



## **QUARTERLY REPORT**

**APRIL – JUNE 2009**

**FOR THE  
JUDICIAL REFORM IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT  
Indefinite Quantity Contract  
No. DFD-I-00-04-00173-00  
Task Order No. 03**

Submitted to USAID  
July 10, 2009  
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Skopje, Macedonia

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Judicial Reform Implementation Project (“JRIP” or “Project”) for this quarter continued to show advancements in all component areas. The pace of activity accelerated in order to complete several key tasks before the summer recess, which will begin in early July.

The *Implementation of New Reforms* component completed an analysis of the bottlenecks that delay processing of commercial cases in Basic Courts Skopje 2 and Veles. On May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the Executive Summary and key findings of this analysis was delivered to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). The full report with attachments and additional statistical data was submitted to the MOJ on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The key recommendation was that the existing organization of courts, as established in the Law on Courts, be preserved and that specialized commercial or trade departments be established within all basic courts with extended jurisdiction. This was recommended rather than the creation of new and separate commercial courts.

During the month of May, work continued on the proposed changes and amendments to the Law on Enforcement. On June 9<sup>th</sup>, a committee in Parliament proposed that transfer of existing enforcement cases from the courts to enforcement agents be postponed until July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010. In addition, on June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, the Project sponsored a training session in time management, finance management, and conflict resolution for twenty new enforcement agents. Training sessions were also held to assist capacity building of the Chamber of Enforcement Agents in the areas of development of a communication strategy and project management.

The Project sponsored MOJ legislative drafting sessions dealing with amendments to the Law on Civil Procedure, which was enacted in 2005. More than 110 civil judges from throughout Macedonia attended information sessions and shared their experiences with implantation of this law. These sessions emphasized issues related to resolving cases outside of court, such as using licensed mediators. The underlying goal is to create a framework through which civil disputes can be resolved quicker, the case backlog is reduced, and the judges are able to allocate their time more effectively in solving more complex cases. The workgroup’s recommendations were finalized in June and submitted to the Government. Assisting the MOJ draft the new Law on Case Management was also a Project priority during this quarter. Public discussions will be held before the draft law is submitted to the Government in November 2009.

The component *Improvement of Court Practices and Material Resources* worked on case flow management and case delay reduction during this quarter. In addition, emphasis was placed on implementation of the Automated Court Case Management and Information System (ACCMIS), as well as the Public Users Satisfaction Survey and Public Information Officer (PIO) advanced trainings.

The ACCMIS Executive Action Group held regular meetings to review updates on the ACCMIS vendor’s software training and implementation progress. As the quarter ended, user training on ACCMIS was more than 80 percent completed. By early July 2009, it is expected that all courts, except for Appellate Court Gostivar and the dispatched misdemeanor section of Basic Court Skopje 1 that lack the appropriate hardware infrastructure, will be actively using ACCMIS.

In late May, the President of the Supreme Court and the Minister of Justice informed the Project that their institutions were in no position to assume funding for the twelve information and communications technology (ICT) professionals provided by JRIP. These employees were provided by the Project as a “bridge” solution, to serve in the interim while courts

completed the process of employing their own permanent ICT staff. Having an ICT professional in each court is an essential part of ACCMIS' successful implementation and its long-term sustainability. Both the President of the Supreme Court and the Minister of Justice requested the Project to extend the contracts of the professionals for additional 6 months, which is the time they expect they will need to get the necessary financing. The Project responded and obtained approval for extending these contracts to give court leaders more time to arrange for a permanent solution in this area.

In early May 2009, Project representatives were invited to attend weekly meetings of the newly established Supreme Court ICT Committee. This is a high-level committee chaired by Supreme Court President Judge, Jovo Vangelovski. The Minister of Justice, Mihajlo Manevski, is also a member of this committee, along with directors of the MOJ and Supreme Court ICT Centers. This committee should assist with the coordination of ICT matters, such as strategic planning and implementation of sustainable ICT court solutions. Thus far, the committee's time has been spent on clarifying the technical specifications for new computer servers, which are vital to the long-term success of ACCMIS. These servers are to be purchased by the MOJ through a World Bank loan. In addition to the server issue, the most critical issues before the committee regarding ACCMIS implementation are insufficient antivirus protection and the upcoming expiration of the contract supporting the wide area network (WAN).

The Project continued its cooperation with Judicial Council leaders to coordinate Project and Judicial Council work plans. This included Project support for the Council's participation in the *European Network of Councils for the Judiciary* (ENCJ) meetings in Bucharest, Romania held in late May 2009; participation in the June 2009 workshop for court administrators on case backlog reduction; and scheduling a presentation to the Council on the recently completed cost-per-case analysis. On May 27<sup>th</sup>, the Judicial Council asked the Project to develop a software solution similar to ACCMIS for tracking and managing complaints against judges, applications for judicial appointments, and other relevant items. The Project is currently reviewing this request in accordance with its approved work plan, mandate, available funding, and other work priorities.

The Project also met with two officials of the Court Services Council (CSC), President Judge Dobrila Kacarska and Supreme Court General Secretary Sonja Gruevska, to clarify the next steps needed to support that new council. As a result, the Project prepared a proposal to furnish and equip an office for five CSC support staff when hiring is completed. Planning efforts are also underway to improve communication within the Council, through the use of a modern conference call device.

On June 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, the Project, working in partnership with the Academy for Training of Judges and Public Prosecutors (JTA), sponsored a workshop for 45 court administrators on further development of case flow management and other court administration mandates. Areas emphasized included: the draft Law on Case Management, unified backlog and case delay reduction plans, improving communications between judges and court administrators, an update on ACCMIS development and implementation, how to develop better business writing skills, and the Law on Court Services.

During the quarter, the Project assisted the Administrative Office of the Court Budget Council (AO) as they presented the results of their third round of public users' satisfaction surveys. Overall, the public's response to the question, "All in all, I think the performance of the court was efficient" increased by four percentage points since a similar survey was conducted six months ago. In addition, advanced training sessions in Public and Media Relations were conducted during May and June.

The Project continued to support implementation of the PIOs in all courts in Macedonia. In May and June, the Project provided two advanced three-days trainings in Public and Media Relations for around thirty representatives of the judiciary.

The Project developed, published and distributed an educational brochure on best practices for writing court press releases. This was a joint effort with the JTA and the Judicial Council. In addition, support was provided to the Judicial Council in designing their website. Assistance in preparing press releases was provided to the PIO of the Basic Court Skopje 2, the JTA and the Chamber of Enforcement Agents.

