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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary activities of the Judicial Reform Implementation Project (Project) for this reporting period included: preparation for the Budget and Finance meeting set for early October 2008; supporting the implementation of the Law on Enforcement by supporting the Chamber of Enforcement Agents and assisting the courts and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) in registering and reducing enforcement cases still in the courts; supporting the Academy for the Training of Judges and Public Prosecutors by conducting four days of training sessions for court administration staff; supporting the capacity building of the Administrative Office of the Court Budget Council (AO of the CBC); supporting efforts of public access and court outreach through three days of training for public information officers in the courts; and supporting efforts for full computerization of the courts with a modern, advanced case management system.

The Project continues to facilitate close coordination with the Supreme Court, AO and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), who represent the Project's principal partners. Cooperation with the MOJ is encompassed in this report primarily under "Implementation of New Reforms" (Section 1). Assistance to the Supreme Court, AO and the lower courts is encompassed under "Improvement in Court Practices and Material Resources" (Section 2).

Key activities during the reporting period include:

- Held weekly coordination meetings with the MOJ and the AO
- Supported the development of an AO website
- Supported the basic courts in the development of their websites and the enhancement of those already in existence
- Worked with the MOJ to implement the methodology and the strategic plan for filtering and purging an estimated 615,000 old enforcement cases necessary to fully implement the Law on Enforcement
- Provided training for the Executive Board of the Chamber of Enforcement Agents and the MOJ Department for Oversight of Enforcement Agents, Notaries and Mediators on best practices and standards for monitoring the work of private enforcement agents
- Supported the Academy for Training Judges and Public Prosecutors regarding program assistance in the development of training curriculum in case flow management, court administration and ethics for court staff and administrators, and supported four days of court administration staff training
- Collaborated with the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association and obtained volunteers to aid the courts in the filing and purging of old enforcement cases
- Began the second round of Public Users Satisfaction Surveys to assist in obtaining greater public trust and confidence in the courts
- Continued with the development and updating of the Project's web-site
- Conducted a transparent procurement process for the development of a new Automated Court Case Management and Information System (ACCMIS) including successfully drafting a Source and Origin Waiver for the successful vendor
- Focused Project resources on development of unified court nomenclatures for use in the new ACCMIS
- Presented the ACCMIS concept to 80 president judges and other judicial branch leaders at the July 8th Court Officials Consultation Meeting

- Finalized preparations for a Court Financing and Budget Study Conference of the Macedonian Judicial Branch
- Conducted the first training for public information officers in the courts
- In partnership with USAID's World Learning, conducted a study tour for AO and court personnel to the Republic of Ireland to enhance knowledge of modern court and administrative best practices

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW REFORMS

1.1 LAW ON ENFORCEMENT

The Law on Enforcement introduced a system of private enforcement agents that has been operational since 2006. The problem of inefficient enforcement procedures in the courts will remain until December 31st, 2008, when the cases will be transferred to private enforcement agents.

Introduction of New Methodology for Filing and Purging Enforcement Cases

The process of registering old enforcement cases, which is being undertaken by the 15 legal interns, resumed during this quarter. The Project staff continued to work on the conversion of the registered cases to an electronic format. In the reporting period, 13,800 cases were converted.

Due to annual vacation leave in the courts in August, the process of registering old enforcement cases by the legal interns was suspended. Also, as a result of the absence of the electronic company employees who support the work of the court interns, the engagement of Skopje interns for July was shortened. This time will be made up in October. The legal interns continued their work on September 1st in the basic courts Skopje II, Tetovo, Gostivar and Prilep, and will be engaged through mid October.

According to the most recent data, 184,644 cases have been registered in the 5 basic courts during the period April 15th through September 30th. The percentage of cases that qualified for transfer to enforcement agents varied from court to court. In Skopje it is 21 percent, in Tetovo 9.7 percent, Kumanovo 45.8 percent, Prilep 49.5 percent, and Gostivar 48 percent.

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ), supported by the Project, will organize a meeting with the president judges on October 1st. During the meeting, the Minister of Justice will present the strategy for purging and transferring cases from the courts to the enforcement agents at the end of the year. The Project worked closely with the MOJ to prepare for this meeting. The Project's team on several occasions met with the MOJ and the Chamber of Enforcement Agents (CEA). At the meeting held on September 4th, Mr. Koshtanov from CEA expressed three main concerns of the Chamber regarding the transfer of enforcement cases:

- The number of appointed enforcement agents throughout the country is insufficient to overtake the huge backlog of enforcement cases;
- Refunding administrative taxes to the creditors who have previously paid the court taxes might be a problem because the administrative taxes that are paid to the enforcement agents are lower than the court taxes;
- It is questionable what will happen to the authentic titles which were not summoned

As part of the preparations for the meeting, the Project completed additional analysis of the backlog cases from 21 courts and shared the results with the MOJ. The analysis show that

197,853 cases have been registered in these courts, out of which 25,434 are enforceable court decisions, 15,300 are enforceable misdemeanor cases, 4,591 are enforceable criminal cases, and 152,528 are enforceable authentic titles. In total, 382,497 cases were registered by both the courts and the legal interns. The status of the backlog with directions for future steps will be discussed at the meeting on October 1st.

