1.2.3: Increased Confidence in the Judicial System. The chart below illustrates the conceptual linkages between the JSP and the USAID/Macedonia Framework.



II. PROGRAM-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND TASKS

2.1 RESULT 1: STRENGTHENED ADVOCACY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN JUDICIAL SECTOR REFORM

2.1.1 Requirement 1.1: A Short, Focused Assessment, Baseline Survey, and Resulting Action Plan on Justice Sector LPAs and CSOs, and the Role they can Play in Strengthening the Rule of Law in Macedonia

The JSP, through a selected sub-contractor, previously completed the short, focused initial assessment of the organizational needs of 11 professional organizations and CSOs. JSP selected three organizations for Phase II of the assessment:

- The Macedonian Judges Association (MJA), which represents most of the judges in Macedonia. It is active in providing a forum for discussion of various issues facing the society, such as the public discussion on the Law on Defamation and key areas of case processing through the Administrative and High Administrative Court.
- The Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), which is a LPA that provides continuing legal education for young lawyers and works to promote and advance the legal profession in Macedonia. MYLA promotes access to public information and supports the establishment of a free legal aid system.

- The Court Administration Association (CAA), an organization representing approximately 1200 court employees and is very active in proposing and writing new rules and sub-regulations and advocating for reform.

In Phase II, CIRa assessed the performance of the three selected organizations to identify performance gaps and to recommend training and technical assistance packages customized to the needs of each.

The objectives of the second phase of the organizational and performance assessment process were to:

- Prepare a comprehensive set of performance assessment instruments and a capacity-building process and present them to the three selected organizations;
- Conduct a performance assessment of the selected organizations’ leadership and personnel; and
- Prepare an organizational assessment of the performance of the LPAs and CSOs and present it to JSP staff members for consideration.

2.1.2 Requirement 1.2: Per the Findings of Requirement 1.1, the Capacity of at Least Two Judicial Sector Professional Associations are Improved



Macedonian Young Lawyers

On February 21, JSP met with representatives of Embra to emphasize the importance of identifying vacant seats as early as possible so JSP staff can fill them with participants from other LPAs. On February 27, JSP staff met with Embra, MYLA and CAA representatives to schedule future training sessions and coordinate the next training workshop cycle.

JSP proceeded with the implementation of Phase III, which started in October 2012 and will run through October 2013, at the latest. Phase III activities include a series of training workshops to enhance the capacity of the selected organizations. JSP is overseeing the presentation of these workshops.

Participant reports have been very positive overall and the trainers and facilitators have received high marks. The training for MJA on “Media & Public Relations Strategies” as well as the “Management & Leadership Skills” for CAA received a score of 5, with 5 being the highest. The content has been described as appropriate and rich in substance. Comments found in the remark include the desire to attend similar trainings in the future and the usefulness of the trainings in their work as well as the organization.

MJA participation has been low and its members have displayed a lack of enthusiasm. JSP staff met with the president of the MJA, Judge Nikolco Nikolovski, to discuss the future participation of the association in this program, among other things. Judge Nikolovski opined that the training sessions should focus more on substantive topics related to judges’ adjudicative work rather than on strengthening the capacity of the MJA. He stressed that judges have busy schedules, making it difficult to ensure their participation in trainings. At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that MJA will be participating in only two training sessions: (i) Effective Media and Public Relations and (ii) Stress Management. The former is to be held during the second half of March and the latter during the second half of April.

It is unfortunate that the MJA forfeited the opportunity to continue receiving targeted training as previously agreed. It will be missing a good opportunity to become stronger and more relevant to its members.

Alternatively, JSP has reached out to the eight LPAs/CSOs that are not among the original targeted group and has offered them at minimum three seats each at the remaining training sessions, provided that the selected participants make a good faith commitment to attend specific sessions.

2.1.2.1 Trainings and Workshops for LPAs –First Quarter of 2013

Activity/Deliverable	Counterparts	Activity Description	Start Date	Finish Date
Provision of Effective and Efficient Services (2 days)	CAA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparation of the trainings and workshop materials 	Jan. 31, 2013	Feb. 1, 2013
Effective Media and Public Relations (3 days)	CAA		Feb. 11, 2013	Feb. 12, 2013
Project Planning, Design and Implementation (3 days)	CAA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of the trainings and workshop 	Mar. 11, 2013	Mar. 13, 2013
Training in Management and Leadership skills (2 days)	CAA		Mar. 14, 2013	Mar 15, 2013
Media and Public Relations Strategies (2 days)	MJA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation of the trainings and workshop 	Mar. 18, 2013	Mar. 19, 2013
EU Funding Mechanisms (2 days)	CAA, MYLA		Mar. 20, 2013	Mar. 21, 2013
Media and Public Relations Strategies (2 days)	MYLA		Mar. 26, 2013	Mar. 27, 2013

Trainings	Activity Description	Start Date	End Date
Advocacy and Lobbying (1.5 days)Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparation of the trainings and workshop materials 	October 31, 2012	November 1, 2012
Planning, Design & Implementation/Project Cycle Management (3 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of the trainings and workshop. ▪ Evaluation of the trainings and workshop 	November 6, 2012	November 8, 2012

2.1.3 Other Capacity Building Support for LPAs and CSOs

Macedonian Judges Association

At a meeting on February 4, Judge Nikolco Nikolovski and Director Arnaudovska of the Academy discussed with JSP the revision of the Judicial Code of Ethics, which is widely considered outdated and too ambiguous to enforce.

Judge Nikolovski opened the meeting with a discussion of the dilemmas and open issues regarding the preparation of the Code and the inclusion of conflict of interest provisions. In particular, he discussed the possible implications for the existing Code's conflict with the Law on the Judicial Council and the Law on the Prevention of Corruption.

Judge Aneta Arnaudovska presented the latest findings of the Groupe d'Etats Contre La Corruption, EC¹ (GRECO). She recommended that the project consider assisting the MJA in revising the code and incorporating the provisions published on the GRECO website into the Macedonian Code. The role of the JC in preparing the Code was also discussed. It was concluded that the JC must endorse the revised Code and must participate in all future phases of its preparation. The COP offered the project's assistance for this endeavor, which was gladly accepted by both Judge Nikolovski and Judge Arnaudovska, particularly in sharing experiences and expertise.

