



European Network of Councils
for the Judiciary (ENCJ)

Réseau européen des Conseils
de la Justice (RECJ)

Improvement plan

1. Focus on 2-3 topics: the dialogue meetings aim to identify three top-priorities for each judiciary. It is advisable to stick to these top-priorities, once these have been endorsed by the Councils. Given the complexity of achieving objectives in the area of independence and accountability, focus is essential.
2. Integration in general strategic planning: Councils are advised to decide explicitly about the relationship between the I&A improvement plan and overall strategic planning of the Council. Integration in an overall strategy process, especially if a formal legislative procedure is mandatory to approve plans, may be efficient. This may affect the timeline of the improvement plan, and the ENCJ should be informed about this.
3. Focus on the mandate of the Council (if possible): to achieve results speedily it is advisable to focus on topics that are within the mandate of the Council or, second best, the judiciary. Dependence on the co-operation of actors outside the judiciary can easily lead to delay or worse. However, this will not always be possible, as the top-priorities in this area often require legislation. A balance between topics that require legislation and others that can be achieved internally should be strived at. As to topics that require legislation or otherwise close co-operation with the other state powers, a strategic approach with regard to the interaction with the other powers, aimed at establishing a constructive dialogue, is necessary. This may involve the media as well. Such a strategic approach will require a long term perspective.
4. Use a simple format: in order to facilitate exchange of ideas with other Councils it is recommended to address the following topics in an improvement plan (or in an extract about independence and accountability of a general strategic plan):
 - (1) main challenges: presented in a few sentences with a concise presentation of the context in which the challenges have arisen;
 - (2) strategic objective(s) to address the challenge(s): described by linking them to a specific area that is planned to be improved;
 - (3) methodology (how will the objectives be realised): the informativeness of this part has a significant added value for the implementation of the member's own objective as well as for the dissemination of good practices among ENCJ members;
 - (4) key stakeholders: identified by linking them to the challenges or the strategic objectives to address the challenges;

- (5) risks: identified for each of the strategic objectives;
- (6) concrete timelines: even if the selected measures are to be applied in a continuous process of improvement of the judicial system, distinguishing stages encourages the interest in achieving the results and allows self-control;
- (7) monitoring mechanism: not only a monitoring process should be determined but also the variables to measure success and the periodicity of measuring for each of the strategic objectives.



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Format Action plan for improvement

Member/Observer:

1) Brief description of main challenge(s)
2) Strategic objective(s) to address the challenge(s)
3) Methodology (how will the objectives be realised)
4) Key stakeholders
5) Risks
6) Timeline
7) Monitoring mechanism (How will the progress be monitored?)