Capacity Building of the Chamber

A Board of Director's management training session for the Chamber of Enforcement Agents (CEA) was held in Ohrid, from July 4th-6th. The training was delivered by the Center for Institutional Development (CIRa), as part of the series of capacity building interventions for this young professional organization.

A procurement process for capacity building services was undertaken by the Project during July, along with the selection of a service provider for providing additional trainings in the area of communication. Three firms formally responded to the Request for Proposals by the deadline, July 7th. The Macedonian Institute for Media (MIM) was ranked as the most qualified vendor. MIM will deliver trainings, in cooperation with the Project's Communication Coordinator, for Project counterparts in the area of public relations and communications. The first workshop, on drafting a communications strategy with the Chamber of Enforcement agents, is planned for the first week of November. The communications strategy is an integral part of the long-term strategic plan of the Chamber, which is to be adopted in mid November 2008.

Training on basic business communication skills for the MOJ Sector, which oversees the work of the enforcement agents, public notaries and mediators, was held on the 18th-19th of September in Berovo. Seven employees of the Sector took part at the training, which was delivered by Biljana Petkovska, Executive Director of the MIM, and Jelena Janevska, JRIP Communications Coordinator. Prior to the training, the trainers met with representatives of the Sector in order discuss and assess their needs and tailor the training in a way that it corresponds to their actual needs. This training is continuation of JRIP's technical assistance in the area of capacity building of the MOJ Supervisory Sector, and is part of the efforts to support the proper implementation of the Law on Enforcement. The participants highly evaluated the training, and stated that it was very positive and beneficial for their work.

Beginning in November 2008, the Chamber of Enforcement Agents will become a beneficiary of a regional project designed to strengthen enforcement systems in Western Balkan Countries, implemented by the Center for International Legal Cooperation (CILC) of the Netherlands.

Mr. Uitdehaag, from CILC, was scheduled to arrive in Macedonia in late October or early November 2008 to conduct a two-day training with the Chamber and the MOJ. Due to other engagements of the Chamber, this seminar will be postponed for either 14th-15th of November, or 21st-22nd of November, depending on Mr. Uitdehaag's availability. The training will include enforcement agents and president judges, and will focus on dealing with objections against irregularities during the enforcement.

1.2 Law on Academy for Training Judges and Public Prosecutors

Throughout the reporting period, Project staff met with representatives of the Academy for Training Judges and Public Prosecutors (JTA) and engaged in final discussions regarding the Project's technical support to the JTA in future court staff trainings. More specific issues were discussed at a meeting on August 27th between the Chief of Party, the Court Administration Coordinator, Court Administration and Delay Reduction Assistant from JRIP, Sandra Buzlieva and Debora Lakordova from the JTA and Lidija Stojkova Zafirovska, from

CARDS 2004 Project. The discussion focused on ways that the Project could best support the JTA.

It was agreed that the Project would provide support for trainings organized by the JTA. Advanced case flow management and ethics training was held on September 18th-19th, plus two one-day trainings on basic case flow management, ethics and customer service on September 22nd-23rd.

The advanced case management and ethics workshop included 21 court representatives, court secretaries and heads of intake offices. The training provided the participants the opportunity to enhance their knowledge in the areas of case management and ethics. Judge Dobrila Kacarska, President Judge of Basic Court Skopje 1 and representative of the JTA, presented practical aspects of the Court Book of Rules and the novelties of the Law on Court Services. Pepa Laleva, consultant of the CARDS 2004 Project, presented international standards of case flow management and ethics. Gordana Stojanova-Ribaroski, JRIP representative, presented successful practices of effective case flow management. To assist the JTA's efforts to develop staff for future trainings, each advanced class participant developed and delivered an oral presentation on specific case management and ethics practices.

The two, one-day basic trainings, were attended by 57 court representatives, intake officers and other new court employees from Basic Court Skopje 1 and Skopje 2. The course was constructed to train the participants in basic case management, ethics, customer service standards, and practices implemented in different Macedonia courts. The trainings were delivered by: Pepa Laleva (ethics), Gordana Stojanova-Ribaroski (effective case flow management) and Hanis Mehmedi (customer service). The training has provided the participants with practical knowledge, experience, and skills necessary to become more effective court employees. During the trainings, participants exchanged experiences and openly discussed the issues related to the three focus areas.

For these trainings, besides teaching, the Project provided: educational materials, training venue, accommodation, simultaneous translation, etc. The CARDS 2004 Project contributed a trainer.

The training curriculum and the complete training materials were delivered to the Judicial Training Academy for their use in the future non-judicial training programs to be delivered by the JTA.

1.3 Law on Court Services

The Law on Court Services was enacted by the Parliament on July 25th, 2008, in a special emergency procedure, and was published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia on August 4th after being endorsed by the President of the Republic. The draft law had been pending in the Parliament since December 17th, 2007. In the next two months, courts have an obligation to prepare various new acts of organization and systematization.

1.4 Law on Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia

On July 24th, Parliament passed the latest amendments to the Law on Court Budget transferring court budgeting responsibilities from the Supreme Court to the Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia. With this decision, the Administrative Office and the Court Budget Council (CBC) will move to the Judicial Council. Project activities with the Judicial Council will be redefined to reflect functions of the AO being transferred to this institution.