## **1. IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW REFORMS**

### **1.1 LAW ON ENFORCEMENT**

The amendments to the Law on Enforcement, which pertain to the transfer of old enforcement cases to private enforcement agents, are currently under parliamentary review. At the Parliamentary session on December 30<sup>th</sup>, it was decided that the amendments should first be discussed at a public debate in order to include experts' and citizens' opinions. The public debate was held from April 23<sup>rd</sup> until May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

The comments on the proposed amendments were reviewed in the May 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Parliament's *Committee for Political System and Relations with Ethnic Communities* (the Committee) with the Minister of Justice. A summary of these suggestions will be provided to members of Parliament for their review, with recommendations for possible interventions and further amendments at the second hearing in the Parliament. On June 9<sup>th</sup>, the Committee proposed suspending implementation of the provision for transfer of enforcement cases, until July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010. This proposal was accepted by the Minister of Justice. It is expected that these amendments will be passed by the Parliament in late June.

The activities of the MOJ working group for amending the Law on Enforcement continued in this quarter. The group held eight meetings during the reporting period (three in April, three in May and two in June), and all were attended by JRIP's Legal Framework and Reforms Manager, Nena Ivanovska. The EU expert on enforcement, Mr. Jos Uitdehaag, provided his opinion and comments on the proposed amendments, which were discussed in the June 24<sup>th</sup> session of the working group. The draft text of the law will be presented to the Government for the first hearing in late June.

#### ***Capacity Building of the Chamber***

In the reporting period, the Project continued to support the development of the Chamber of Enforcement Agents (Chamber).

From April 24<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup>, the Project contributed to the growth of the Chamber by conducting a workshop for the development of a communications strategy. Seven enforcement agents and two employees of the Chamber took part in the workshop. The workshop was highly interactive and participants developed the core communications strategy of the Chamber that will be incorporated into its strategic plan. The training was lead by JRIP's communications coordinator Jelena Janevska, in cooperation with Marina Tuneva, a trainer from the Macedonian Institute for Media (MIM). Ms. Tuneva also provided follow-up support to the Chamber and helped them finalize the communications strategy, which should be approved by the Board of the Chamber.

On June 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> JRIP organized the fourth initial training for improving professional skills of newly appointed enforcement agents. The training focused on the latest changes to the Law on Enforcement (LoE) pertaining to the transfer of cases, the new system of disciplinary measures and control mechanisms, the role of the Chamber in building the credibility of the new profession, and building professional skills including functioning of the office, communications with clients and staff, and financial management. During the training, the EU standards and best practices of private enforcement systems were introduced by the Dutch expert, Jos Uitdehaag. This activity will also support the implementation of the LoE, which will lead toward more efficient enforcement of civil judgments.

From June 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup>, JRIP organized the second training in Project Cycle Management for the Chamber, attended by eight enforcement agents, and two staff members. During the training, the participants learned the methodology for developing project proposals, including project format and profile, timetable of planned activities, project sustainability, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation. As a result, two project proposals were developed for implementation of the strategic goals of the Chamber.

JRIP also continues to support the professional development of the MOJ Sector that oversees the work of enforcement agents, public notaries and mediators (Sector). On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Center for Institutional Development (CIRa) conducted a free training needs assessment for the employees of the Sector, for possible trainings during 2009-2010. Based on the assessment, CIRa prepared and submitted a report that outlined the key areas where trainings were most needed. The key areas identified were: human resource management, facilitation skills, strategic planning, and efficiently providing services to clients. Other areas included thematic training for monitoring and supervising the work of enforcement agents, notaries and mediators. Based on the results of the assessment, JRIP proposed to the Sector two possible topics for a training which will be organized in September. Besides this, JRIP will sponsor two additional training sessions prior to May 2010.

## **1.2 LAW ON COURTS**

### ***Assessment of Labor Cases***

During this quarter, the electronic registration of archived labor cases was completed in Basic Court Bitola. A total of 1,427 cases registered in electronic format were provided to the Project for further analysis. Also, a representative sample of cases was selected for in-depth analysis, along with the already selected representative sample of cases from the second pilot court – Skopje 2.

The assessment of labor cases began in early January 2009. During the first phase of the assessment, the team managed to register all the closed and archived labor cases from Basic Court Skopje 2 and Skopje 1 that were filed between 2005 and 2008. The total number of registered cases was 3,894. Also, the Project conducted structured interviews with eight judges from the labor department of Basic Court Skopje 2, and with two judges from Basic Court Bitola. Based on the interviews, JRIP completed a summary of findings, which will help the interviewing team understand the function of the labor department as well as the specific problems faced in labor case processing. The in-depth analysis of the identified labor cases will be implemented in July.

### **Assessment of Commercial Cases**

The analysis of commercial cases commenced on April 5<sup>th</sup> and was conducted by Nena Ivanovska and Keti Bushinoska from the Project, and retired Judge Violeta Josifovska, engaged by USAID's Business Environment Activities (BEA) Project. This analysis was carried out in Basic Courts Skopje 2 and Veles.

In April, twelve legal interns engaged by the Project, in 15 days, managed to register 8,476 archived commercial cases from Basic Court Skopje 2, and 1,203 cases from Basic Court Veles. After the completion of the registration, a representative sample of cases was identified for an in-depth analysis. 370 commercial cases were selected, including bankruptcy cases, small claims and general commercial cases.

From April 15<sup>th</sup> to May 10<sup>th</sup>, the team analyzed all the selected cases, and interviewed judges that are in charge of processing these types of cases. The team then summarized the information obtained from the interviews and processed data from the statistical reports that included the number of resolved cases, number of old unresolved cases, and duration of procedure per case and per judge. With this information, the team produced an executive summary with key findings and recommendations. The executive summary was submitted to the MOJ on May 15<sup>th</sup>, and the full version of the report including annexes was submitted on June 18<sup>th</sup>.

The report identifies bottlenecks in the Law on Civil Procedure and the Law on Bankruptcy that cause case delay and provides recommendations for improving case processing through amendments to the current legislation. Also, it provides more information supporting the establishment of specialized commercial departments within basic courts of extended jurisdiction rather than the creation of new and separate commercial courts, encouraging the specialization and sub-specialization of judges in the commercial and bankruptcy area, and calling for a balanced allocation of judges among courts and court departments.

### **1.3 LAW ON ACADEMY FOR TRAINING JUDGES AND PUBLIC PROSECUTORS**

The collaboration with the JTA in the area of capacity building of court administration continued in this quarter. A workshop on "Further Development of Case Flow and other Court Administration Mandates" was conducted on June 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>. The workshop focused on the draft law on case flow management, the implementation of the unified backlog and delay reduction plans, the law on court services and employment procedures. It also developed the capacities of the court administrators in effective communication and business correspondence.