On March 28, a follow-up meeting was organized with Judge Arnaudovska, the Academy director and Macedonia's representative to GRECO. The object of the meeting was to discuss the logistics of preparing a preliminary draft code to satisfy the GRECO deadlines of April 21. During early March, the project provided the director with preliminary research regarding the development of a revised judicial code of ethics and agreed to draft a preliminary proposed draft for further consideration by Director Arnaudovska, the MJA, the JC and GRECO.

Support for Publication and Office Assistant for Court Administration Association (CAA)

The initial and follow-up assessment of CAA, which was conducted by the Center for Institutional Development (CIR), clearly identified problems in the functioning of this young professional

¹ States Against Corruption European Commission

organization caused by a lack of both professional personnel and a functioning administrative office. The project funded the hiring of an office assistant to support the work of the CAA's president and facilitate clear communications with branch offices and other members. The assistant, who started work on January 15, has been assisting the CAA in developing a JSP-supported publication for distribution to its membership. The draft of the publication was received in early March and is being reviewed by JSP staff for content and syntax. JSP has retained an outside design and layout expert to prepare the final product for printing. JSP will translate the draft into English and Albanian and plans to publish and distribute it with JSP support in April.

The office assistant/volunteer has attended the capacity-building training sessions and workshops given by Embra, which will further strengthen the association's capacity and support in its daily work. The project will provide the office assistant volunteer with a small stipend for daily expenses.

On February 22, JSP sent a letter to the president of the CAA outlining the terms of their cooperation in order to clarify expectations on both sides. The CAA acknowledged receipt of the letter on Feb 27.

Publications and Public Information by Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA)

JSP has been collaborating with MYLA in the preparation, publication and distribution of a flyer designed to strengthen the association and bolster the participation of its existing members. MYLA will distribute the brochure to students at four law schools in Skopje and Tetovo with a formal presentation and a Q&A session.

In February, MYLA had the flyer translated into Albanian for the Tetovo distribution and printing has been completed. The Albanian version of this publication is now ready for distribution. The presentation and distribution in Tetovo is scheduled for May 8.

MYLA also compiled a more extensive brochure describing the accomplishments of the organization for distribution to a wider audience, in order to publicize its accomplishments and attract new members. It is currently being refined by the MYLA board and will be produced in April.

Macedonian Lawyers Association

The JSP met with members of the Macedonian Lawyers Association (MLA) to describe the project's activities, mission, and goals. The MLA is an organization of lawyers working in the commercial and business sectors. It is an active organization; it organizes two meetings or conferences each year, discusses current legal topics, and publishes a monthly newsletter, *Pravnik* (Lawyer).

The Macedonian Lawyers Association had a prominent role in the JSP-sponsored roundtable held on March 22, which included three other LPAs—AFFT, MYLA and the PPA. The subject of the roundtable was "Court Proceedings and Court Efficiency." The objective of the discussion was to ascertain concerns of legal practitioners regarding the practice of law in Macedonia. Subjects included issues involving aspects of the Civil Procedure Law and the Law on Case management, aspects of the Criminal Procedure Law, as well as practices and procedures of the courts. As a result of the discourse, 14 issues and/or concerns were raised and JSP received 6 recommendations for changes in laws or practices.

Additionally, the president of MLA, Danica Miladinov, is one of the selected participants to take part in the study tour as later described.

Support for European Law Students Association (ELSA)

During this quarter, JSP supported the effort by ELSA to enhance public information and education through the publication of its second brochure entitled *Juvenile Justice System—Prevention Instead of Punishing*. The first brochure was designed as civics education for high school level students, in helping them understand the structure of government, the courts, and the legal process. On January 31, the brochure was presented to the students, in conjunction with a visit to the Basic and Appellate Courts, Shtip. A number of students from a school for special needs in the Shtip area were included in the group.



This second brochure is designed to provide more specific information and an overview of the system for juvenile justice in the Republic of Macedonia, with emphasis on the importance of prevention instead of punishment. The brochure will be distributed to courts, ELSA members, high school students and other interested institutions and associations. The text within the brochure were written by ELSA members, and the draft, upon initiative of JSP, was reviewed and approved by Judge Lazar Nanev, an expert in the juvenile justice system. A total of 1,500 copies of the brochure will be printed (1,300 in MK and 200 in ENG).

The project also selected the ELSA president, Ana Velkovska to participate in the study tour to Sweden and Estonia.

Assistance to Selected Organizations in Identifying and Applying for Grants

A call for proposals was published by the Delegation of the European Union in Macedonia in the framework of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), 2012–2013 *Supporting a Thieving Civil Society in the Field Through Country Based Support Schemes (CBSS)*.

The deadline for submission of a Concept Note is April 12. JSP informed the 11 NGOs and LPAs, with which the project has been working. To date, JSP received one response from the All for Fair Trials Coalition. The organization thanked JSP for the information and the offer of assistance.

The CAA also expressed an interest and accepted the offer to have JSP review their concept note prior to submitting it. At the time of the report, there has been no news or updates on this matter from the CAA or the All for Fair Trials Coalition.

Off-shore Study Tour for LPAs and CSOs

Planning continued for a study tour to Estonia and Sweden from April 8-19. JSP began the process of selecting seven to eight participants from the membership of the LPAs and CSOs at a meeting with MYLA and CAA on February 27. Members from the MLA, MYLA, ELSA, AFFT, and CAA were in the final group of participants. Study tour participants will learn how LPAs and CSOs function and support the judiciary, and how to organize targeted advocacy campaigns, draft laws, and lobby for their enactment. The group will be meeting with ombudsman, legal rights institutes, judicial officials, bar associations, and international “watchdog” groups.

