

Plan of Action 2006

At the end of 2004 JSCA published its five-year Strategy Plan. Following its approval by the Board of Directors, the document has been widely distributed throughout the region to ministries of justice and other justice sector institutions, including judicial branches, public prosecutor's offices and public defender's offices. The plan was expressly approved by the delegates of the Summit of the Americas held in November 2005 in Mar del Plata, Argentina.

According to this document, 2006 is the second year that JSCA will work under those strategic guidelines. We propose to carry out the following specific activities during this period:

1. Support for Criminal Justice Reforms
 2. Development of Information Systems and Judicial Management
 3. Justice and Economic Development
 4. Other Activities in Fulfillment of JSCA's Goals
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1. Support for Criminal Justice Reforms

We plan to continue to move forward in our efforts to support countries that wish to establish efficient adversarial systems by working with both those that have already implemented the relevant legal reforms and those that are still in transition. As the demand for such support exceeds JSCA's current capacities, we must be selective and choose the actions that will have the greatest possible impact.

1.1 Research

- a) This year we will conclude the study initiated during the previous period by (i) updating information from the Follow-up Study on Criminal Procedure Reform in countries that have undergone significant changes, some of which have occurred as a result of the study itself; and (ii) gathering data in countries that were not included in the initial study because they began their reforms after the project was launched. We will generate a publication and organize local and regional activities to disseminate its results.
- b) We publish a book on innovation in criminal prosecution based on the material and papers presented at the seminar on criminal prosecution held in Mar del Plata, Argentina in December 2005.
- c) We will publish the Public Defense Manual that was developed during 2005.
- d) We will put together a collection of the best papers written by students from the Inter-American Program for Training Trainers for Criminal Procedure Reform.
- e) We will conclude research projects on gender and criminal procedure reform that were implemented in 2004 in Bolivia and Córdoba, Argentina using methodology developed by JSCA.

1.2 Training and Dissemination

- a) A third version of the Inter-American Program for Training Trainers for Criminal Procedure Reform will be held. It will include an onsite basic course, an e-learning intermediate course and an onsite advanced course. The program is directed at individuals in local leadership positions in this field.
- b) Support and monitoring will be provided for the implementation of local replicas of the second version of this program.

1.3 Technical Assistance (these activities will be carried out at the express request of justice sector institutions and will be financed by said institutions)

- a) We will maintain our presence and participation through technical assistance and training in the implementation of solutions that JSCA has developed to problems identified in the implementation of criminal procedure reforms. Special attention will be paid to introducing orality in the investigation stage. We will carry out actions in the Province of Buenos Aires, the City of Buenos Aires and the Province of Córdoba in Argentina and in Bolivia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.
- b) We will provide special support to countries that are initiating reform processes, including Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama and Peru.

2. Development of Information Systems and Judicial Management

2.1 Research

- a) We will develop a set of publications entitled "Judicial Management Materials," which will provide strategies for addressing key challenges and problems in judicial management and information from a practical perspective. These materials will lead to specific training activities. The following initiatives will be implemented during this year: (i) on the design, implementation and operation of models for judicial offices; and (ii) on the interpretation of statistical information for making decisions in judicial institutions.

- b) We will develop and distribute a second version of the Index of Online Access to Judicial Information with revised indicators and updated data. The publication will be distributed via Internet.
- c) We will systematize available statistical information in order to build a webpage that allows users to make connections between various types of information. The webpage will be accessible through JSCA's home page.
- d) We will analyze the possibility of building new rankings for countries based on available data on the functioning of their judicial systems.
- e) We will conclude our study on justice spending in the region, which began during the previous period.

2.2 Training and Dissemination

- a) We will develop and offer a virtual course on the design, implementation and operation of judicial offices.
- b) We will develop and offer a virtual course on the use of statistical information for decision-making in judicial institutions.
- c) We will hold the IV Inter-American Seminar on Judicial Government in El Salvador.

2.3 Technical Assistance

- a) We will support the implementation of pilot projects on criminal justice reform.
- b) We will conclude our efforts to gather statistical information in Guatemala.
- c) We will develop comparative justice indicators for Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua (subject to IDB approval).
- d) We will conduct a comparative study on management and judicial budget policies in the region to guide the work of the recently created Justice Council in Brazil. This activity will conclude with a national seminar.

3. Justice and Economic Development

We will continue to develop a comprehensive proposal for supporting the civil and commercial justice reform process in the region from a public policy perspective. Special attention will be paid to the following:

- a) We will carry out a study on the impact of judicial reform on countries' economic development jointly with the University of Florida. The purpose of this initiative is to build an instrument for the comparative measurement and monitoring of this relationship.
- b) We will conduct a comparative study on institutional arrangements for debt recovery.
- c) We will analyze comparative experiences in online litigation.

4. Other Activities in Fulfillment of JSCA's Goals

4.1 Research

- a) We will develop a comparative study on judicial reform in the Americas in collaboration with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).
- b) We will produce an evaluation of judicial system operation in countries in the Americas in collaboration with the OAS General Secretariat (subject to OAS approval).
- c) We will develop a proposal on principles of judicial ethics in collaboration with the Inter-American Legal Commission.
- d) We will finish our publication on alternative dispute resolution in the Americas in collaboration with the Universidad de Nuevo León.
- e) We will finish the study and design a publication on indigenous communities and judicial reform.
- f) We will document experiences with access to justice in the Americas in the context of the EUROsociAL project(1).
- g) We will design a study and manual on best practices in justice as a public service (EUROsociAL) (2).
- h) We will generate a study on the level of fulfillment of Summit of the Americas mandates in the area of justice. This project would be commissioned by the Inter-American Dialogue.

4.2 Training and Dissemination

- a) We will participate in and support local and regional conferences on topics related to our mission.
- b) We will hold an international seminar on judicial government in collaboration with Fundación Carolina of Argentina.
- c) We will continue to publish Judicial Systems Journal on a biannual basis in collaboration with INECIP of Argentina.
- d) We will continue to publish the Nexus Newsletter on a monthly basis.
- e) We will design and implement virtual courses on gender and judicial reform and "Comprehensive Treatment of Gender Violence" (EUROsociAL).
- f) We will design a virtual course on information and customer service policies (EUROsociAL).
- g) Two fora will be held on judicial reform in Mexico. One will focus on juvenile criminal responsibility and the other will address alternative dispute resolution methods (European Union project).
- h) We will explore the possibility of undertaking training activities designed to benefit judicial systems in

Caribbean nations in collaboration with the National Judicial Institute (NJI) of Canada.

i) Over the course of this year JSCA will take advantage of many opportunities to engage in joint activities with the network of Latin American experts associated with JSCA's Virtual Community. Initially, we will encourage members to discuss JSCA texts and research studies through a virtual forum with a blog-like structure. We will also encourage members to submit their own work and that of their institutions for similar analysis.

j) JSCA's Virtual Library and link to GLIN will be strengthened.

k) JSCA activities and products will be promoted through meetings held with journalists specializing in judicial issues in Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Peru.

(1) Only the project activities for which JSCA will be responsible are described in this report. The Center may, however, participate in a much broader set of activities.

(2) See note 1.