The training was provided by JRIP staff: Filip Janiceski, Jelena Janevska, Nena Ivanovska and Ljupco Tagasovski, and lecturers from the JTA: Vlado Ruzojcic (Head of the Intake Office in Basic Court Skopje 1) on improving the communication between court administration and judges, Dimitar Georgievski (Director of the State Administrative Inspectorate) on the draft Law on Case Flow Management, and Biljana Zagar (State Counselor on Legal Affairs in the Civil Servants Agency) on sharing the best practices regarding employment procedures.

JRIP will also partner with the JTA in organizing a comprehensive capacity building event for the Court Budget Council (CBC) members, planned for late October, 2009. JRIP will sponsor the event and will provide an international consultant, while JTA will provide local experts for topics such as budgeting processes, auditing, and the role of CBC in the budgeting process, etc.

## **1.4 LAW ON COURT SERVICES**

After being reviewed and approved by the Government's Legislative Secretariat, five sub-regulations under the Law on Court Services were published in the Official Gazette on June 8<sup>th</sup>. These sub-regulations are:

- Regulation on the selection and employment of court employees;
- Regulation on the manner, procedure and the form for evaluation of court employees;
- Regulation on the manner and procedure for case flow management with the use of information technology;
- Regulation for the structure and content of the forms for registering the data for court employees; and
- Curriculum for education of court police.

The regulation on case flow management with the use of information technology will have a suspended implementation, starting from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010. The Project supported the MOJ in all phases of drafting the sub-regulations, organizing information sessions to receive feedback, and finalizing the sub-regulations.

## **1.5 LAW ON CIVIL PROCEDURE**

During this quarter, the Project provided technical support to the MOJ in amending the Law on Civil Procedure, which was enacted in 2005. This process started in early April, aiming to identify the current problems and impediments in implementing the law. For this purpose, the Project and the MOJ organized four information sessions in all court appellate regions: Skopje (April 1<sup>st</sup>), Bitola (April 3<sup>rd</sup>), Stip (April 6<sup>th</sup>) and Gostivar (April 8<sup>th</sup>).

Over 110 civil judges from the courts throughout the country took part in the information sessions and shared their experiences with implementation of the law. The judges pointed out concrete articles contained in the law where modifications or interventions are necessary in order to ensure more effective implementation. The feedback received during the information sessions was documented by the Project and shared with the MOJ. This feedback provided direction to the legislative drafting work group, which was established by the MOJ in late April. The Project's Senior Legal Framework and Reforms Manager, Nena Ivanovska is member of this working group.

During the reporting period, the working group held four meetings. In addition, and upon request of the State Secretary of the MOJ, Biljana Brishkoska-Boshkovski, from May 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> the Project organized an off-site session for preparing the draft amendments to the law.

Some of the major interventions in the law are based on the recommendations presented by judges at the information sessions organized by the Project and the MOJ in April 2009. The proposed amendments include: defining timelines for specific actions, restricting the use of expert witnesses, encouraging parties to settle their dispute by mediation, and preventing possible misuse of court processes by attorneys. The entire set of amendments is envisioned to improve the efficiency of courts in resolving civil disputes, and thus provide fast and fair justice. The text of the amendments should be finalized in September 2009.

## **1.6 OTHER LAWS AND AMENDMENTS**

### ***Law on Case Management***

The Project committed support to the MOJ for preparation of the Law on Case Management, as one of its major priorities. During this quarter, the Project continued to provide technical support to the MOJ in preparation of the law. After the first draft of the law was prepared, the Project held several meetings with judges and court employees to finalize the provisions that pertain to case processing in misdemeanor procedure, inheritance procedure, issuing payment orders, and administrative court procedure.

The working group will continue working on finalizing the law, organizing public discussions and will consider the expert opinion of the Project's consultant, retired Judge Joseph Traficanti, before it is submitted to the Government. The submission is set for no later than November 2009.

## **2. IMPROVEMENT IN COURT PRACTICES AND MATERIAL RESOURCES**

### **2.1 IMPROVED COURT ADMINISTRATION PRACTICES**

#### ***Improved AO Strategic Planning and Operational Capacity***

After several meetings with the AO and the Judicial Council, Project Court Administration and Case Delay Reduction Assistant Filip Janiceski prepared an action plan for activities to support the AO and the Judicial Council. This action plan was presented and discussed during coordination meetings held on April 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. The action plan will facilitate tracking the progress of activities for developing the capacities of the AO and the Judicial Council.

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, Filip Janiceski met with the AO to discuss the details of this action plan, such as: data analysis as a result of the third Public Users' Satisfaction Survey in the courts, training CBC members, preparation of a Handbook for president judges and court administrators on budgeting and finance, and training the new IT staff on the ABMS, etc.

On May 20<sup>th</sup>, a regular meeting was held with the AO and the Judicial Council. It was agreed that at the next session of the CBC Nena Ivanovska, from the Project, will present and lead a discussion on the recently completed cost-per-case analysis.

In line with the "next steps" proposed by consultant Dr. Deborah Botch in the Court Budgeting Study, the CBC reviewed and accepted the "Macedonia Judiciary Budget and Finance Study" at its April 2009 session. Moreover, a conclusion was issued setting out the commitment by the CBC to implement all 29 recommendations. In that light, the CBC decided which recommendations for improving court budgeting and financial management are of the highest importance at this moment, and should be implemented immediately. For two recommendations, technical support by JRIP is urgently needed. Some recommendations will be implemented during 2009, and the rest will be implemented between 2010- 2012, in accordance with CBC's Strategic Plan. Some of the recommendations have already been implemented.

The AO requested urgent support for implementation of two recommendations from the Budget and Finance Study. These recommendations focus on budget preparation with specific forms, guidelines and instructions. It was agreed that JRIP would recruit local short-term finance expert/s to lead, mentor and advise the AO through the completion of the

budget preparation process, from June until December 2009. The Project published a call for consultants and on June 29<sup>th</sup> conducted interviews with the shortlisted candidates.

On May 27<sup>th</sup>, the AO and the Project met with the Director of the JTA and agreed to partner in organizing the upcoming training session for members of the CBC planned for late October 2009. This training will include court budgeting best practices, budget analysis, leadership, independence and strategic planning. The JTA will send the invitations and will hire local experts, while JRIP will provide funding for logistics and the international consultant.