PHM International (PHM) was selected as the successful bidder following “best and final offer” negotiations on the relative benefits versus costs of each of the proposal options, including travel options. On February 13, JSP sent PHM a written statement of issues to be addressed, to which PHM responded on February 25. A Scope of Work was agreed, and the contract was signed at JSP offices on March 14. As the director of PHM was in Skopje on that day, a preliminary orientation

was conducted with the available participants. It was agreed that the JSP office would make the travel arrangements, having been completed after approval by the Tetra Tech DPK Home Office.²

2.1.4 Coordination Meetings

President of the Judicial Council

In early December, Judge Zafiroska was elected as a member of the JC for the second six-year term. At the inauguration meeting of the JC on December 20, Judge Zafiroska was elected as the president of the Council with a two-year mandate. The DCOP and COP meet and speak to the president on a regular basis to coordinate the efforts of the project with the JC activities and support the various arms of the judicial branch. On January 28, the DCOP traveled to Shtip with Judge Zafiroska to coordinate project activities with the president judge of the Appellate Court, Shtip. Discussions revolved around the full use of ACCMIS, case management and backlog reduction, as well as planning for the visit of local students to the appellate court and basic court in Shtip that took place on January 31, in cooperation with the courts and the European Law Students' Association (ELSA).

President Judge of Skopje I

On January 29, JSP staff met with the newly appointed president judge of the Skopje I court, a large criminal court that handles the most important criminal cases in Macedonia. This coordination meeting was intended to ascertain the needs of the Skopje I court and to determine what, if any, assistance can be offered by the project. The team discussed with the president judge the under-utilization of ACCMIS, particularly in the misdemeanor department, the problems with service of process and its cost, the need for training couriers, and the possibility of a closed case analysis to provide for better classification of cases. The JSP team will discuss possible cooperation with COR and schedule another meeting with the president judge.

President of the Supreme Court

On February 6, the COP, DCOP, COR, and JSP Court Administration Coordinator held their first meeting with the newly-elected chief justice and president of the Supreme Court, Judge Lidija Nedelkova. The conversation primarily focused on the advantages and disadvantages of electronically recording court hearings. Other topics included source codes, harmonization of court decisions, productivity of the Supreme Court and EduSoft's extended warranty and maintenance. JSP agreed to supply Chief Justice Nedelkova with the details of the contractual obligations on warranty and maintenance that were submitted to the chief justice on February 20.

Chamber of Enforcement Agents

The Chamber of Enforcement Agents, one of the LPAs receiving project support, held its annual assembly and a two-day training workshop beginning on February 1. The DCOP, who has supported the organization from its inception and through two previous projects, was invited to participate and discuss coordinated efforts, future trainings and the potential for future cooperation.

General Secretary of the Supreme Court and President of the CSC

On February 6, the COP, DCOP, COR, and court administration coordinator met with Sonja Gruevska, general secretary of the Supreme Court and president of the CSC to discuss future cooperation with the CSC and CAA, including the printing and publication of the project-supported manuals on hiring and disciplining court employees. The group also considered the possibility of

² The participants left Skopje on April 8 to begin the study tour.

supporting the Supreme Court in processing cases, as well as the upcoming completion of staffing guidelines and the selection of a working group.

On March 12, the COP and Court Administration Coordinator met again with Ms. Gruevska, to coordinate upcoming activities. Ms. Gruevska agreed to discuss with the Council the possibility of supporting JSP in rewriting job descriptions for court IT staff, public information officers as well as court administrators. The COP again offered JSP assistance in helping the Supreme Court in case processing and backlog reduction since that court has not done well in expeditiously resolving cases as compared to most courts in the country. To date there has been no reply on either issue. JSP will be persistent in attempting to address these issues.

Norwegian Center for Mediation

Members of the Restorative Justice Project, sponsored by the Norwegian Center for Mediation, requested a meeting with JSP to identify possible areas of cooperation or overlap in efforts. The project, which is sponsored by the Norwegian Embassy in Macedonia, aims to foster mediation and diversion in the juvenile justice area. The coordination and informational meeting took place at JSP offices on February 8.

American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative

Representatives of the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) requested a meeting with the new in-country director, Elizabeth Givens. They will be working mainly with defense attorneys to prepare the new Criminal Procedure Law, which is scheduled to take effect in December 2013. Possible areas of mutual cooperation and information exchange were discussed.

Media Development Center

On January 29, the COP, DCOP and the project attorney met with Roberto Belicanec of the Media Development Center. The purpose of the meeting was to coordinate and inform each of the respective projects' objectives and goals. The Media Development Center is engaged in issues of EU jurisprudence in deciding cases for non-material damage in cases against journalists regarding defamation.

Academy for the Training of Judges and Public Prosecutors (Academy)

The COP and staff regularly meet with the director of the Academy Judge Aneta Arnaudovska. Judge Arnaudovska is interested in pursuing a revision of the Code of Judicial Ethics for the Judges of Macedonia. She is a representative of Macedonia to a European Union body, which is pushing potential member countries to revise their judicial and other ethics codes. At a meeting on March 28, the project agreed to assist in the preparation of a preliminary draft code for consideration of a future working body to consider revisions. Work began in late March.

2.2 RESULT 2: MORE INDEPENDENT, EFFICIENT, AND CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF JUDICIAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

2.2.1 Requirement 2.1: Legal Framework and Judicial Branch Policies Strengthen Independence, Effectiveness, and Accountability of the Judicial System

2.2.1.1 Review and Advocacy of Laws by Judiciary

Judicial Branch Forum

The first Judicial Branch Forum took place on November 6. The participants consisted of the top policy makers and decision makers of the judiciary. The discussion focused on the achievements of judicial reform to date and the needs of the judiciary going forward, with special emphasis on the performance and failures of current laws. The group concluded that the Judicial Branch Forum should continue to meet on a quarterly basis. The Forum provides an opportunity for the top policy makers and decision makers to be brought together in a formal setting to discuss relevant judicial policy issues. This offers an opportunity to foster communication and collaboration between the high-level actors.



Judges Nikolovski & Arnaudovska

Accordingly the project scheduled the second quarterly Forum for March 15. As agreed on the first meeting, JSP solicited topics for discussion from the JBF members, which constituted the agenda for the second meeting. These topics are larger policy issues, which require review and possible further action.