1.5 Other Laws and Amendments

Law on Courts

The Project made initial preparations to provide technical assistance to identify bottlenecks in the processing of labor and commercial cases. The Project has worked on developing a methodology for assessment of labor and commercial cases, which will be implemented in the period October 2008 – March 2009. The assessment will use a pilot court approach focusing on two courts from different appellate regions, and will cover 100 cases from each court.

2. IMPROVEMENT IN COURT PRACTICES AND MATERIAL RESOURCES

2.1 Improved Court Administration Practices

Improved AO of the CBC Strategic Planning and Operational Capacity

The Project team continued, throughout this quarter, to hold weekly meetings with Dr. Zanina Kirovska, Director of the Administrative Office (AO) of the Court Budget Council (CBC). The meetings focused on caseload management, human resources management, information and communications technology (ICT) management, financial management, public access, court user satisfaction, and court facilities management.

On occasion these meetings (approximately monthly) included Supreme Court General Secretary Sonja Gruevska and Supreme Court Head of Cabinet Lidija Tanevska-Jadrovska. As their time permits, members of the AO staff also attend the meetings as representatives assigned to work with the Project on increasing the operational effectiveness of the AO.

In addition to the usual topics listed above, in this last quarter topics of discussion for the director and her staff included: court and non-court nomenclatures, the Automated Court Case Management Information System, the budget and financial study report, court administration trainings, communications and the AO web site, basic court web-sites and the concept of Public Information Officers in the courts.

The Project continues to support the AO in the next (second) round of public user satisfaction (known as Q-10) surveys by managing 12 of 27 basic courts. The AO contacted all 27 basic courts and provided information on how they should prepare for the survey. All courts confirmed the dates for the survey and the survey implementation teams. They also checked and confirmed the installment and the functioning of the survey application.

The second round of the public user satisfaction survey was launched in the Basic Court Skopje 1 on September 24th. The survey was organized by the court and managed by the Administrative Office and it showed an increase of 25% in user satisfaction from the baseline survey conducted in January 2008. The level of satisfaction on the overall court performance for this court is now 78%.

The second round of the survey will be completed by the end of November 2008 and the results will be reported in the September-December quarterly report.

AO Staff Specialization

The AO director has designated a member of her staff Maja Klifova, AO legal department head, to work with the Project in the areas of case backlog reduction and human resource

management. The Project staff continued, during this quarter, to meet with her to strengthen the AO's ability to eventually take over the oversight of case management by the courts. Another member of the AO team, Maja Hadzi Kimova, has been designated as the liaison to the Project for the upcoming enhancement of the automated case management system. Ms Hadzi Kimova has also been designated as a member of the steering committee for the development and procurement of the automated system software. She also coordinates the AO website contents. Lidija Velkovska was designated to work with the Project's new communications coordinator on the AO newsletter. Long and short term strategies are discussed with these staff members and work will continue on these topics, thus furthering the goal of strengthening the operational capacity of the AO.

2.2 Public Access, Services and Information

Development of Public Information Officers

Citizens have the right to information about their public institutions including the courts. Laws on free access to information in the public sphere provide a legal framework and guarantee access to information. It is clear that the public is interested in what courts are doing. The concept of Public Information Officers (PIO) provides a mechanism for implementation of the principles of openness, transparency and accountability in the courts.

In the reporting period, the Project worked to create a solid base to launch the implementation of the concept of Public Information Officers in the courts. Written materials on the concept were distributed to president judges and court secretaries at the ACCMIS event on July 8th.

Training agenda and training methodology were developed by the two trainers, Jelena Janevska, Project's Communications Coordinator, and Biljana Petkovska, Executive Director of the Macedonian Institute for Media. Four trainings were planned for the PIOs from all courts in Macedonia, divided in the four appellate regions. The trainings are scheduled as follows:

- Appellate region Stip - September 25th - 27th - Hotel Manastir Berovo
- Appellate region Skopje - October 9th - 11th - Hotel Bistra Mavrovo
- Appellate region Bitola - October 16th - 18th - Hotel Klimetica Ohrid
- Appellate region Gostivar (plus Administrative Court, Supreme Court and the Academy)-November 20-22 - Hotel Bistra Mavrovo

The first training in Public and Media Relations for the PIOs in the courts from the Appellate Region Stip was delivered in September in Berovo. Seven PIOs and their 5 assistants attended the training, representing the basic courts of: Berovo, Vinica, Delcevo, Stip, Strumica, Kocani and Radovis. Basic Court Sveti Nikole and Appellate Court Stip, although invited through fax and regular mail and reminded on the training dates, did not participate at the training.

During the training, the participants learned how to present their work to the public, how to communicate with the media and how to work on improving their image. Specifically, the training topics included:

- Current coverage of the work of the judiciary in the media
- The concept of PIOs in the courts
- Public relations-elements and importance
- Basic communication and presentation skills
- Introduction to the media system in Macedonia

- Tools for communication with the media
- Press-release
- Interview
- Organizing a press-conference
- Public relations strategy

The training was highly interactive and provided full participation of all PIOs and their assistants. It provided practical skills and knowledge that can be immediately transferred to their everyday work. Participants wrote press-releases, were interviewed and recorded and received feedback on their performance from the group and the trainers.