The AO implemented the third Public User Satisfaction Survey in the courts with limited support by the Project. They prepared a report showing the survey results and submitted it to the Judicial Council. The results show an increase in user satisfaction when compared to the same survey conducted six months ago. The public's favorable response to the question, "All in all, I think the performance of the court was efficient" increased by four percentage points since the last survey. It is expected that the next round of the survey will be administered by the courts themselves, with support of the AO.

### ***Effective and Efficient Case Flow Management Programs Implemented in the Macedonia Courts***

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, the Appellate Court in Bitola organized a working session to review implementation of backlog and delay reduction plans in the basic courts of this region. All president judges and court administrators reported on their current situation with pending cases. It was agreed that the next meeting will be held before the summer break. Since JRIP planned to organize round tables on case flow management in all appellate regions, it agreed to support the next event. This will facilitate the work of the backlog reduction committees in this appellate region and others throughout Macedonia.

The workshop on "Further Development of Case Flow and other Court Administration Mandates" was conducted on June 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> at the Hotel Millennium in Ohrid, in cooperation with the JTA.

The goal of the workshop was to enhance the administrative and managerial capacities of court administrators. The main focus was on implementation of backlog and delay reduction plans in the basic courts, elaborating upon the concept and goals of the proposed Law on Case Flow Management. Additionally, the workshop provided sessions on ICT development in the courts, business correspondence, communication between judges and court administration, application of the Law on Court Service, the work of the Court Administration Association, and the Civil Servant Agency's experience in employment processes.

During the interactive workshops sessions, all court administrators reported on the current situation with their pending and old cases, with emphasis on obstacles encountered. They also discussed other issues that affect their everyday work as court administrators.

At the evaluation session, very positive feedback was received on all aspects of the training. The court administrators clearly stressed the need for further capacity building events.

The lecturers were provided by the Project's staff and experts from the JTA. Appellate Court Presidents and the coordinators from the Judicial Council were also invited.

### ***Improved Judicial Council's functions and capacities***

The cooperation with the Judicial Council intensified in this quarter. JRIP sponsored the participation of the President and the General Secretary of the Judicial Council at a

conference of the ENCJ in Bucharest, Romania from May 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>. The Project also supported the Council's presentation at this event by reviewing and translating their speeches and presentations.

On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, JRIP's Filip Janiceski and Jelena Janevska participated in the Judicial Council working group for the development of their website and provided suggestions and recommendations on the structure of the website and its functions.

The Judicial Council submitted its work plan for 2009 to JRIP in order to explore possibilities of future collaboration. JRIP is expecting a proposal on concrete needs and areas for further cooperation.

From September 19<sup>th</sup> through October 3<sup>rd</sup>, JRIP will organize a study tour to the US for a small number of high level judicial branch personnel. The objective of this activity is to give key court leaders a clearer vision of the independence and accountability of US court systems. A review of the New York State Court System will take place as the first part of the study trip, and the second part will be conducted in California, with special emphasis on Judicial Council functioning.

In May, the concept of the study tour was presented to the Judicial Council and the Supreme Court. The presidents of both institutions expressed support for this initiative. In early July, JRIP will present the detailed agenda to the President of the Supreme Court and President of the Judicial Council.

### ***Functional Court Service Council (CSC)***

Following the orientation training for the CSC held in March 2009, JRIP developed an action plan for implementation of the recommendations proposed by the Project's consultant, Judge Joseph Traficanti.

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, JRIP representatives met the President of the CSC, Judge Dobrila Kacarska and the permanent member of the CSC, Supreme Court General Secretary Sonja Gruevska. At that meeting, detailed plans were discussed to ensure proper functioning of the CSC. To support the CSC, JRIP hired a vendor to develop a proposal for equipping office space for CSC staff. This project will be implemented once the staff is hired. JRIP is also exploring options for improving communications between the CSC members. The details on these issues will be discussed at the next meeting with the CSC.

The working group focusing on changes and amendments to the Law on Court Service has not yet been established. This will occur after completion of the nomination process, coordinated by General Secretary of the Supreme Court Sonja Gruevska.

As agreed, during this quarter the court administrators submitted their proposals, comments and suggestions on possible changes to the Law on Court Service to Sonja Gruevska and JRIP. During the workshop on "Further Development of Case Flow and other Court Administration Mandates", JRIP facilitated a discussion on the law.

## **2.2 IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC ACCESS, SERVICE AND INFORMATION**

### ***Public Information Officers (PIO)***

During the reporting quarter, the Project continued to develop, support and mentor PIOs to foster more open and transparent courts.

The Project developed curriculum for advanced trainings in public and media relations, which aimed to further increase the capacities of the courts to present their work to the public. During May and June, JRIP delivered two advanced trainings for around thirty PIOs from all court appellate regions and representatives from other institutions in the judiciary. Both trainings were organized in cooperation with the JTA.

The trainings were delivered by Jelena Janevska, the Project's Communications Coordinator and Biljana Petkovska, the Executive Director of the Macedonian Institute for Media.

The training topics included:

- Communication skills, specifically listening skills
- Communication skills, regarding nonverbal communication
- Presentation skills
- Developing relationships with media contacts
- Public relations in crises
- Giving public statements in crises situations
- Organizing a press-conference; and
- Strategic approaches in public relations including defining objectives, target audiences, messages and communication tools.

The trainings were highly interactive and provided for full participation by all PIOs. Participants developed advanced practical skills and knowledge that can be immediately used in their everyday work, in order to publicly promote the work of the courts. Participants gave statements in crises scenarios, organized press-conferences, and worked on developing ideas for communications strategies. They received feedback on their performance from the group and from the trainers.

In their evaluations of the trainings, participants expressed great satisfaction with the knowledge and skills they gained, as well as the approach of the trainers. They have asked for additional training, mentoring and support from the Project. Specifically, they suggested that the Project could help them by working with the management of the courts to help them recognize the need for being open and transparent to the public. The PIOs continue to stress that they are not communication professionals, and rather see themselves as absolute beginners. They very much appreciate and need the Project's support in their everyday work, through trainings, publications, networking meetings and mentoring.

During this quarter, the Project supported Judge Antoaneta Dimovska, the PIO from Basic Court Skopje 2, in developing a press release.

To improve cooperation between the courts and the media, and promote the role of the PIOs in the courts, the Project developed a leaflet on courts and media. During April, 250 copies of the leaflet were distributed to all PIOs and to seventeen national electronic and printed media institutions.

The Project developed and printed an educational brochure on best practices for writing press releases for the courts. It was distributed during the two trainings, to PIOs, JTA and the Judicial Council.

