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**JUDICIAL REFORM
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**Report
Court Service Council Capacity Building
And
Court Administrators' Transition Training**

Submitted to

Judicial Reform Implementation Project

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Prepared by

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Background

The Republic of Macedonia adopted the Law on Court Services, which became effective on January 1, 2009. The new law is a laudable reform measure since it, among other things, moves the employees of the court system and its non-judge administrators from being employees of the Executive Department to the judicial branch of the Macedonian Government. As required by the Law on Court Services, a number of related draft sub-regulations were also prepared establishing procedural protocols for the selection and registration of new employees, performance evaluations, case management and utilization of information technology. Draft sub-regulations also address the protocol for the newly formed Council on Court Services. These are presently being reviewed by the Secretariat on Legislation.

Another important provision of the new law transitioned the former court secretaries in the largest courts to the title of Court Administrator. This section of the law contemplates a professional staff to oversee and administer court operations including human resource issues, case management, backlog reduction, facilities management, and general overall court operations.

The Judicial Reform Implementation Project (JRIP), a USAID sponsored project, has actively supported the implementation of a modern, independent and accountable court administration. Under its Work Plan for 2009, JRIP is required to support the implementation of the Law on Court Services (Section 2.5) and Enhanced Court Administration and Management (Section 3.1) Accordingly, this consultancy was established to assist in both endeavors. It was conducted from in country from March 15th to March 28th with travel and report writing following from the US.

Goals of Consultancy

The goal of the first conference was to assist the new Court Services Council (Council) in building its capacity as a new institution within the Macedonian Judiciary. A major objective was to assist the Council in establishing a clear vision of its mission and the means to attain it. The following activity was the first capacity building exercise for the nine members of the Council and began the process of building its aptitude as a new and independent institution envisioned in the new Law on Court Services.

The goal of the second training was to support the transformation of existing court secretaries into pro-active and well-informed court administrators. This training, "The Role of Court

Administration and Court Administrators” was organized for appellate court administrators and court administrators from the basic courts of expanded jurisdiction and their counter parts in courts without expanded jurisdiction. This exercise was designed as advanced training planned to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities in managing and administrating modern court operations. The program was calculated to empower the administrators and to enable them to gain skills needed to comply with the Law on Court Services and the Law on Courts with practical knowledge and skills.

Methodology and Steps Taken

Court Service Council Orientation Training: This consultancy began with a review of the applicable laws and sub-regulations. There were also a series of meetings with project staff as well as the president of the Court Services Council, Judge Dobriela Kacarska and Sonja Gruevska, the General Secretary of the Supreme Court and the only permanent member of the Council. Clearly, a program was required which would meet the acute needs of this new organization. These consultations and a review of the mandates of the applicable laws and sub-regulations revealed the current capabilities of the Council and identified its immediate needs. Accordingly, an Agenda was prepared and approved by the Council president. A copy of the agenda is annexed to this report as **Attachment I**.

The conference was held on March 23rd at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Skopje and was attended by all but one of the members. Spirited and in-depth discussions ensued and a number of needs were identified for future action. In addition to determining the future material and technical needs of the Council, a number of substantive topics were presented. The Council, meeting only for the second time as a full body, reviewed its legal mandate, structure and composition with the consultant. Factors critical to success, the indicators which will signal success and the obstacles ahead were also examined. The conference was designed to provide a vision for the long-term future of the council and the remedial steps necessary to meet the immediate requirements imposed by law. The Council together with this consultant, JRIP COP, Sam Juncker and project staff attorney, Filip Janiceski, identified the resources necessary and future actions required for a fully functioning Council. The recommended actions and resources are set forth in the “Observations, Recommendations and Needs” section of this report.

Court Administrators Transition Training: As agreed, JRIP staff delivered necessary support material as requested by this consultant well in advance of the site visit. JRIP staff attorney Gordana Stoyanova-Ribaroski produced recommended topics and agenda items. Consulting with project staff, the Administrative Office (which also sent representatives to the conference and provided 2 presenters) and the Judicial Training Academy, a final agenda was adopted. With the help of JRIP staff, the presenters were coordinated and their materials acquired for translation and inclusion in the conference materials. Topics included Advanced Caseflow Management,

Budget and Finance, The Role of the Court Administrator, Leadership in the Court Culture, Communication Skills, Human Resource Management, Court Facilities Management, Time Management and related topics. This consultant prepared presentations on a number of topics included in the agenda and took part in breakouts and feedback sessions. A number of handout materials were also prepared and used either as sample templates or presentation aids. The training/workshop/conference was held on March 24th, 25th and 26th at the Holiday Inn, Skopje. A copy of the final agenda is attached to this report as **Attachment II**. As required, the Judicial Training Academy co-sponsored this event and the presenters included an adjunct faculty member.