The agenda topics included:

- Review of the new software for court statistics;
- Need for harmonization of the Judicial Ethics Code with the international standards;
- Appellate courts' strategy for reducing old cases; and
- Benefits of the centralized public procurement through the CBC.

The participants reached the following conclusions:

1. The president judges (PJs) of all the appellate courts and their teams should take responsibility to communicate the message to all PJs on their region, for overseeing the entry of data into ACCMIS, in order for the necessary statistical reports to be generated.
2. MJA should start the procedure for amending/improving the Judicial Code of Ethics, alongside a mixed committee is to be created for that purpose. The committee is expected to produce the first draft of the Code by the end of April 2013, prior to the next GRECO evaluation.
3. The appellate courts should have a more active role in their regions for reducing the backlog of old cases. At a separate session, the appellate courts harmonization committees should discuss the issue of management of court procedure with special emphasis of preliminary review of the complaint, as well as the Article 19 of the Law on Courts.

4. The CBC should implement the centralized public procurement for the telephone and internet. In the interim, the public procurements should be organized on the appellate court level.

The next meeting will tentatively take place in late June 2013 and the topics for discussion will again be defined in advance, in coordination with the JBF members.

2.2. Requirement 2.2: Administration and Management Rules, Policies and Procedures, Systems and Practices to Support a Modern Court System; Work with Judicial Sector Authorities and Actors to Establish Effective Governance and Operational Systems for Managing Court Resources – Budget, Human Resources, Facilities, Equipment Etc.; Strengthen Managerial Capabilities and Introduce Performance Standards

2.2.1 Strengthening Judicial Administration and Management Systems, Procedures, and Capacities

Background

The project was charged with conducting an assessment of existing judicial administration and management systems, procedures, and capacities to identify procedural impediments and performance weaknesses within the courts. An array of new institutions has been created within the judiciary, including the JC, the Academy, the CBC, the AO, the CSC, and committees addressing specific subjects, such as the automation of case management. These changes are designed to work together to streamline and modernize the judicial process. The assessment made five long-term recommendations and seven interim recommendations. Both the project and its working partners have evaluated these recommendations. Some are still under consideration, while others have already been implemented by the AO, the CSC, the CAA, and the Forum with the assistance of the JSP.

Recommendations include a permanent establishment of the authority and responsibility for judicial administration in the judiciary, expanding administrative policies, and developing new ones. The assessment underscored the need for a robust leadership and administration of the Macedonian judiciary. These, as well as other recommendations, address the key issues facing the judiciary, including the absence of effective governance systems and lack of management capacity, exacerbated by poor communication/coordination within the judicial sector. These systems are underdeveloped and have been targeted by the project for in-depth development by various initiatives described in this report.

2.2 Requirement 2.2 - Administration and Management Rules, Policies and Procedures, Systems and Practices to Support a Modern Court System

Court Service Council and Court Administrators

- The manual for hiring employees (Manual) has been completed with project support. JSP completed in-house printing on February 28, and electronic versions were also made available on CD. During March, two copies of the printed and electronic version of the Manual were distributed to each court.
- On March 12, representatives of the Project met with the CSC president, Sonja Gruevska. JSP COP reiterated the need for reviewing selected merit-based job descriptions for IT staff

and public information officers and court administrators that should be eventually endorsed by the CSC. Revision of the job descriptions has been raised several times by the IT administrators as an urgent need for improving their status in light of the crucial role they play for the functionality of ACCMIS, IT equipment and overall operation of the courts. The president of the CSC, Ms. Gruevska has yet to approve the initiative and has said that she will take the matter up with the Council.

Development of Needs-based Budgets

The project has been asked by the AO to sponsor a roundtable for all court presidents, administrators and accountants, entitled Criteria & Methodology for Needs-Based Budget Preparation. At a meeting in Veles on February 26, JSP began planning for an event in mid-April ahead of court budget preparations for the upcoming year.

During the reporting period the representatives of the project visited the basic court in Veles on February 26 and March 25, together with the Head of the AO, in order to follow up with the implementation of the model for calculation of planned and actual price of a court case. This model was part of the Functional Analysis for Improvement of the Effectiveness of the Courts in Macedonia, which was conducted by the World Bank and the Ministry of Justice in 2011. The BC Veles has been a pilot court in this project and has participated in preparing needs-based budgets for 2013-2015, which should be replicated in all other courts in Macedonia. The proper implementation of this model would reflect the process of budget preparation in terms of making accurate projections for the number of filings and dispositions, and on such basis, the required financial and HR resources for each court.

Support for Court Accountants: Preparation of Final Annual Account

JSP organized training on “Preparation of Final Annual Account,” to support the uniform preparation of final annual accounts in all courts in Macedonia for the AO. The training took place on January 17 and 18 in Kavadarci.



Court Accountants prepare Annual Report

The objective of this training was to enhance skills and build common understanding of the court accountants of all courts in Macedonia regarding the preparation of final annual accounts. Despite the frequent change of the accounting regulations, court accountants very rarely attend professional trainings because courts cannot afford the costs. The CBC, which prepares a consolidated annual account based on the courts' annual accounts, has noted occasional mistakes or inconsistencies in the application of the accounting rules by individual courts.

Thirty-six participants in total attended the training, including 32 accountants from the courts, Judicial Council and the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors; 2 representatives from the AO; and 2 internal auditors of the Judicial Council.

The training was evaluated with the average grade of 4.76, in which the highest grades were given to both trainers, for their friendly and approachable attitude, thorough and correct elaboration of the topics and using concrete examples from their practice. The participants also suggested several topics for future trainings, including the warehouse and financial operations, use of ABMS, clarification of basic assets and courts depository account, budgeting and state audit control.

The training was considered as very useful and a timely refresher of knowledge for court accountants, since training on this topic has not been provided for many years.

Support for Court Accountants: Guidelines for Unified Accounting Practices

At the request of the head of the AO, JSP supported a workshop on the standardization of accounting forms and payment procedures. While inspecting the courts, the internal auditors from the Judicial Council noted that each court uses different payment forms and procedures and recommended that they be brought in line with the requirements of the Law on Accounting for National Budget Users.