### ***AO Newsletter***

JRIP continues to support the AO to develop its bi-annual Newsletter that promotes the work of the AO. As was previously agreed, it is expected that the AO will gradually assume the responsibility for preparation of the Newsletter from JRIP's Communications Coordinator.

For the next issue, planned for July 2009, the AO will prepare the articles, and the Project will also contribute articles on its activities.

### ***Capacity Building in the Area of Communications***

In April, Project Communications Coordinator Jelena Janevska worked with the Chamber to develop their communications strategy. In June, a session in business correspondence was provided to the court administrators.

The Project's communications coordinator supported the Judicial Training Academy in developing a press release. Also, support was given to the Chamber in preparing a denial for an article published in one of the daily newspapers.

## **2.3 COURT FINANCING STUDY**

At its session in April 2009, the CBC reviewed and accepted the recommendations of the Court Budget and Finance Study, prepared by the Project. Moreover, it issued a conclusion that commits the CBC to implementing all 29 recommendations of the study. It also established that the highest priorities must be implemented immediately and asked for support from JRIP. Some of the recommendations were already implemented, others will be implemented during 2009, and the rest in the period 2010- 2012, in accordance with CBC's Strategic Plan.

Based on the urgent request for technical support by the AO, JRIP started the selection process for recruitment of court finance and budget local experts to support implementation of two recommendations (number 1 and 7) from the Court Budget and Finance Study.

The CBC was also interested in the cost per case analysis and asked for a presentation on the methodology. JRIP's Senior Legal Framework and Reform Manager Nena Ivanovska will provide this presentation to the CBC and all president judges at their next meeting.

## **2.4 COURT COMPUTERIZATION**

### ***Automated Court Case Management and Information System (ACCMIS)***

#### **On-site trainings of ACCMIS users:**

Throughout the reporting period, the on-site trainings continued with user groups of typists/note-takers, judge's assistants, judges and court administrators. Trainings were conducted on-site, in small user groups or individually with users at their work spaces by EduSoft's local trainers. By the end of June, about 80% of the training plan has been completed.

The Appellate Court of Gostivar and dispatched Misdemeanor Department of Basic Court Skopje 1 do not meet minimum technical conditions for ACCMIS use. Due to equipment and connectivity problems, ACCMIS implementation and on-site trainings in these two courts are still on hold.

After completing the curriculum, trainers will continue with their daily presence in the courts, providing on-site consultation and support. This will allow courts to gradually and smoothly enter the second phase of ACCMIS implementation, i.e. its practical usage with live data on a daily basis.

Judges, as a separate user group, were the most difficult to work with due to their busy daily schedules, sporadic training attendance and computer illiteracy. As a result, in some courts it is expected that training of judges will not take place until mid July.

**Transferring existing electronic data and switching to live ACCMIS usage:**

Throughout this quarter, the EduSoft team continued visiting courts in order to switch ACCMIS from practicing into live day to day work. This occurred wherever courts had satisfactory training progress and did not have significant technical and organizational obstacles. The switching procedure was comprised of transferring existing electronic data and court cases from the old Integrated Court Information System (ICIS) into the new ACCMIS. Trained users (mainly registry clerks and typist/note-takers) were gradually migrated from training into live ACCMIS usage.

By the end of June, 32 courts had overcome the key technical and organizational obstacles and started practicing with live ACCMIS data.

Because of its internal organizational issues, the Supreme Court requested to be the last court switched to live ACCMIS usage. This will occur in the first week of July.

The goal is by midsummer 2009, all trained court users will feel confident and comfortable using ACCMIS as a daily tool. Once ACCMIS enters into regular use, appropriate on-site trainings will be conducted for relevant users in the MOJ and the Judicial Council.

Hopefully, by that time, ACCMIS partners, the Supreme Court and the Ministry of Justice, will legally regulate the standard usage of ACCMIS in courts through appropriate laws, sub-regulations and written orders.

**Quality assurance of the trainings:**

During this reporting period, representatives from JRIP, EduSoft, MOJ and the Supreme Court continued, through direct contacts with courts, to confirm quality assurance of the ACCMIS on-site trainings.

The goal of these visits was to get first-hand information on the progress and quality of the ACCMIS on-site trainings and to evaluate the readiness of a court for switching into the live ACCMIS mode. In addition to discussing regular training topics and providing quality assurance, emphasis was given to the urgent need to upgrade the RAM memories of server machines on which ACCMIS is installed. During the visits, all court presidents expressed readiness to purchase additional RAM memory through their court budgets. The Project recommended that they purchase 4GB RAM memories for each of the ACCMIS servers.

Field visits showed that the training progress varied from court to court, depending on circumstances that included users' computer skills, size and technical condition of a particular court, etc. In some courts where progress had not reached the desired level, possible obstacles and respective solutions were identified. In several courts, additional trainers were assigned for performing more frequent trainings and court management was asked to organize conditions for additional training classes, expanded training hours and better synchronization and coordination with EduSoft's trainers. Again, it was emphasized that the courts are also accountable for providing the optimal technical and special organizational conditions for successful on-site trainings.

During this period, JRIP had several meetings with EduSoft and their training subcontractor, MESA, to further strengthen the quality assurance, control and monitoring process in the field. More local trainers, regional coordinators and more frequent independent on-site visits

by MESA were arranged. Meanwhile, EduSoft conducted additional train-the-trainer classes for the additional trainers and extra classes for the existing trainers.

In every court, as the trainings of a particular user group were completed, the trainers conducted a survey. Each trainee was asked to complete a satisfaction survey form and indicate, among other things, if he/she needed additional training classes, how many and in what areas. Some users have asked to repeat various classes to clarify and/or strengthen their knowledge and understanding of ACCMIS.

**Capacity building and sustainability support:**

At the beginning of April, with the concurrence of the President of the Supreme Court and respective courts, JRIP provided 3 month IT contractors for twelve courts that did not have IT staff. This was an interim solution. The purpose of the short term IT contractors was to help courts achieve and maintain minimal technical start up conditions for ACCMIS usage. Additionally, they help users practice their daily usage of IT tools and support successful implementation and sustainability of ACCMIS.

These IT contractors identified many internal technical and organizational issues. It was reported that these courts had serious hardware flaws, no anti-virus protection, and no connection to the judicial network. These problems were primarily due to insufficient human resources and financing. This resulted in improper technical maintenance and usage of court equipment and communication infrastructure, causing low efficiency and effectiveness of the ACCMIS on-site trainings.