As a result of information obtained during interactive presentations and at the Needs Assessment Session, a number of required future resources and needs were identified. These are set forth in the "Observations, Recommendations and Needs" section of this report which follows.

Observations, Recommendations and Needs:

Court Service Council Orientation Training: The needs of this new organization are clearly enormous if it is to develop into a functioning institution of an independent judiciary. At the time of the conference this consultant found a membership eager to fulfill the mission both collectively and individually but somewhat dispirited. Despite a lack of basic resources, the members have commenced their work by approving the systemization within the courts (the number and grade level of judicial assignments to each court). This, in essence, was a mechanical act needed to comply with the law placing the judicial staff under the management of the judiciary. However, the Council remains a hollow shell. It has not been assigned staff or office space and has no dedicated automation—hardware or software. To the extent it has been operating, it has done so on an ad hoc and manual basis.

Under current law all of the members of the council will rotate every 2 years in an order prescribed by law. There is one permanent member -- the general secretary of the Supreme Court. This, of course, presents a major problem for long-term development, institutional capacity building and preservation of institutional memory.

The council is comprised of president judges and court administrators from the basic courts of Macedonia. These members are busy administrators who have significant responsibilities in their home courts. Yet, the sub-regulations for the Law on Court Services requires that each hiring panel required for screening new employees include a member of the council. To the council members this seems an onerous task in view of the geography of the Country and the geographical distribution of the members of the Council.

The Council is also expected to oversee the examinations given to new employees, supply questions for the written tests and assist in other clerical and ministerial acts associated with this function.

A competency of the Council involves hearing appeals brought by court employees from certain employment decisions of the president judges or, in some instances, court administrators. This function will involve disciplinary measures including dismissals. Such activity should involve the interactive participation of all members acting collectively. As with its other competencies, the difficulty lies in bringing together the entire Council in light of their physical locations throughout the Country. This practical difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that the law prescribes several short deadlines for Council decisions. The required turn-around time is as little as 8 days in some cases. A measure of success in any institution is the timeliness with which it completes its required tasks. This presents a challenge to the Council but not one without remedy.

Recommendation #1: Council Staff must be hired without delay. Without a staff to perform the clerical, ministerial, office and administrative tasks of the Council, it will fail in its mission. The membership is dispirited, and not without just cause. Without staff, there is simply not enough time in the day for the busy membership, with full-time high-level positions, to meet the demands required. It is a matter of time before a significant number of court staff is authorized or a number of appeals from disciplinary and other human resource matters are filed. It is estimated that five staff members are required. After an assessment of the disciplines required, five staff members should be immediately hired and trained. Due to the usual time required for both hiring and training this should be done without delay. It appears that the responsibility for supplying staff lies with the Supreme Court and the Administrative office. Planning for training should begin immediately by pre-selecting trainers and topics to facilitate a program as soon as the staff is selected.

Recommendation #2: Office space with furnishings should be acquired. Presently, the president of the Council and the permanent member in their respective offices, are conducting the administrative work. The Council has been advised that the Supreme Court has agreed to supply the office space when needed. This space will presumably be in the Supreme Court building. It should be immediately identified even before it can be populated with staff. This will permit the Council to begin to identify furniture and automation equipment required to make the office operational. These tasks –seeking office space, identifying furniture and automation needs –should be pursued simultaneously and in advance. Such space must also include a reasonably large meeting room for the full Council.

Recommendation #3: Information, Technology and Communications needs should be assessed. The Council should immediately seek technical assistance in conducting an ITC needs assessment. Such an assessment will require the technical help from a person or organization knowledgeable and experienced in the field and should consider, among other things, the following:

- Server(s) and work stations
- Data base requirements
- Software design for data collection and storage (for decisions and other records of the Council) and electronic archiving.

- Connectivity between the current and future members of the Council in home courthouses
 - Email capability needs
 - Future video conferencing capabilities
 - Future telephonic conferencing capabilities
- Printing needs and required printers
- Means for migration of data from the Civil Service Department, Administrative Office of the Court Budget Council and possibly other units.