The workshop, entitled “Preparation of Unified Payment Procedures and Guidelines upon Judges’ Order and other Accounting Documents,” was held on February 4-5 in Veles. The objective was to prepare standardized forms to be used by the judges and court accountants in all courts in Macedonia. There were 18 participants in attendance, including 6 judges, 6 court accountants, 3 court administrators, the Head of the AO and 2 internal auditors of the JC.

The standardized forms developed by the group include payment orders for expert witnesses, ex-officio attorneys, jury judges, overtime duty, payments from court deposits, and on-sight inspections of crime scenes. The AO sent the payment forms developed at the workshop to all courts for feedback; comments have been received only from the BC Bitola. The next step is adoption of the forms at a session of the CBC, which is expected in April.

After adoption, the guidelines will be officially presented to the State Audit Bureau. The AO requested project support for publishing the guidelines, presenting them to the state auditors, and distributing them to all courts and other relevant judicial institutions. JSP has agreed to this request.

Harmonization of Decisions of Appellate Regions

The project has agreed to support a leadership team for the harmonization of court decisions. The group, which comprises the four appellate region president judges (PJs) and heads of departments, will meet on a quarterly basis to discuss and harmonize important decisions. The initiative is led by the Academy, which requested the project’s support. One of the weaknesses noted is an inconsistent application of the laws in different appellate regions and sometimes between courts of the same appellate region. Different decisions can be reached in different courts although applying the same articles of the laws. This causes legal uncertainty and decreases public trust and confidence in the judiciary. The goal of these working meetings is to discuss and bring to a conclusion a number of questions raised by civil court departments. Judges in the first instance courts will decide future cases by applying current laws and the conclusions reached at these harmonization meetings on the appellate level.

The first harmonization meeting will take place on April 12, at the Academy. The subsequent meetings will be scheduled quarterly in coordination with the Academy based on the availability of the judges.

The conclusions from all harmonization meetings will be published in a bulletin at the end of the year. This transparency will foster greater public confidence in the judiciary, by providing an identifiable basis for trust in the courts.

2.2.2.2 Support of Public Information/Education Activities

Student Visits to Courts and Informational Publication for Students

In support of improved transparency, understanding and information about the judicial branch, JSP began a program to sponsor student visits to a number of courts in Macedonia, including the Bitola Basic and Appellate Courts, the Shtip Basic and Appellate Courts, the Skopje II Basic Court and the Tetovo Basic Court.



Judge Dimovska with Students

As reported above, JSP has teamed up with ELSA, which produced an informational brochure on juvenile justice for high school students describing the judicial branch and the structure, functions and jurisdiction of the courts in Macedonia. ELSA is currently working on a second publication on the subject of juvenile justice, which JSP has agreed to print and distribute in conjunction with other student court visits. During this quarter, two student visits were made to three courts. On January 31, a student visit was made to Basic and Appellate Court Shtip and on March

7, to Basic Court Skopje II. The Shtip visit was hosted by Judge Emil Pilatov, president of BC Shtip, and Judge Stojance Ribarev, president of AC Shtip, while the Skopje visit was hosted by Judge Antoaneta Dimovska. During the court visits the ELSA brochure was presented by ELSA representatives and an explanation of the court process was presented by the judges, followed by a Q&A session. Each court hosted local students including students from schools for special needs students.

Year-End Report of Appellate Regions

In January, plans were made to support a year-end publication for each appellate region. The Shtip Appellate Court previously provided a very popular and informative publication that included pictures of the president judges in the region and case flow information, including the number of pending cases at the end of the year—a significant step towards advancing transparency. With JSP support and encouragement, all appellate regions produced a similar publication, highlighting its 2012 results. Logistical and printing support was provided by JSP and the publication of the four appellate region publications were ready for distribution on March 15. The first copies were delivered to the court leaders at the Judicial Forum on March 15 and later distributed to all courts. Not only were the publications well prepared by the appellate courts, but also the contents illustrated the excellent results of court processing and backlog reduction for the year 2012.

Judicial Practice Bulletin for the Bitola Appellate Court

A publication was developed by the Appellate Court Bitola in reference to decisions on civil and criminal case, as well as conclusions from working meetings from the civil departments of the four appellate courts in Macedonia. The bulletin underlines the importance of the unification of court decisions of appellate court councils and the need for consistent application of the law by all judges. It provides valuable insight, thereby improving transparency and communication, and leads to harmonization of court practices and decisions. In this quarter, the JSP agreed to assist such effort by supporting the printing and distribution of this document to all judges and courts in Macedonia. The printing was completed in January 2013 and distribution of 700 copies to all judges was accomplished during January.

2.2.2.3 Differentiated Case Management – Consultancy

While there is a positive trend in the reduction of cases of backlogged and pending cases in the Macedonian judiciary, an advanced case management tool known as differentiated case management or DCM has the potential to assure expediency and efficiency. Under JSP's direction, Markus Zimmer concluded a report entitled *Case Management Practices in the Macedonian Courts: A Proposal for Designing and Implementing Differentiated Case Management and Time Standards* to assess the current status, managerial framework and operational efficiency of the Macedonian court system and to determine whether it is a viable candidate for successful experimentation of DCM.

The substance of the report extends beyond the description and implementation plan for a DCM pilot effort. The methodology for the assessment is comprised of five primary elements: (i) a review of the case process statistics, (ii) a determination of the sufficiency of existing judicial and support staff resources, (iii) the extent of which dispute settlement options are available, pursued by judges and utilized by parties, (iv) the engagement with judicial system leaders and reform champions through DCM presentations, targeted interviews and focus group sessions, and (v) assessment of the judicial system's automated case information management system (ACMIS).