Based on their initial scanning of the technical conditions, JRIP provided these IT contractors with the necessary tools and materials, such as: connectivity patch cables and plug-in connectors, network testers, tongs, switches, CD devices, etc. JRIP also provided the courts with RAM memory for refurbishing old computers in order to install Windows XP and register on the Judicial Domain network.

The server machines in these courts are about eight years old with 1/2GB or 1GB of RAM memory and were not able to effectively serve all envisioned ACCMIS users. Therefore these server machines needed to be refurbished with RAM memory to 4GB each. The Project worked closely with the CBC in assisting the remaining courts to upgrade their servers.

The twelve courts have recognized the importance of engaging IT staff in their everyday work. Due to financial and regulative obstacles, the President of the Supreme Court asked JRIP to extend their contracts for an additional three to six months. JRIP communicated this request to USAID, and after obtaining their concurrence, extended the contracts with the ICT professionals for the selected twelve courts for an additional three months, with the possibility of another three-month extension.

**Other ACCMIS related activities:**

In April, the Project received a letter from the president of the Judicial Council asking for a meeting to discuss the possibility of modifying the ACCMIS software to meet their specific Judicial Council needs. During April and May several meeting were held with the Judicial Council representatives. The Project recognizes this need and is considering this request in accordance with the Project's approved work plan, mandate, available funding and other work priorities. Also on these occasions, JRIP invited the Judicial Council to join and participate in the ACCMIS Action Group Executive Committee. The invitation was accepted and two representatives started regularly attend committee meetings.

During April, several joint meetings were held with representatives from the AO of the CBC and the Agency for Civil Servants about the new Law on Court Service. JRIP offered help in providing the judiciary with the software which several years ago was developed with USAID funds for the needs of the Agency for Civil Servants. The assumption is that the same software, after some modifications, can be used to support the court employment process. However, the judiciary still has some dilemmas, i.e. how to organize and conduct the employment process: centralized (in Skopje), semi-centralized (in appellate courts) or decentralized (locally in every court). The AO informed the Project that no decisions on this issue could be expected before midsummer, so until then this issue has been put on hold.

Since the beginning of May, JRIP's representatives, Ljupco Tagasovski and Sam Juncker, started attending meetings of the newly established Courts ICT Coordination Committee. Meetings are held at the Supreme Court and chaired by the Supreme Court President Judge. The meetings were usually attended by the Minister of Justice, the heads of ICT Centers of the Supreme Court and the Ministry, two judges representing the Supreme Court and Basic Court Skopje 2, and EduSoft as the ACCMIS vendor.

The key agenda items of these meetings were:

- Procurement of new servers for each court through a loan from the World Bank;
- Establishment of working groups of court practitioners as part of the JRIP advocated court technology committee; and
- Practical steps for further implementation of ACCMIS in live usage.

No progress has been made in procuring new servers, since the MOJ's representative strongly opposes centralized disaster-recovery and backup solutions, as opposed to the Supreme Court, JRIP, and EduSoft who see it as a must.

Definite progress was made in defining the members of the work groups of court practitioners that will monitor the usage, review received request and suggestions for improvements and other legal aspects of ACCMIS. The final decision regarding work group membership was expected to be made by the Supreme Court President Judge in mid June, but it did not happened until the end of the month. Because of this delay, the frustrations among users started to increase, as there was no one to review and decide upon their requests and suggestions, especially in the area of nomenclatures and various legal grounds.

JRIP initiated a June 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of president judges dedicated to practical steps for further implementation of ACCMIS in live usage. JRIP did all necessary preparations for the following agenda:

- Update on the current situation:
  - Progress of ACCMIS on-site trainings
  - Current situation of the technical and organizational environment
  - Establishment of a body responsible for usage and improvements of ACCMIS
- Presenting tasks and deadlines for:
  - Updating the electronic data (closed and pending cases)
  - Regular daily usage of ACCMIS
  - Transition period of dual record keeping (paper and electronic)

Representatives of the MOJ, Judicial Council and USAID were also invited. After the meeting, JRIP prepared a follow up letter with conclusions. The letter containing specific tasks and deadlines was signed and sent to courts by the President of the Supreme Court. To fulfill the commitment of the Government and the judiciary for converting to ACCMIS, it is

necessary, by the end of 2009, to achieve complete consistency between data existing in paper registry books and ACCMIS.

Courts were given several deadlines to achieve the final goal. These tasks were elaborated and discussed in detail with the court administrators during their June court administrators training in Ohrid.

Generally, the small courts assured JRIP they will have no problem achieving the deadlines and medium sized court expressed some doubts but with hard work will succeed. The biggest courts, like Basic Courts Skopje 1 and Skopje 2, expressed serious concerns with the deadlines. After several meetings, JRIP decided to assist Skopje 2 by contracting 20 professional typists for a period of one month to enter into ACCMIS about 18,000 pending cases.

### **Three most pressing treats on ACCMIS successful implementation:**

- **Insufficient Anti-Virus protection**

Although there are about 2,400 computers in the courts, at the beginning of 2009 the Ministry of Justice purchased and delivered anti-virus software for only 1,400 computers. This shortage threatens the proper work and performance of ACCMIS due to a contaminated technical environment. As an interim solution, JRIP suggested that the courts disable computers' floppy and CD devices as well the USB flash ports. However, this temporary solution must be overcome as soon as possible by purchasing additional anti-virus licenses for 1,000 computers. So far, because of a financial crisis, neither the Supreme Court nor the MOJ plans to do anything in this regard in the near future.

- **WAN three-year contract expires on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009**

Three years ago, through an OSCE donation, Macedonian courts, Public Prosecutors offices and the Judicial Council were interconnected by leasing Telecom land lines. That agreement expires on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009. The Wide Area Network Interconnectivity (WAN) of all judicial entities is crucial for ABMS, ACCMIS and other software applications. With the IT strategy 2007 – 2010 of the MOJ, it was envisioned that by extending the current contract the capacity of the inter-connectivity will be at least doubled. ABMS and ACCMIS were designed to give full performance once the WAN is upgraded. Features like electronic data exchange will be almost impossible without interconnectivity. In addition, any remote maintenance and interventions, centralization and standardization of nomenclatures, electronic filing, centralized disaster-recovery backup system, etc., will not be possible without an adequate WAN.

- **Prolonged purchase of new servers as replacement to outdated ones**

Through several meetings with the Supreme Court, Judicial Council and AO, JRIP raised the issue of insufficient capacity of existing servers in all courts. By initiating upgraded RAM memory in every court, JRIP intended, as an interim solution, to provide the minimum satisfactory level. This will allow the start up and use of ACCMIS as the daily operational tool. To use the full potential of ACCMIS and introduce new technologies like e-filing, e-mailing, scanning paper documents and attaching them into an e-case, more powerful servers are required. This was originally envisioned and agreed upon by the stakeholders at the beginning of the ACCMIS initiative.