Recommendation #4: Staggered rotating membership should be pursued. The Council and other interested entities should advocate for a change in the law stipulating that the individual memberships be filled by staggered rotation. A model could include a rotation every 2 years where two or three members' terms expire and are refilled by members from the courts stipulated in the law. This would provide a solid basis for a sustainable institutional memory and insure, over time, a capacity to address the inevitable workload. Assistance should be sought for drafting and advocating for the necessary amendments. The Ministry of Justice should be contacted for support in the changes in the law suggested by the Council, and the Council should be represented on any working groups established.

Recommendation #5: The Council should be permitted to name a representative to an employee interview panel. The legal protocol for hiring employees requires written exams as well as practical skills examinations. After passing both, candidates are then entitled to an oral interview. Having a Council member serve on every panel will cause undue hardship and foster delay, in the opinion of this consultant. It is recommended that the Council retain the legal ability to have one of its members on the interview panels in special circumstances. However, in its discretion, (or, if agreed, in the discretion of the president) the Council should be empowered to designate a court administrator from a court other than the one in which the interview is to take place and from a different region of the Country. This designee will then serve as representative of the Council at the interview and vote as if a Council member.

Recommendation #6: An amendment is needed limiting the number of candidates required to be interviewed. The consensus of the group is that the current law seems to require that all job applicants who pass the written and practical employment exams is entitled to a personal interview. The Council and this consultant consider this an onerous, and in some cases, impossible task that was perhaps unintended. The Council should immediately seek an amendment to this provision either clarifying or changing it. An alternative suggested is that the top five to ten candidates, in accordance with a point system, be scheduled for interviews.

Recommendation #7: Deadlines for each of the Council's competencies should be set forth in the Law on Court Services or sub-regulations. Some but not all of the Council's competencies have time limits for disposition clearly set forth. While the group acknowledged that the Civil Servants Law can be used if the Law on Court Services is silent, it is not a

permanent solution. The Council should seek assistance in advocating for a clarification of the law setting forth time deadlines for the dispositions of all of its competencies.

Recommendation #8: A formal agreement should be made between Council and the Department of Civil Servants. The agency within the Macedonian Government that previously managed the employees of the judiciary prior to the adoption of the Law on Court Services has a database containing information, which will be needed by the Council. The Civil Service Department, for example, has a bank of questions, which can be used for the written examinations. Consultations with the agency should be conducted immediately to determine:

- What reservoir of data is available
- Whether there are any legal obstacles for transferring the data to the Council
- The means of transferring or copying information that the Council requires
- The integrity of the information (security)

Naturally, the Council must first have in place the technical ability to accept the data that is presumably in electronic format. The alternative of merely using the data from the database of the Civil Service Department is not recommended. Moving forward, the Council should be purely independent.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other legal document should be entered into between the Council and the agency to memorialize the agreement when reached.

When Council staff is retained, part of their training should be consultation with and mentoring by selected employees of the Civil Service Department. Presumably, there are years of experience that can be helpful to the new employees.

The council should seek assistance, as needed, to formalize and implement these information and mentoring sessions as well as the preparation of the MOU.

Recommendation #9: A formal arrangement should be made with Administrative Office of the Court Budget Council. The Administrative Office (AO) has acquired a bank of information, some of which will be vital to the successful operation of the Council. The AO has available personnel and payroll records of the employees of the Judiciary. The data resides in the Automated Budget Management System (ABMS). A representative of the Council should meet, as soon as possible, with the head of the AO to determine what information is required for the Council's work. It should be determined whether that data can continue to reside with the AO with unlimited access by the Council. Since the AO is a body of the judiciary it is not necessary to maintain the same dichotomy required for information residing in the Executive Branch. However, maintaining its own data bank may make the records more easily accessible by the Council's staff when needed. Delay may occur if the Council is required to make a request from the AO when information is needed.

Since the Court Services Council is a new entity, there may be legal obstacles to full and complete access, unintended as they may be. An expert in Macedonian law should determine this, and remedial legislation or rules should be adopted, if necessary.

The Council should seek technical assistance to accomplish this recommendation and Recommendation #7 as soon as possible since further steps will be necessary to implement both when hardware and software become available.

Recommendation #10 Internet based telecommunications should be established between all Council members. The expense of travel to the Council's offices (when provided) is not fiscally justified for short meetings where no complex or vexing problems need to be discussed. While there is no substitute for face-to-face meetings, there are times when they are not justified by travel expense. Member time is better spent in their courthouses instead of travel status. The age of technology fortunately provides options.