While the report extends to both immediate and mid-term recommendations, some of its key elements of the ability of the Macedonian court system to sustain and build upon a DCM pilot effort for civil case management include:

- An assessment and 5-yr and 10-yr plan for the reduction of judicial staffing
- A focus by the judicial system leadership on rebuilding and strengthening bench-bar relationship.
- Advocacy by judicial system leadership for settlement options and programs
- A case information management system with event deadline tracking functionality to which judges and staff have easy access
- A well-trained judicial support staff assigned to work closely with judges to monitor event deadlines and ensure compliance.
- Development of strategic IT systems sustainability plan that includes replacement of servers and computers, maintenance and upgrade of hardware and software and provisions for its funding.
- A central case management and statistical research and analysis function to monitor and provide feedback and guidance as well as to plan for and manage expansion of the pilot program to other trial courts in Macedonia.

2.3 RESULT 3: INCREASED FAIRNESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE THROUGH MORE EFFECTIVE LEGAL PERSONNEL AND EFFICIENT PROCESSES

2.3.1 Requirement 3.1: Develop and Implement Targeted Specialized Trainings for Judges, Court Administrative Executives, and Court Staff

On November 22, 2012, the roundtable "Identifying the Needs for Continuous Education of Judges in the Area of Commercial Law" was held in Skopje. The roundtable generated 21 recommendations for topics to enhance the efficiency of judges and lawyers in the area of commercial law. Two training workshops were held in February based on the roundtable's findings as follows:

On February 1, a workshop entitled “Practical Implementation of the Law on Civil Procedure with a Special Emphasis on the Provisions for Electronic Delivery and the Implementation of the Law on Electronic Signature and Electronic Data” was held on the Academy premises. This topic is extremely timely as it addresses portions of two new laws that will shortly go into effect: the Law on Civil Procedures (on electronic delivery of court papers) and the Law on Electronic Signatures.

The trainers were Judge Ljubica Kolic, head of the Civil Department of the Skopje II Basic Court and Marin Piperkoski, director of the IT Infrastructure Department at the Clearing House KIBS AD Skopje. There were 53 participants comprising civil and commercial judges, lawyers, and representatives from the different business chambers.

In cooperation with the Academy, the project organized a workshop to support the implementation of specialized training on commercial law for judges. The workshop, “Evidence and Quality of Evidence in Commercial Cases with a Special Emphasis on the Expert Testimony/Use of Financial Instruments as Evidence in Commercial Cases,” was delivered at the Academy on February 15. The trainers were Judge Tatjana Susuleska of the Bitola Appellate Court, who provided a presentation entitled “Evidence and Quality of Evidence in Commercial Cases with a Special Emphasis on the Expert Testimony” and Mr. Marko Andonov, Law Professor at the University American College, Skopje, with the presentation “Use of Financial Instruments as Evidence in Commercial Cases.” The 28 participants included civil and commercial judges, representatives from the business chambers in Macedonia and representatives from the Macedonian Bar Association.

2.3.2 Requirement 3.2: Improve Caseload Processing and Reduce Backlog of Cases

Most courts have made a good deal of progress in processing cases and reducing backlogs. However, challenges do remain. The Law of Case Management requires case processing committees to be established in each court. A select working committee developed draft models of two documents required by law, monthly reports and internal procedures. The president of the JC subsequently approved both models.

JSP, in cooperation with the JC and the appellate courts, organized two working meetings on “Case Processing and Backlog Reduction,” on March 18 for the courts of the appellate regions of Bitola and Gostivar, and March 21 for the appellate regions of Skopje and Shtip. The goal of these meetings was to present the unified protocols for the working committees for backlog reduction (internal procedures, monthly reports and Annual Plan) that was developed by the selected working committee in 2012. The meetings also focused on the possible reasons for case delay, measures to overcome the delay, and the novelties introduced by the new software for court statistics.

At both meetings, Judge Zafiroska gave an overview of the new software for court statistics and reiterated that expected results would not be received if the relevant information is not entered in ACCMIS. Therefore, she reminded the president judges and court administrators that it is their responsibility to oversee the process of entering data by the courts staff on a regular basis.

Additionally, Judge Zafiroska noted that to a large extent, the working committees for backlog reduction not only existed on paper, but also has the potential to play an important role in the judicial system to reduce the backlog and identify reasons for delay. She observed that the monthly reports sent by some of the committees to the JC are missing analysis and the reasoning behind the

delay of the older cases. However, Judge Zafiroska did remark that a huge portion of the old cases has decreased exponentially, due to the operation of the committees.

The JC president also addressed the issue of random assignment of cases by reminding the assemblages that such assignments should be done once a day (usually at 3:30pm) and by only one court employee. Making assignments several times a day is not permitted and she emphasized to the president judges that it is their responsibility to oversee the process.

It was observed that in many courts there is a delay from filing a case until scheduling the first hearing. In some courts, court decisions were not announced at a special hearing. Another delay was due to verification of court decisions by judges after the decision had been made. Again, Judge Zafiroska commented that the publication of court decisions on the court's website is mandatory. She also commented that the President Judges should be focusing their skills on management and leadership.

At the meetings, the head of the AO of the CBC, Ms. Silvija Janevska, was also present to discuss the preparations for the Court Budget for 2014, using the cost per case methodology. Ms. Janevska informed those present that historically CBC has prepared the annual reports to the Government and the Parliament based on the final annual accounts of the individual courts, which included the total number of resolved cases. Starting from 2013, a more detailed report is to be submitted, including projection of number and type of cases, HR analysis, public relations, reasons for postponing the hearings, the condition of the IT equipment, etc. that is to be used as a basis for court budgeting. In order to be able to prepare the report, CBC will submit a request to all courts indicating what kind of information is needed.

The meeting on March 18 was attended by 36 participants, while the meeting on March 21 was attended by 59 participants.

The next steps include assembling the elements of a training to be given in each appellate region with a "train-the-trainers" element. Select court personnel from each region will then be tasked with training in the courts with the greatest backlog of cases, with support from the JSP.

2.3.3 Support for Judicial Sector Automation

ACCMIS Database Warehouse and Statistical Interface Software

JSP, together with JC, is developing an "ACCMIS Database Warehouse and Statistical Interface Software" to generate more precise and targeted statistical reports for the courts. EduSoft has completed the development, installation and testing of the software. The vendor delivered the source code to the project on January 15, thus JSP considers this contract successfully delivered.