Participants expressed high level of satisfaction with the training. On a scale from 1 (the lowest) to 5 (the highest), the overall evaluation of the training was graded with 4.8. The training materials were evaluated with 4.9, while the work of the trainers was graded 5.0.

In their evaluations, participants said: —The topics were presented in a highly professional and expert level; What was theoretically elaborated was as well practiced. All positive and negative aspects were stressed. Also, many practical advices were given for implementing the tasks in the area of public relations; Completely acceptable, understandable and concrete approach in the topic; What I liked the most is trainer’s way of teaching: Fluent, clear, on standard Macedonian language, their readiness to communicate with us in each moment; I liked the interaction and friendly approach during the three days.”

Administrative Office Website

During this quarter, the Administrative Office Website was finalized. The Project’s Communications Coordinator worked with the AO, Supreme Courts’ ICT department and website vendor to finalize and post the AO’s new website. On July 18th, the AO website www.sudskibudzet.sud.mk was launched and now provides information on the AO and its work.

The website includes the following sections and contents, among others:

- About us - what is the AO; successes and who is who
- Activities
- Upcoming activities
- Annual reports
- Internal revision unit
- Courts in the Republic of Macedonia
- Resources
- Publications
- Gallery
- Contact us

The AO employee appointed for updating the website received the necessary guidelines from the vendor and will regularly update the website’s content.

Court Websites

During this quarter, websites were developed for 14 basic courts. These websites, together with the 10 pilot court websites and Kavadarci basic court website can be accessed at

www.sudovi.sud.mk. Citizens now have access to information related to the work of 25 basic courts in Macedonia. Of the 27 basic courts in Macedonia only Debar and Negotino do not currently have websites. These two courts were contacted several times by the Project and the AO, but have not responded with local materials needed to create their website.

As a follow-up, the Project prepared leaflets and posters to market the websites and invite citizens to visit them. The Project provided 100 Macedonian language leaflets, 20 English language leaflets and 5 posters to each of the 25 basic courts that have a website. A cover letter explaining the purpose of this promotional activity was sent to these courts outlining how this information could be used. The materials are displayed on frequently visited locations in the courts and can be accessed by the interested citizens.

Also, the Project provided guidelines on how the courts should proceed in updating their website contents in coordination with the Supreme Court's ICT department.

Judicial Reform Implementation Project Communications

The website of the Judicial Reform Implementation Project is being regularly updated by the Communications Coordinator with articles and photos on the Project's activities. Six new articles and an interview have been placed on the website this quarter.

In July, the Project promoted its activities and achievements within the DPK worldwide network. A three-page summary of JRIP's achievements in newsletter format was shared within the DPK network to update the DPK family about the important work the Project is doing in Macedonia.

Project's Communications Coordinator regularly does press clipping on the newspaper articles dealing with the judiciary in Macedonia, published in two Macedonian daily newspapers, Dnevnik and Utrinski Vesnik.

2.3 Court Financing

The AO, USAID, and the Project determined that a thorough review of the budget and financing laws and practices of the Judiciary of the Republic of Macedonia is essential. The Project retained a US expert in budget and financing, Dr. Deborah Botch, who completed a study evaluating the current budgeting and fiscal management processes in the judiciary and provided recommendations for improvements.

The expert's report was received on June 30th. It included 29 recommendations for better budgeting and financing which, if enacted, will likely result in a more appropriate share of the national budget for the judiciary. The report was translated into Macedonian and shared with the AO on July 29th and with the new President of the Court Budget Council, the new Chief Justice Jovo Vangelovski. The Project is now working on developing ways for implementation of the recommendations that would make the judicial budget more consistent with the courts' actual needs. Formal presentation of the recommendations to the Supreme Court, CBC, AO, court budget users, Parliament members, Ministry of Finance and other interested institutions will be made at the finance and budget study findings and recommendations conference scheduled for October 8th. Chief Justice Jovo Vangelovski and the new USAID Mission Director, Michael Fritz, will also speak at this event.

Following this event, on October 9th and 10th, the CBC/ AO and the Project will organize an action planning workshop with a smaller group that will work on preparing an action plan for implementation of the recommendations from the study.

The Project, in consultation with the US expert, has developed the agendas for both events, and the worksheets that are going to be used at the action planning session. The agenda, the list of participants, and already developed materials have been presented and discussed with the CBC President Judge and the AO Director.

2.4 Court Administrators Study Tour

From August 31st through September 6th, the Project helped coordinate and participated in a USAID World Learning sponsored court administration study tour to the Republic of Ireland. Participants included court secretaries from Basic Courts Kavadarci, Gostivar, Kriva Palanka, Kummanovo, along with the court secretary of the Stip Appellate Court. Three participants from the Administrative Office of the Court Budget Council, with responsibilities for court facility improvements, information and communications technology, and finances also participated.