In the short-term, communication is available through the Internet with providers such as "Skype" which is available without charge. The long-term solution to communications between council members lies with video conferencing. It is questionable whether the resources would be made available for this modern means of communication given other priorities of the Republic. However, it should be imbedded in the long-term plan of the Council and pursued, as resources become available.

The mid-term solution is telephonic communications, which is readily available. This consultant has met with 2 telecommunication companies in Macedonia regarding this subject. Currently, due to the configuration of the telephone lines in the Supreme Court and in most of the courts, conference calls are limited to 3 participants. For a modest sum however, it appears that this can be expanded to include the nine member of the Council. Under this scenario the president of the Council could initiate a call to all nine members with only a modest investment to upgrade the Supreme Court system.

Two steps should be taken under this recommendation:

1. The Council should contact local communications companies and request a demonstration and assessment by a number of providers. The Council should then solicit cost estimates for telephonic conferencing capabilities in accordance public procurement rules, if applicable. The estimates should include the necessary upgrading of equipment in the Supreme Court, as well as telephones designed for conference calls where needed.
2. The Council should seek technical assistance to immediately set up Skype accounts in each member's office or wherever Internet is available in the courthouse. The Council should seek assistance to accomplish this. There needs to be a key person to coordinate the effort in each venue. Downloading the software is not difficult but protocols, usernames, passwords etc. need to be set up, a profile created as well as a number of preferences offered by the provider. Back-up protocol (using such as land line or cell

telephone) should be prepared with numbers to call and procedure to follow in the event of an Internet failure in one or more of the venues before or during the Internet call.

There should then be a series of test calls with, some simple training organized, since this type of communication will seem awkward, at first, to those not accustomed to it. This needs to be an organized and controlled effort if it is to be successful. A conference call must be conducted and managed in an organized way and strictly controlled if it is to be successful. The chair of the meeting bears a responsibility to manage it tightly.

Such a meeting requires that Notice of Meeting and Agenda be sent out before as well as documents necessary for the decision making process. (A sample Notice and Agenda for telephonic conference call was distributed at the March 23rd conference).

Recommendation #11: Other Law or Rule Changes to be sought. There are a number of statutory or rule changes, in addition to those enumerated in earlier recommendations, which a consensus of the Council has identified. These however, will need additional study and be the subject of a study group dedicated to them and other changes. A system-wide Staffing Level and Classification and Compensation Study is needed to address many of these issues. The issues are identified were:

- Acts of Systemization lack criteria
- The titles of the courts staff are in some instances questionable and are taken from previous civil servant's structure without analyzing applicability to the court system
- The Court employees have the same responsibility in all courts but the scope and quantity of work differ
- There is a need for a methodology to determine the number of court employees and their deployment

Recommendation #12: The Council should designate Sub-Committees to address issues in the start-up process. There are a number of issues needing immediate attention as outlined above. More challenges will surface as the Council evolves into a functioning and efficient unit of the judicial system. It is recommended that sub-committees be designated to study certain issues and to report to the Council as a whole. This, of course, requires staff time. Even if staff is acquired, their own orientation will be burden enough. Therefore the following steps are recommended:

1. Sub-committees should be considered for the following suggested topics;
 - Legislation and rule changes
 - Identifying and proposing continued educational and training needs for Council and staff
 - Development (perhaps with AO) of an Employee Handbook
 - Statistical Reports and Public Information (to explore needs)

- Investigate possible funding and support for Classification and Compensation Study
2. Technical Assistance should be obtained to support the Council and sub-committee work by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with a qualified donor.

Court Administration and Court Administrators Workshop: The thrust of this portion of the consultancy was to prepare and deliver a series of topics and an Action Planning Workshop for Court Administrators. This was completed under the auspices of JRIP in partnership with the Judicial Training Academy (JTA). There were a number of presenters from within JRIP as well as from the AO, the JTA and the Appellate Court, Bitola Region.

Professional court administrators are the key to the long-term sustainability of a successful court administration that has the trust and confidence of the people. Most who attended these 2 ½ days of seminar/workshops have transitioned from the title of court secretary to the new profession of Court Administrator under the new Law on Court Services. (Smaller courts use the senior administrative employee as a court administrator). This new profession will go a long way in satisfying the expectations of court users.

During the programs, which were conducted from March 24th through March 27th, the group was instructed in a number of topics. The core mission as well as the measures necessary to demonstrate court performance and accomplishments were thoroughly covered by the various presenters and by inter-active workshops and feedback sessions. The agenda for this program is Attachment II of this report. The program included an exercise for developing future needs of the group of administrators. From this and other interaction with the court administrators, this consultants has prepared a series of recommendations for future action which follow.