Supreme Court Coordination Committee for Improving Use of ACCMIS

The Committee for Improving Use of ACCMIS meets at least monthly and JSP staff attends the meetings to facilitate coordination between the committee and courts. The committee working on developing uniform nomenclatures for court decisions in criminal, civil, administrative, and non-contested procedures is the process of finalizing its work.

Automation for High Administrative Court

The ACCMIS system has been in use in all 33 courts since January 2010. However, in November 2010, as a result of the latest changes in the Law on Courts, the High Administrative Court was

established to decide appeals on decisions brought by the Administrative Court. As the initial ACCMIS application was not projected to be used in this court, a vendor has now been selected and a contract signed for ACCMIS installation in this court. The work began in January and is expected to be completed by April 30.

Request for Computers and Security Cameras by Appellate Court Gostivar

In December, JSP completed the request by Judge Hajdari Ekrem Shefajet, president of the Gostivar Appellate Court, for installation of court security cameras, two printers, a scanner, and two personal computers. The COP inspected the installation on February 4 and signed the agreement with the president judge to transfer ownership.

Electronic Digital Recording of Court Hearings and Trials

The full implementation of electronic recording requires additional training for judges and some court staff. On February 4, the selected vendor began training in two pilot courts (Basic Courts of Bitola and Veles) and then expanded the training to all civil courts with electronic recording devices. On February 5, the DCOP made a visit to BC Bitola to assist the president judge in fixing problems with the reinstallation of the recording equipment that were disconnected in three courtrooms.

The original date for completion was April 25 but the prime minister requested that the schedule be accelerated. Ms. Ivanovska re-negotiated the contract with the trainer, who agreed to complete the training in the originally designated courts by March 31 at no additional cost. At the time of the report, the training is to be completed on schedule. The project will follow the actual implementation over the next quarter to assure full compliance.

Review and Evaluation of the Status of Judicial Automation

Over the past several years, there has been a proliferation of automation, including ACCMIS. The project has determined that the time is right to evaluate the progress of automation and identify gaps and shortcomings, if any. It is important to determine whether the functionality and interaction between the components are working efficiently and effectively. Long-range strategic planning is needed and this review will be the start of the process for the ITC personnel of the courts and court administration.

Accordingly, JSP has requested its on-call ITC expert to conduct this review and make recommendations for future enhancements and development. Following the review, the project will provide the judicial leaders with the opportunity to create an IT strategic plan, including a replacement schedule for outdated and underpowered equipment.

Back-up Testing and Restorative Procedures for ACCMIS

A team led by the project Logistic and IT coordinator, Aleksandar Pavlovski traveled to BC Krusevo on March 7 and 8 to test the back-up capability of ACCMIS and to determine whether it was actually possible to restore lost data if lost. This process had never been tested before and results have been positive. Data was backed-up and restored as per systems requirement. Other members of the team include Orde Jovanoski, Pero Arizanovski and Dejan Sepanoski.

Meeting of IT Personnel

On May 31, 2012, IT personnel from all of the courts in Macedonia met for the first time and expressed a need for periodic learning and discussion sessions. Accordingly, a follow-up roundtable of all IT court personnel took place on March 26. The top IT



IT Experts Meeting

personnel held a planning session for the roundtable on February 26, involving the potential agenda topics and activities to support the IT employees in the courts. This event was co-sponsored by the Academy and JSP and a welcoming introduction was given by COP Traficanti and Director Arnaudovska. The PJ of the CJ also attended and delivered some important and instructive observations and comments. Two local experts provided the substantive lectures—Mr. Marin Piperkovski on “Digital Certificates” and

Mr. Predrag Tasevski on “Raising Awareness on the Issue of Security of IT Systems in the Courts.”

Other presentations were made by court IT personnel include Mr. Orde Javanoski, who presented the results of the backup testing and disaster restoration that he took part in the BC Krusevo. Additionally, Mr. Dejan Stefanovski, the IT person from BC Bitola gave a demonstration of the internal web page/forum that he created for the benefit of the court IT personnel across Macedonia.

The JSP ICT expert/consultant Rozalija Karcicka-Vaseleva presented an overview of the ICT development in the Macedonian judiciary.

The presentations were followed by a Q&A session. The problem of security was of major concern and its consensus raised the need for the development of unified security procedures. Judge Zafirovska added that the IT personnel should advise the PJ and/or court administrator of any problems with ACCMIS particularly regarding any divergence from the prescribed protocol for random assignment of judges.

III. EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The project is aware of the importance of accurate reporting of events. This quarterly report includes a matrix summarizing each event, training, forum, seminar, round table etc., along with pertinent descriptive information.

No.	Event	Date	Counterpart	Number of Participants	Gender		Result Requirement	Evaluation
					M	F		
1	Training on “Advocacy & Lobbying” for the Court Administration Association (CAA)	November 29 th - 30 th 2012	MESACONS/EMBRA, CAA	10	5	5	Result 1.2	4.9
2	Working meeting on "Developing Protocols for the Operation of Courts Working Committees"	December 17, 2012	Judicial Council of RM	8	3	5	Result 2.2	/
3	Training on “Advocacy & Lobbying” for the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA)	December 15-16, 2012	MESACONS/EMBRA, MYLA	8	4	4	Result 1.2	4.6
4	Promotion of ELSA brochure “Organization of the court system in RM” to high school students at the Basic Court Tetovo	December 24, 2012	ELSA, Basic Court Tetovo	80	N/A	N/A	Result 1.2	/
5	Training on “Project Planning, Design and Implementation / Project Cycle Management” for MYLA	January 17-19, 2013	MESACONS/EMBRA, MYLA	9	4	5	Result 1.2	4.1
6	Training on “Preparation of Final Annual Account”	January 18, 2013	Administrative Office of the Court Budget Council (AO of CBC)	36	6	30	Result 2.2	4.7
7	Training on “Establishing and Maintaining Partnership and Cooperation” for CAA	January 24-25, 2013	MESACONS/EMBRA, CAA	9	2	7	Result 1.2	5