Over the course of the week, the group spent time with experts and officials of various court departments and related agencies, such as:

- Information and communication technology in the courts,
- Financing and budgeting,
- Court facility improvements,
- Media relations, and
- Human resources management in the courts.

A vital part of this activity was development of action plans for implementation by study tour participants upon their return to Macedonia. The court secretaries' action plan centered on implantation issues in connection with the Law on Court Services. The administrative office group developed an action plan for building public trust and confidence in the courts, including a newsletter and related outreach efforts.

2.5 Court Computerization

Nomenclature Reconciliation

A major issue in the design of a case management application is having consistent nomenclatures used universally throughout the system. Accordingly, the Project in the past period focused its resources on developing unified court nomenclatures.

The court nomenclatures development and unification effort was completed in June 2008. The developed nomenclatures were presented for approval to Chief Justice Jovo Vangelovski at the first official coordination meeting with him on September 11th, 2008.

This document was also presented and discussed in details with EduSoft, the company selected to develop and implement the Automated Court Case Management and Information System (ACCMIS). It was concluded that the structure and content of the developed nomenclatures completely fit the anticipated structure of the ACCMIS. Minor revisions were made to the document to fit the ACCMIS design structure and a new version of the document was prepared and handed to the ACCMIS vendor on September 26th. Currently, the Project is focused on transferring existing electronic court data into the ACCMIS. In order to conduct the transfer, EduSoft will prepare a list of unified existing nomenclatures from the courts of Macedonia. The Project will support matching of these nomenclatures with the ones developed on the central level. This will be done by the

facilitators of each of the expert groups by mid November. The actual physical matching of nomenclatures will be done through the Supreme Court's IT Center.

The Project filed an official letter of request to the MOJ for transfer of existing, other institutions nomenclatures. The transfer of these nomenclatures is essential for the transfer of files into ACCMIS.

Procurement Process –Automated Court Case Management and Information System

The ACCMIS tender process continued with the final evaluation of bids of the four highest scoring vendors. They were invited to give oral and visual presentations on Tuesday, July 1st before the steering committee and the independent consultants. The week before, the Minister of Justice appointed Mr. Nikola Prokopenko as the new representative of the Ministry on the committee. The new member replaced Mr. Dimitar Gjorgievski who was the key representative of the Ministry for more than a year and was actively involved in all joint activities of the Project and the Ministry of Justice. This replacement did not disrupt the bid evaluation process.

After the July 1st presentations, a final ranking was done and a local company, EduSoft, was chosen as the successful bidder. During July and August, JRIP worked on obtaining all necessary concurrences and approvals from DPK and USAID. Because EduSoft was a non-USA vendor, JRIP was required to obtain an appropriate waiver. After receiving the final approvals on the contractual details, the contract with EduSoft was signed on August 27th, 2008. Sequentially, the ACCMIS program activity has entered a new stage towards its successful implementation. In two separate meetings with the Chief Justice and the Minister of Justice, the Project updated the ACCMIS partners on the latest developments and future steps.

At the meeting with Chief Justice, the Project asked for the establishment of a Court ICT Committee and official approval of a new set of Court Nomenclatures provided by the Project. The Chief Justice was optimistic regarding the quick establishment of Court ICT Committee but was skeptical about how fast the new Court Nomenclatures could be proclaimed official. It was agreed to hold regular monthly informative and coordinative meetings.

In September, the Project briefed the Minister of Justice on two occasions regarding ACCMIS program activities. On these occasions, the Minister expressed a desire for a complete re-design of ACCMIS' technical, managerial and funding aspects. These issues will be discussed in regular monthly meetings.

On September 4th, a meeting was held and EduSoft was officially introduced into the ACCMIS program tasks. The purpose of this initial preparatory meeting was setting up the basic rules and framework for operationalization of the signed contract. The elements of the contract were reviewed, clarified and confirmed.

After two months of summer break, the ACCMIS Executive Committee reassembled on September 10th to welcome EduSoft. On behalf of EduSoft, Ms. Kopanova once again committed to the general activity plan expressing confidence that by the end of 2008 the ACCMIS software will be ready for deployment and by the end of 2009 it will be fully implemented and heavily used in every court's daily operations. Ms. Kopanova then elaborated the proposed EduSoft activity plan for September. The Committee supported the presented plan.

Two more ACCMIS Executive Committee meetings were held in September. It was agreed that in the upcoming few months, ACCMIS activity will focus on 5 main areas: a) court nomenclatures, b) migration of data from legacy court systems, c) reviewing and approving the proposed ACCMIS model, d) generating pre-defined templates for various reports, and e) investigating the need for additional changes eventually caused by adoption of new laws.

Concerning the new set of court nomenclatures, in September the Project had several working meeting with EduSoft clarifying the content of the code tables provided by the Project. A two-step process was agreed to for their implementation in courts: first unification of the current variations by requiring all courts to use the same set of current nomenclatures, and secondly those unified currently used nomenclatures to be replaced with the new set provided by the Project and approved and made official by the Supreme Court. By the end of September, EduSoft had collected and investigated all variations of nomenclatures used currently in courts, unified them and disabled the option in the current systems which allowed each court to create its own set of court nomenclatures. EduSoft also prepared a software program, which will be used for re-writing existing records in courts according to the unified current nomenclatures. From October 29th-31st, the Project will organize several sessions of expert teams for further revising of the new court nomenclatures.