Recommendation #1: Backlog and Delay Reduction Committees should be formed in all basic and appellate courts within the next three months. There appears to be great enthusiasm for the creation of case management committees among the group of court administrators. Of particular interest was a presentation by the president judge of Appellate Court Bitola, Judge Danica Risteska. She has captured the positive energy of the courts within her region and attracted the attention for going forward with at least one other appellate court president judge. It is recommended that the Bitola model be followed; that committees be formed in each court with active support of the appellate court presidents. The competencies of the committees should include the development and implementation of case management and backlog and delay reduction plans. This approach would more easily attract the attention of basic court president judges, some of who may lack the enthusiasm or interest in such an endeavor. Absent addressing the issue on an appellate region level, the venture could be accomplished, court-by-court, in the manner used in the previous Court Modernization Project. These endeavors will need the

technical support of qualified experts experienced in this area with possible support of the JRIP team, resources permitting.

Recommendation #2: An array of computer-generated reports -- “Management Tools” -- should be developed. As the Automated Court Case Management Information System (ACCMIS) becomes fully operational, there is an array of management tools, which will become available at virtually a keystroke. Examples were demonstrated at the workshop held on March 24th to 26th. Such performance data is indispensable in preparing, justifying and presenting budgetary requests as well as enhancing productivity. Each court committee should determine models most useful to the particular court and assist in the design of general reports applicable to all courts. It is an excellent way to highlight performance. Here again, technical expert support and advice is required and should be supplied by an appropriate project or donor.

The court administrators expressed the following concerns regarding ITC issues:

- The trainings must be fully conducted (30 hours) and employees should be required to attend all full sessions
- IT employment requires a change in the job announcements in order to secure free competition of the universities
- Court Service Council should endeavor to attract qualified candidates to the IT field in the courts
- The Court Administrators support a nation-wide ITC committee that will coordinate automation for all courts and their interaction with other entities. NOTE: This is a proposal long supported by MCMP and JRIP.

Recommendation #3: Each court should conduct a full operational analysis of staff time and work. After the ACCMIS is operational and training is complete, each court should conduct a thorough analysis of each task required throughout the working day. This should include not only case processing steps but administrative and customer service tasks as well. This “in house” self-audit should be used to determine, among other things, which tasks are still needed after full automation and which steps are duplicative. A determination and plans to streamline and re-align staff and tasks, where necessary, will be a valuable result. The court administrators should then share and compare these findings with the Court Services Council, the Administrative Office and among themselves. This consultant has developed templates to assist in this self-review. They were distributed at the workshop and are suggested templates only, which should be improved and enhanced as circumstances in each court warrant.

Recommendation #4: There should be periodic meetings of all court administrators and those acting as court administrators. The cadre of court administrators and those acting as such in smaller courts collectively constitute a valuable entity and provide an excellent opportunity to benefit individually from the collective wisdom of all. It is noteworthy that the group has taken steps to form an association, which should be encouraged and supported by judicial administration. For the institution of the judiciary to benefit, it must support such

endeavors by the administrators. One means of support is to sponsor several meetings a year. These functions can include a combination of formal educational material as well as the exchange of best practices that have evolved in various courts. The association, if formed, may fill the educational role if given adequate resources for meeting space, travel, technical support etc. Issues regarding law and rule changes, problems affecting court productivity, court security and facility issues, human resource questions etc. will generally be common among all courts or, at least, courts of similar size. Open discussion and follow-up is cathartic as well as productive. The leaders of the new association should seek the support of the AO and other necessary institutions to institutionalize such periodic meetings no less than 5 or 6 times a year. Structured agendas should be prepared and sent out in advance to the membership with copies of supporting materials. Such an association will need technical and material support to build its capacity and sustainability. This should ultimately be born by the judicial budget. Initially, however, support should be sought from a qualified donor.

The General Secretary of the Supreme Court is, in essence, the formal and official leader of Court Administrators and should have important input in the implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation #5: Each court administrator should have email capability in his or her office. Communications between court administrators and their counter-parts in the smaller courts is essential. Each has experience, knowledge and expertise to share and each has the need, from time to time, of advice from others. While telephonic communication is always available, there is often a need for the transfer of documents, which can most expeditiously be accomplished by email. Each administrator should be set up with a court domain unique to the judiciary of the Republic of Macedonia. The AO and IT Department of Supreme Court should take steps to implement this recommendation as soon as possible. This will also enable any entity or project agreeing to give technical support to the group of administrators a means of communicating helpful support and engage in collective dialogue with this targeted group.