During April, JRIP, in close cooperation with the World Bank, initiated a series of joint meetings with heads of the Supreme Court and MOJ ICT Centers. The purpose was to reactivate the idea of replacing the outdated eight-year old server machines by using the

already arranged €1.1 million World Bank loan for ICT purposes. The goal was to have the new servers deployed and installed by September 2009. A draft of the technical specification was developed, approved and signed by the President of the Supreme Court and officially handed to the MOJ to complete the final document binder and submission to the World Bank for final purchase approval. However, the Director of the MOJ ICT Center has put this on-hold until further notice of the Minister.

### ***Electronic Court Recording***

The Project has identified the need for modernization of proceedings regarding preparation of court minutes. Currently, minutes are filtered, rephrased, misdirected and misinterpreted. Therefore, JRIP prepared an Electronic Court Recording Study to consider installing digital audio recording equipment for court hearings. It could be used to prepare and verify the accuracy and completeness of court hearings minutes.

During May, the concept and the study were shared with the MOJ, Judicial Council and court administrators. A positive reaction was received. The plan is to establish a work group that would include members from all stakeholder groups. The primary goal would be to address and resolve all possible legal and technical impediments before the equipment is installed.

## **3. ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS**

### ***JRIP's Communications***

During April, JRIP's communications coordinator developed and reported a success story based on the activity of the PIO of Skopje 2 Basic Court during the National Day of the Judiciary. The success story was published in the May issue of the USAID Newsletter.

In May, JRIP and its ACCMIS related activities were featured on the morning program of the national Macedonian Television. The seventeen-minute TV record is available on JRIP's website.

The Project developed the contents and draft material for the video on JRIP's contribution to developing the human resources of the judiciary. These products were sent to USAID for their review and production with support of the US Embassy.

In this quarter, JRIP's website was updated with eight new articles and success stories on the Project's activities and achievements.

### ***Processing Project Consultants***

During this quarter, the Project hosted Jos Uitdehaag, enforcement agent from the Netherlands, who provided short-term technical assistance to the MOJ sector that oversees the work of the enforcement agents and the Executive Board of the Chamber of Enforcement Agents. He also delivered two-days of training to the newly appointed enforcement agents on the EU standards and best practices on private enforcement systems. The training focused on building the professional skills of these agents in terms of time management, finance management and communication. This consultancy began on June 7<sup>th</sup> and ended on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

The project also engaged two local consultants. Biljana Petkovska was engaged as a communication expert, to partner with JRIP's Communications Coordinator in delivering two trainings in public and media relations for the PIO's in the courts, on May 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, and June 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>.

Zoran Stojkovski was engaged in two capacity building trainings for the MOJ and the Chamber. The first was held on March 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>, and the second on June 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>.

***Newly Appointed Staff***

In April, the JRIP Legal Interpreter temporary replacement position was offered to Riste Nikolov and he joined the Project on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Nikolov will carry out duties designed to meet the objectives of the Project. He will produce materials that are grammatically correct, spellchecked and correctly formatted; will proofread materials that were produced or received from outside of the Project; and other duties as assigned.

***DPK Home Office***

From June 27<sup>th</sup> through July 12<sup>th</sup> the Project is hosting Sergio Zegarra, DPK's Program Officer. Mr. Zegarra visited JRIP to identify solutions, bring best practices, and to strengthen relations between DPK, JRIP, and USAID.

***Other***

On May 28<sup>th</sup>, the Project hosted Kathy Stermer and Rhys Payne from, ARD, Inc., Amber Brooks and Antoaneta Skartova from USAID and Petar Atanasov, University Professor. The guests from ARD, Inc., were selected by USAID to carry out a Democracy and Governance Assessment in Macedonia. The Project's staff presented Project goals, activities, achievements and current issues in each of the Project's components.

**4. SUMMARY OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER:**

**JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2009**

DATES	# OF DAYS	COURSE / ACTIVITY	DIRECTED TO	LOCATION	RESOURCES
<b>COMPONENT A: IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW REFORMS</b>					
Task 1: Assistance in implementation of <b>Law on Courts</b>					
July –	Ongoing	Assessment of labor cases in trial courts Skopje 2 and Bitola	Basic Courts	Skopje, Bitola	Ivanovska, Businoska,
Task 2: Assistance in implementation of <b>Law on Enforcement</b>					
September	1	Support legislative drafting activities of the changes and amendments to the Law on Enforcement	, MOJ, Chamber of Enforcement Agents	Skopje	Ivanovska, Businoska, Lazareska- Gerovska

DATES	# OF DAYS	COURSE / ACTIVITY	DIRECTED TO	LOCATION	RESOURCES
<b>COMPONENT A: IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW REFORMS</b>					
September	2	Capacity Building Training	MOJ Oversight Sector	TBD	Ivanovska, Bushinoska
<b>Task 3: Assistance in implementation of the Law on Academy for Training of Judges and Public Prosecutors</b>					
July–September	Ongoing	Further on coordination on building and strengthening the capacity of the JTA (Component B) Preparation of Training Strategy/Program and training Curriculum for the Court Administration	JTA	Skopje	Juncker, Janiceski, Ivanovska
<b>Task 4: Assistance in implementation of the Law on Judicial Council</b>					
July–September	Ongoing	Organize and conduct a Study Tour in USA for the Judicial Council and Supreme Court leaders	Judicial Council, Supreme Court	USA (New York State and California)	JRIP Team
July–September	Ongoing	Set the Plan on further areas of cooperation between Judicial Council and JRIP	Judicial Council	Skopje	Juncker, Janiceski
<b>Task 5: Assistance in implementation of the Law on Civil Procedure</b>					
July – September	Ongoing	Finalizing the draft-law and entering into Governmental procedure	MOJ	Skopje	Ivanovska, Bushinoska
<b>Task 6: Assistance in drafting of the Law on Case Management</b>					
July-September	Ongoing	- Finalizing draft-law and entering into Governmental procedure - Procuring a foreign expert to assess processing of various types of cases in two pilot courts	MOJ	Skopje	Ivanovska, Bushinoska