In regard to the migration of data from legacy court systems, the biggest challenge are courts in Bitola and Veles as both have accumulated court case data through their locally developed systems since 1998/99. Both systems are operating on completely different hardware and software platforms and have completely different structured data elements. The Project and EduSoft carefully approached the problem and have agreed on best solutions. Field visits to courts in Bitola and Veles were undertaken in mid September. Analysis from the collected data showed that more —manual” work will be needed than initial anticipated. Because of inconsistency in the entered data, purging and clearing almost 100, 000 legacy records cannot be done by any automated computer procedure. Therefore, a prioritization plan was made to first migrate the most current and still open cases, with older and closed cases completed afterwards.

Concerning reviewing and approving the technical details of the proposed ACCMIS model, on September 12th EduSoft provided the Project with technical documentation including: functional description, business logic (activity diagrams), logical data base design, business rules, process model, drafts of user guides for end-users and ICT support staff as well the revised training plan. In order to validate and approve the model, the Project will again use the expertise of the court practitioners and will organize working sessions with focus groups of court practitioners on October 21st to 28th. The Project has invited 32 experts from courts to participate as representatives of all types of ACCMIS end-user groups: registry clerks, typists, note takers, judge assistants, court secretaries and judges.

EduSoft has reported that in mid September its teams started creation of pre-defined templates for various types of reports and investigating the need for additional changes caused by adoption of new laws.

Presentation of ACCMIS Concept to Court Leaders

On July 8th, the Project, in cooperation with the Supreme Court, organized a Court Officials' Consultation Meeting. The conference took place at the Holiday Inn, Skopje. Eighty participants took part at the conference, including president judges, court secretaries, representatives from the Judicial Training Academy, and members of the Judicial Council. The main focus of the event was the new ACCMIS program activity. Project representatives presented the scope and goals of this program, past preparatory activities that supported the

program, and future activities that will ensure the success of ACCMIS. The participants were informed that post contract award most of the activities will take place in the field; in each court in the country. Therefore, special attention was given to what is expected to be prepared and done by the courts to make the implementation of ACCMIS possible. It was stressed that due to the aggressive agenda proposed for early completion of the activity, it is essential that a high level of cooperation exist among the Project and the courts. The Consultation Meeting was organized to assure the acceptance of ACCMIS by all its future users. During the panel discussion, participants welcomed the ACCMIS initiative and agreed on the need for strengthening coordination and cooperation.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

JRIP Staff

July 31st was the last working day for one Project staff member - Vladimir Manasievski. Vladimir was hired to serve a six month contract beginning on February 1st as an ICIS Administrative Assistant. During the first months of his employment, Vladimir completed the field research including the collection and organization of all existing nomenclatures from ICIS users in Basic Courts Ohrid, Skopje 1, Skopje 2, Kriva Palanka, Bitola, Appellate Court Skopje and Supreme Court. His work in these courts was supported and conducted with the help of the court's IT employees. For the last few months he worked on the conversion of the old enforcement cases in electronic format from Basic Courts Kumanovo, Tetovo and Prilep. Also, Vladimir provided technical expertise in setting-up the new websites for the basic courts that did not have websites and worked closely with the Supreme Court's ICT department on the technical details for posting the AO website.

Processing Project Consultants

The Project hosted Dr. Ronald Stout and Marianna Stout, Project's consultants who were retained for work on the new ACCMIS. They departed Macedonia on July 4th, after completing their 16-days work assignment.

During the reporting period the Project finished all the preparations to host for the second time Dr. Deborah Botch to present the results of the Court Finance and Budget Study. Her first consultancy for the Project was as a court budget and financial expert. Ms. Botch was engaged for total of 35 days starting from May 19th through June 13th, 2008.

Study Tour to the Republic of Ireland

The Project, along with USAID/World Learning, participated in a USAID funded Court Administration Study Tour to the Republic of Ireland from August 31st through September 6th, 2008. The participants were a group of representatives from the Administrative Office of the Court Budget Council, selected court secretaries from basic courts in the Republic of Macedonia and Mr. Sam Juncker, COP of the Judicial Reform Implementation Project.