Recommendation #6: The Court Administrators should commence a regular schedule of employee performance evaluations. Performance evaluations appear at first to be a daunting task especially in the larger courts. However, the courts already have a system of hierarchal chain of command. Larger courts have heads of intake offices, heads of registration offices, head of Commercial Division etc. Each employee's immediate supervisor, using the prescribed templates and protocol, should conduct the evaluations. The court administrator should evaluate only those who serve in a supervisory capacity but are subordinate to the court administrator. The court administrator should establish a time line for completing the evaluations and keep records of the results. Each designated employee who is expected to conduct evaluations on subordinates should undergo a short orientation training to assure valid results and professional techniques. An appropriate expert in the field should provide technical assistance for this orientation training.

Recommendation #7 Acts of Systemization should be streamlined and updated. A number of concerns were expressed regarding a variety of Human Resource issues. The AO and Court Services Council should address these issues in the short-term. For the long-term, a comprehensive Staffing Level and Classification and Compensation Study should be conducted.

The concerns and comments made by the court administrators on HR matters included:

- Considering the reality of the organizational structure in the courts, many titles and positions are missing
- There is a need for the AO to conduct a needs assessment (how many of each position are needed)
- The Ministry of Finance now decides what positions will be funded thus threatening judicial independence
- Concerns were expressed about the number and cost of temporary positions
- Appropriate titles must be approved to support the court administrators with mid-management personnel as was contemplated in the law
- The Court Service Council should act as an employment agency

Recommendation #8: Ongoing training for court administrators should be planned and delivered. Without exception the court administrators advocate very strongly for continued training in the various disciplines of their profession. There is a sincere eagerness for ongoing, in-depth and advanced continuing education. An assessment needs to be conducted to determine the capability of the Judicial Training Academy and others to support and deliver ongoing training. Technical and material support for this must be obtained. Trainings could easily be folded into the periodic meetings, which are advocated above in Recommendation # 4 and any meetings scheduled by the General Secretary.

Assuming that the association of court administrators is formed, it will require initial support as discussed in Recommendation # 4.

The administrators identified their priorities for future needs, support and/or training, in order of priority by consensus of those voting, as follows: (15 court administrators responded)

1. Competencies under Court Services Law (HR, employment including testing and interviews, disciplinary procedures, material liability determination, evaluation and termination of employment) (13 votes)
2. ITC Implementation (12 votes)
3. Caseflow management support and education (including committees) (10 votes)
4. Round Tables on unification of practices and standardization (10 votes)
5. Business correspondence (writing skills) (7 votes)
6. Changes of Law on Court Services (7 votes)
7. Customer Service (7 votes)
8. Backlog and delay reduction (6 votes)
9. Support for Court Administration Association (5 votes)

10. Verbal and non-verbal Communications (3 votes)
11. Presentation skills (3 votes)
12. Public Media Relations (2 votes)
13. Miscellaneous:
 - a. International Best Practices
 - b. Law on Courts revisions

Conclusion: There are a number of factors which identify a well functioning court system. To expect that all factors and all performance measures will be met 100% of the time would be naïve. However, using modern technology combined with a knowledgeable workforce and effective leadership, a high degree of perfection can be obtained. This requires constant vigilance and a willingness to make the hard decisions. Paramount among enhancement tools is self-assessment and willingness to change. Court leaders must be agents of change and move the institution toward excellence.

The recommendations made in this report are a combination of needs assessments made by this consultant in consultation with actual practitioners of court administration in Macedonia combined with the experience gleaned over the years working in a number of court systems in the US and other countries. Accordingly, the recommendations reflect, to a large extent, the wants and needs, and in some cases, frustrations of judges and court administrators. Court Service Council members and court administrators all displayed a remarkable exuberance for their work and for the mission of the judiciary. The key element—enthusiastic people—is in place. Now what remains is for the funding sources to respond.

Few of the recommendations require large amounts of resources. Most require organization, determination and a willingness to accept change. Minimal initial support, mostly technical, is required to build the capacity of these two institutions representing the target groups of this consultancy. Many recommendations require only coordination and communication.

To the extent that international projects are able, these recommendations provide an important opportunity to move into the next phase of what has been respectable progress in court reform and modernization.

Respectfully submitted
Joseph J. Traficanti Jr., Consultant.