8	Training on “Provision of Effective and Efficient Services” for CAA	January 31- February 1, 2013	MESACONS/E MBRA, CAA	8	4	4	Result 1.2	4.9
9	Training on “Practical Implementation of the Law on Civil Procedure with a Special Emphasis on the Provisions for Electronic Delivery / Implementation of the Law on Electronic Signature and Electronic Data”	February 1, 2013	Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors (JTA)	48	10	38	Result 3.1	/
10	Workshop on “Preparation of Unified Payment Procedures and Guidelines upon Judges’ Order and other Accounting Documents”	February 4-5, 2013	AO of CBC	18	3	15	Result 2.2	/
11	Training on “Provision of Effective and Efficient Services” for MYLA	February 5-6, 2013	MESACONS/E MBRA, MYLA	9	4	5	Result 1.2	4.3
12	Training on “Disclosing Evidence, Quality of Evidence with Special Focus on the Expert Testimony / Financial Instruments as Evidence in Commercial Disputes”	February 15, 2013	JTA	28	9	17	Result 3.1	/
13	Promotion of ELSA brochure “Organization of the court system in RM” to high school students at BC Skopje 2	March 7, 2013	ELSA, BC Skopje 2	85	N/A	N/A	Result 1.2	/
14	Lecture of JSP COP at the Law School	March 11, 2013	Law School “Iustinianus Primus”	40	N/A	N/A	N/A	/

15	Training on “Organizational & Management Skills” for CAA	February 19-20, 2013	MESACONS/E MBRA, CAA	10	4	6	Result 1.2	4.9
16	Training on “Project Planning, Design and Implementation/Project Cycle Management” for CAA	March 11-13, 2013	MESACONS/E MBRA, CAA	5	2	3	Result 1.2	4.9
17	Training on “Management and Leadership Skills” for CAA	March 14-15, 2013	MESACONS/E MBRA, CAA	15	8	7	Result 1.2	5
18	Training on “Media and Public Relations Strategies” for the Macedonian Judges Association (MJA)	March 18-19, 2013	MESACONS/E MBRA, MJA	7	5	2	Result 1.2	5
19	Training on “EU Funding Mechanisms” for CAA, MYLA and All for Fair Trials (AFT)	March 20-21, 2013	MESACONS/E MBRA, CAA, MYLA and AFT	23	10	13	Result 1.2	4.6
20	Training on “Media and Public Relations Strategies” for MYLA	March 26-27, 2013	MESACONS/E MBRA, MYLA	9	3	6	Result 1.2	4.6
21	Judicial Branch Forum (second meeting)	March 15, 2013	SC, CBC, AO of CBC, JC, CAA, Administrative Court, High Administrative Court, President Judges of the four appellate regions, MJA, JTA, CSC	10	4	6	Result 2.1	/
22	Working meeting for the courts of the appellate regions of Bitola & Gostivar on “Case Processing and Backlog Reduction”	March 18, 2013	Judicial Council, Appellate Courts	36	22	14	Result 2.2 & 3.2	/
23	Working meeting for the courts of the appellate regions of Skopje & Shtip on “Case Processing and	March 21, 2013	Judicial Council, Appellate Courts	59	29	30	Result 2.2 & 3.2	/

	Backlog Reduction”							
24	Roundtable discussion for 4 NGOs on “Court Proceedings and Court Efficiency”	March 22, 2013	Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), Macedonian Lawyers Association (MLA), All for Fair Trials Coalition (AFT), and Public Prosecutors Association (PPA).	34	18	16	Result 1.2	/
25	Roundtable discussion for the IT staff from all courts in MK	March 26, 2013	Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors (Academy) Supreme Court IT department	52	37	15	Result 2.2 & 3.1	4.0
	Total			656	199	253		

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AND PERSONNEL MATTERS

4.1 VACANCY OF PROJECT ATTORNEY POSITION

A minor issue in the last report was the resignation of the project attorney. After this resignation, the project immediately posted an advertisement for a replacement in the newspaper and on some local web sites. The project received several résumés, and selected the best ones. The JSP interviewed candidates and made a final decision to replace the former project attorney. The selected candidate was Mr. Ivan Mojsov, who started in the position on December 1. He was given a probationary position for the first 3 months. While he has performed relatively well, it was decided, out of an abundance of caution, to extend the probationary period an additional 3 months. To date, Mr. Mojsov is performing well. The probationary period is to expire on May 30.

V. DISABILITY INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

The JSP is fully committed to the needs of the disabled and to making the necessary adjustments to assure full participation by all in the project programs and events. This includes the targeted participants of JSP events, as well as facilitators and trainers who may have a disability.

During this quarter, the project has reached out to schools, which serve children with special needs and has included students from those schools in two major events that have been described in detail in this report. Special needs children were included in student visits to three courts where they were integrated with the other attending students and were given the same presentations and tours, including the presentation of the ELSA brochure and an oral explanation of the courts and their workings.

Early in project, the COP has directed that all staff be alert to the needs of all participants in the JSP programs and events and that all requests for assistance or accommodation be directed to the COP or the DCOP. All events to be held in hotels in Macedonia, or elsewhere on study tours, is to be directed to hotels or other venues with the fullest array of accommodation for disabled people.

The COP requested the JSP staff to conduct an internet survey of the most prominent hotels in Macedonia that the project may use for trainings, roundtables, forums, etc. According to the websites, unfortunately, not one single hotel in Macedonia can satisfy all the criteria necessary to be considered fully accessible to the disabled. This information is now used by the JSP to select venues, which are most accessible. The JSP will also be pro-active in ascertaining from partners, counterparts and stakeholders when a disabled person is expected to be included in the targeted audience for a project event.

The JSP approach will include being pro-active in identifying all forms of disability and reasonable accommodation will be made to the extent possible within project resources.

VII. ISSUES OR PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE DELIVERY OR TIMING OF SERVICES

Problems have been minimal and in the nature of those to be expected in the regular course of business. None have been extraordinary and all have been addressed and resolved.