4. SUMMARY OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER:

OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2008

DATES	# OF DAYS	COURSE / ACTIVITY	DIRECTED TO	LOCATION	RESOURCES
COMPONENT A: IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW REFORMS					
Task 1: Assistance in implementation of Law on Courts					
October	ongoing	Prepare strategy for assessing time standards for processing of labor and commercial cases	Basic Court	Skopje	Ivanovska, Businowska,
Task 2: Assistance in implementation of Law on Judicial Council					
October	Ongoing	Assist with transition of CBC/AO from Supreme Court to Judicial Council oversight if draft law is enacted	CBC, AO, JC	Skopje: Supreme Court and JC offices	Ivanovska, Businowska
Task 3: Assistance in implementation of Law on Enforcement					
October	3	Draft communications strategy for the Managing Board of the Chamber of Enforcement Agents	Chamber of Enforcement Agents	Chamber and JRIP offices, Skopje	Ivanovska, Businowska
October-December	4	Coaching sessions and preparation of the draft Strategic Plan of the Chamber of Enforcement Agents	Chamber of Enforcement Agents	Chamber and JRIP offices	Ivanovska, Lazareska-Gerovska, Businowska
October	15	Registry and purging of enforcement cases in Basic Courts of Skopje 2, Tetovo, Gostivar, Kumanovo and Prilep	Five named basic courts	Basic court locations	Ivanovska, Businowska, legal interns
October-December	4	Assist MOJ/Chamber in training of newly appointed enforcement agents if requested by the MOJ	MOJ, Chamber of Enforcement Agents	Skopje	Ivanovska, Lazareska-Gerovska, European expert TBD
October	ongoing	Participate at the Legislative drafting working group on amending Law on Enforcement	MOJ, Chamber of Enforcement agent	Skopje	Ivanovska
Task 4: Assistance in implementation of the Law on Academy for Training of Judges and Public Prosecutors					
October	2	Further on coordination on building and strengthening the capacity of the JTA in cooperation with the CARDS 2004 Project. (Component B)	JTA	Skopje	Juncker, Stojanova-Ribaroski, Ivanovska, Mehmedi
Task 5: Assistance in implementation of the Law on Court Services					
October - February	ongoing	Participate in Legislative Drafting Working group on six sub regulations envision by the Law	MOJ,	Skopje	Ivanovska, Lazareska –Gerovska Antonio Koshtanov

DATES	# OF DAYS	COURSE / ACTIVITY	DIRECTED TO	LOCATION	RESOURCES
COMPONENT B: IMPROVEMENT IN COURT PRACTICES AND MATERIAL RESOURCES					
Task 1: Improved Court Administration Practices					
October - December	Ongoing	Engage in weekly meetings with the director of the AO and designated staff to continue to build capacity of the director and the administrative office	AO	AO	Juncker, Stojanova-Ribaroski, Mehmedi
October - December	3	Engage in monthly coordination meetings with the Supreme Court of RM (including: AO Director, Supreme Court General Secretary and the Head of Chief Justice cabinet)	Supreme Court and Macedonia judiciary overall	AO	Juncker, Stojanova-Ribaroski
October - November	Ongoing	Assist the effort of AO in continuation of the Public User Satisfaction Survey as a self sustained activity	All courts, court users and court employees	AO offices and all Basic Courts	Stojanova-Ribaroski, Mehmedi, Janevska
October-December	Ongoing	Weekly coordination meetings between the Project and the MOJ	MOJ and all courts	JRIP or MOJ offices	JRIP team
October - December	Ongoing	Development of specialization among AO staff in case flow management, human resources, financial management, ICT, public access, public user satisfaction, and court facilities	AO staff	AO and JRIP offices	Juncker Stojanova-Ribaroski, Janevska, Mehmedi,
October - December	Ongoing	Working with the General Secretary of the Supreme Court and AO staff to enhance the case flow and backlog reduction programs begun with MCMP and replicate throughout Macedonia	Basic and Appellate Courts Nation-wide	Office of the General Secretary of Supreme Court, court venues	Juncker Stojanova-Ribaroski, Mehmedi
October - December	5	Assist Academy in curriculum development for trainings of courts' staff in core competencies (case flow management, ethics, customer service)	Academy,	Skopje and regionally	Juncker, Stojanova-Ribaroski, Mehmedi, Janevska, Ivanovska
October - December	Ongoing	Technical assistance to administrators and staff of Administrative Court, if requested in capacity building and transferring data electronically from Supreme Court	Administrative Court, Supreme Court	Supreme Court, Administrative Court	Ivanovska, Tagasovski
October - December (as soon as the Law on Court services Council of Court Administration is established)	5	Pass the developed Macedonia court services employee handbook blueprint before the Council of Court Administration for further development	Council of Court Administration and all courts	JRIP	Juncker, Stojanova- Ribaroski, Mehmedi