DATES	# OF DAYS	COURSE / ACTIVITY	DIRECTED TO	LOCATION	RESOURCES
<b>COMPONENT B: IMPROVEMENT IN COURT PRACTICES AND MATERIAL RESOURCES</b>					
<b>Task 1: Improved Court Administration Practices</b>					
July-September	Ongoing	Engage in regular coordination meetings with the AO/CBC and designated staff to continue to build capacity of the AO	AO/CBC	AO	Juncker, Janiceski
July-September	July-December 2009	Assistance in implementation of Recommendation No. 1 and 7 from the Court Budget Study by recruiting two local senior experts	AO/CBC	AO offices	Janiceski, Juncker

DATES	# OF DAYS	COURSE / ACTIVITY	DIRECTED TO	LOCATION	RESOURCES
<b>COMPONENT B: IMPROVEMENT IN COURT PRACTICES AND MATERIAL RESOURCES</b>					
July-September	Ongoing	Engage in regular coordination meetings with the Court Services Council	Court Services Council	Court Services Council	Juncker, Janiceski
July-September	Ongoing	Regular coordination meetings between the Project and the MOJ	MOJ and all courts	JRIP or MOJ offices	JRIP team
July-September	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, Janiceski, Janevska
July-September	Ongoing	Working with the Appellate Court Bitola to enhance the case flow and backlog reduction programs begun with MCMP and replicate throughout the appellate court area	Basic courts of the appellate courts region Bitola	Appellate Court Bitola	Juncker, Janiceski
July-September	Ongoing	Working with Court Administrators on implementation of the backlog and delay reduction plans and meet the goals therein	Basic and Appellate Courts in Macedonia	All Basic and Appellate Courts	Juncker, Janiceski
July-September		Assist Academy in strategy/program and curriculum development for trainings of courts' staff in core competencies	Academy and AO	Skopje and regionally	Juncker, Janiceski, Janevska, Ivanovska
July-September	Ongoing	Development of the training curriculum for the Court Administrators	Academy, AO, Court Secretaries/Court Administrators	Academy, Skopje	Juncker, Janiceski, Tagasovski, Ivanovska, Janevska, Consultant
<b>Task 2: Court Financing</b>					
July-September	Ongoing	Present the Cost per Case Methodology to the CBC and Judicial Council and follow up as they implement the methodology	CBC, AO, MOF, MOJ, Parliament, courts	Skopje	JRIP team
July-September	Ongoing	Provide technical assistance in drafting the Changes and Amendments of the Court Budget Law	CBC, Courts, MOJ	Skopje and regionally	JRIP team
<b>Task 3: Court Computerization</b>					
July – September	Ongoing	Bi-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	Tagasovski, JRIP team
July – September	Ongoing	Work with vendor on inspection of courts progress in usage of ACCMIS and adjust time frames if necessary	MOJ, Courts	JRIP premises, EduSoft, all courts	Tagasovski, JRIP team and EduSoft experts

DATES	# OF DAYS	COURSE / ACTIVITY	DIRECTED TO	LOCATION	RESOURCES
<b>COMPONENT B: IMPROVEMENT IN COURT PRACTICES AND MATERIAL RESOURCES</b>					
July – September	Ongoing	Work with MOJ and Supreme Court on analyzing, and reviewing ICT needs for improvement technical environment in courts; eventual preparation of MOJ technical tender documentation	MOJ, Supreme Court, all courts	JRIP offices, MOJ, Supreme Court	Tagasovski, JRIP team
July – September	Ongoing	Monitoring and evaluating requests and suggestions for ACCMIS improvements	Court technology Committee, Work groups, EduSoft,	JRIP offices, all court, EduSoft	Tagasovski, JRIP team and EduSoft experts
July – September	Ongoing	Present the E-Court Recording Study to the rest of the judiciary officials; establish a Committee on technical and legal issues	MOJ, SC, JC, courts,	Skopje and regionally	Juncker, Janiceski
<b>Task 4: Communications</b>					
July – September	Ongoing	Finalize planning for the PIO study-tour	PIOs	JRIP offices	Janevska, Juncker
August-September	Ongoing	Plan for optional additional advanced training for PIOs	PIOs, other institutions from the judiciary	Locations outside Skopje	Janevska
August-September	Ongoing	Develop the concept for the PIO Networking Meeting	PIOs	JRIP offices	Janevska
July	Ongoing	Printing of Issue 3 of AO Newsletter	Courts	JRIP offices, AO	Janevska, AO
July – September	Ongoing	Distribution of leaflet on court and media relationship, press release brochure, promotion of PIOs in the courts	Courts, citizens, media	Field visits, meetings	Janevska
July – September	Ongoing	Support to PIOs in preparing press-releases, etc.	Courts	JRIP offices	Janevska
July – September	Ongoing	JRIP's communication issues (preparing promotional materials, articles, reports, website update, press-clipping, etc.)	JRIP	JRIP offices	Janevska

## 5. PROBLEMS AND REMEDIAL ACTIONS

During this Quarter, the Project was able to resolve the issue of meaningful coordinating with one of its main partners, the AO of the CBC. The Project initiated productive coordination meetings with Elizabeta Vaskova, Secretary General of the Judicial Council, and Silvija Janevska of the AO. These meetings resulted in the creation of an action and progress monitoring plan that outlines the principal activities to be accomplished in this partnership, along with time frames and task assignments.

In the area of ACCMIS and ICT matters, the Project was invited in May 2009 to participate in a weekly high-level technology coordination committee chaired by Supreme Court President, Judge Jovo Vangelovski. This committee is similar to the court technology planning committee that this Project, and the former Macedonia Court Modernization Project, had advocated for since June 2007. This new committee asked the Project to extend the employment contracts for the twelve short term basic court IT professionals, allowing the CBC time to hire fulltime court IT professionals for all courts. The Supreme Court's commitment to the concept of fulltime IT support in each court is a major step toward sustainability of ACCMIS and related ICT initiatives by the project. These technicians will work in the courts that lack trained IT staff. They are needed in order to achieve and maintain a minimal level of IT support. This short-term solution will bridge the gap and allow these courts time to hire full time court IT support staff.

The Project also had concerns regarding the lack of progress in several courts on effective ACCMIS training for court staff. To remedy this, several courts were assigned additional trainers so that more frequent and intense training would occur.

The MOJ continues to place on a "fast track" the drafting process of many different key laws. Often the Project is asked to assist in drafting several laws, participate in staff working groups, collect and analyze data, etc., on different laws all at the same time. This causes significant time conflicts and creates the situation that the quality of the drafting work will be adversely affected. To compensate for this, the Project has re-assigned priorities to support the MOJ's requests. In addition, USAID Macedonia communicated these concerns in their regular meetings with the Government.