



JUDICIAL STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

Funding Period:

September 2011 - September 2016

Implementing Partner:

International Development Law Organization (IDLO)

Key Partners:

Supreme Court of Kyrgyzstan, The Council of Judges, Judicial Training Center

Activity Locations:

Nationwide

Activity overview

The USAID-IDLO Judicial Strengthening Program (JSP) is a five-year project providing targeted assistance to the judicial system to improve its independence, effectiveness, and integrity. The program is designed to strengthen rule of law by decreasing corruption, supporting judicial independence, improving the judicial personnel system and internal judicial management, and restoring judicial integrity by increasing public access to and management of judicial information. JSP is implemented through a cooperative agreement with the International Development Law Organization (IDLO).

Activity areas

USAID and IDLO have supported systematic integrity training in accordance with the Supreme Court's December 2013 Plan of Action to Reduce Corruption (developed upon recommendation of a JSP-supported 2012 baseline study of practices undermining the integrity of the court system). Moreover, JSP has assisted with the harmonization between the Law on Civil Service, the provisions of the Criminal Code that regulate corruption-related offences, the Judicial Ethics Code and a new draft law on Conflict of Interests.

Working with judicial system partners, JSP has developed and updated tests for applicants to become judges. The program has also developed rules for use of test results and case studies for a more objective evaluation of applicants' legal skills, for use during judicial selection processes.

JSP has developed a standardized and updated judicial training curriculum and helping prepare strategic plan for the Judicial Training Center (JTC) as the basis for the efforts to improve teaching capacities, status and funding of the JTC. JSP has also developed comprehensive and mandatory judicial training courses. Training of "first time" judges began in 2013 per court-mandated training for this category of judges. These materials will be used for training judges and judge applicants during the remaining term of the USAID-IDLO partnership.

Beginning in 2014, JSP will help produce a series of TV programs and other public outreach announcements and dialogue platforms to encourage improved conduct and respect for rights of participants in judicial proceedings. In order to address a key problem in functionality and safety of courtroom proceedings, IDLO will assist in developing the foundational human resources processes for court staff dedicated to court security, including planning and budgeting, amending court security rules and regulations, and long-term resource planning.

Furthermore, the JSP is providing on-going support with drafting and validating a National Target Program for the Development of the Judiciary (2013-2016). JSP continues to support judicial capacity building on aspects of financial planning, budgeting, monitoring, financial compliance, and human resource development.

JSP also aims to have the Kyrgyz Republic's judges publish of 50% of all court decisions by 2017 on the publicly accessible website, www.sot.kg. The JSP also continues to improve the Supreme Court's website.

Activity impact

In June 2014, the Parliament approved the State Target Program for the Development of the Judiciary (2014-2017), the Judiciary's first strategic plan tied to specific budget levels, developed with JSP support. This binding document, which has received the concurrence of all branches of government, will among other things raise the percentage of the state budget allocated to the Judiciary from approximately 0.5% to 0.85% in fall 2014, rising as high as 1.5% over the three years of this plan. JSP continues to provide technical assistance to judicial capacity building on aspects of financial planning, budgeting, monitoring, financial compliance, and human resource development.

JSP has improved internal and external access to information about the courts' activities by introducing electronic court management system. These efforts have expanded to eight courts and will ultimately help judges in 48 courts publish their decisions and dockets on the website, www.sot.kg. These 48 courts will represent nearly 100% of the judicial decisions taken in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Legal resources such as benchbooks and the methodology on the use of a practical tool for appellate court judges to review and analyze decisions of trial courts contributed to court's effort to improve the professional quality and predictability of judicial decision-making.

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