DATES	# OF DAYS	COURSE / ACTIVITY	DIRECTED TO	LOCATION	RESOURCES
COMPONENT B: IMPROVEMENT IN COURT PRACTICES AND MATERIAL RESOURCES					
October - December	4	Assist Academy in training of Court Secretaries in their transition to Court Administrators when Law on Court services enacted (with Component A)	Academy, Court Secretaries/Court Administrators	Academy, Skopje	Juncker, Stojanova-Ribaroski, Ivanovska, Janevska
Task 2: Court Financing					
October - December	Ongoing	Implementation of the recommendations presented through the Macedonia judiciary budget and finance study	CBC, AO, MOF, MOJ, Parliament, courts	Skopje	Dr. Deborah Botch (US Expert) with JRIP staff support
October 8 th through October 10 th	5	Action planning session and Budget and finance study finding and recommendations conference on the Budget and finance study recommendations to CBC, AO, all PJs, number of court employee representatives, MOF, MOJ, Parliament members and other body/institutions representatives that have a saying in on the court budget	CBC, AO, MOF, MOJ, and Courts	Skopje	Dr. Deborah Botch (US Expert) with JRIP staff support
Task 3: Court Computerization					
October - December	Ongoing	Weekly automation steering committee meeting overseeing the development of the Automated Case Management System	MOJ, AO, Supreme Court IT, and all courts	JRIP or MOJ offices	JRIP team
October 21, 22 and 28	6	Conduct meetings with focus groups to assist in review and validation of proposed ACCMIS model (functional description, all use cases with their business logic (activity diagrams), logical data base design, business rules, process model, drafts of user guides for end-users and ICT support staff as well the revised training plan.)	MOJ, Courts	JRIP meeting room	JRIP team and EduSoft experts
Oct 29, 30 and 31	3	Expert teams working sessions as continuation of nomenclature study and finalization of nomenclatures for ACCMIS	court experts	JRIP offices,	Stojanova-Ribaroski, Mehmedi,
October - December	20	Work with vendor on 1 st phase of Action Plan; conduct analysis, review progress and adjust time frames if necessary	MOJ all courts, Supreme Court	JRIP offices, MOJ offices, selected court locations	Juncker, Tagasovski, Ivanovska, Stojanova-Ribaroski
Task 4: Communications					
October-November	20	Preparation, organization, delivery, evaluation and documentation of the remaining 3 trainings in Public and Media Relations for the PIOs and their assistants	Courts from appellate regions: Skopje, Bitola and Gostivar, Supreme Court, Administrative Court and the Academy	Mavrovo, Ohrid	Janevska, MIM

DATES	# OF DAYS	COURSE / ACTIVITY	DIRECTED TO	LOCATION	RESOURCES
COMPONENT B: IMPROVEMENT IN COURT PRACTICES AND MATERIAL RESOURCES					
November-December	5	Development of PR strategy for the Chamber of Enforcement Agents	Chamber of Enforcement Agents	Skopje	Janevska, MIM
November-December	7	Design and printing of leaflet on court and media relationship, promotion of PIOs in the courts	Courts, citizens, media		Janevska
October-December	10	Preparation of Issue 2 of AO Newsletter	Courts		Janevska, AO
October-December	7	Support to PIOs in preparing press-releases, etc.	Courts		Janevska
July-September	15	JRIP's communication issues (preparing articles, reports, website update, press-clipping, etc.)	JRIP	Skopje	Janevska

5. PROBLEMS AND REMEDIAL ACTIONS

Between July 15th and August 31st of each year, judges and court staff take most of their annual vacation leave. As a result, the Project's work with implementing partners slows during this period. Most Project staff also take vacation leave during this period. Accordingly, during the last quarter, the Project dedicated itself to many in-house tasks. For example, time was spent drafting the USAID Source and Origin Waiver needed for the preferred vendor to be awarded the contract for the ACCMIS project. The Project also dedicated time creating the Year Two Work Plan, and that draft was submitted to USAID on August 28th, 2008.

Now that the Macedonian Parliamentary election has been held and the new government formed, the Project is accelerating implementation work on both the Law on Court Services and the Law on Court Budget. These laws are of vital importance to the independence of the judiciary. Over the next few months the Project expects that many changes will occur as the Law on Court Budget moves the AO and budget supervision for the courts from the Supreme Court to the Judicial Council. Likewise, as a result of adoption of the Law on Court Services, the Project expects to accelerate assistance to the Supreme Court in the development of an Administrative Council that will develop a staffing study, implement a true human resources section in the AO, and develop a new system of court administrators for all courts (basic, appellate, and supreme).

During the quarter, the Project met informally with the new President Judge of the Supreme Court, Jovo Vangelovski. It is vital that additional coordination meetings are held to review major areas of focus, including the upcoming budget and financial conference, establishment of a court technology planning committee or group, and re-emphasis on the very successful case delay reduction efforts of the last Rule of Law project. It is critical that the Project quickly develops a strong professional relationship of trust and confidence with the Chief Justice and confirms that the Supreme Court supports the Project's work plans for 2009 and 2010.

The Project is expending significant resources on development of the new Automated Court Case Management and Information System (ACCMIS). During the past quarter, meetings were held with the Minister of Justice, Mihajlo Manevski, concerning overall management of

the chosen vendor, “sign off” on the various deliverables, and general administration of the ACCMIS effort. Following those meetings, the Project met with USAID officials and requested their assistance in reviewing with Mr. Manevski the protocols in USAID sponsored efforts such as ACCMIS.

Another ACCMIS related concern is adequate bandwidth for the wide area network (WAN) in a large number of courts. The Project also is concerned about the related infrastructure, such as servers, routers, switches, and local areas networks (LANs). These elements will impact the effective operation of the new ACCMIS because of slow response time and frequent WAN and LAN down time. The MOJ and the Supreme Court are aware of these shortcomings but no progress has been made to resolve the issues. The MOJ has elected to move ahead with the ACCMIS and address the WAN and infrastructure shortcoming later as resources become available. Accordingly, the Project has developed technical specifications that the ACCMIS application will need to run successfully under current hardware and network conditions that can then be easily upgradeable as IT infrastructure in the courts improves. The Project will continue to monitor the status of these issues and discuss the status of the IT infrastructure with the MOJ and other appropriate judicial representatives and advocate for a solution as appropriate.