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Justice Financing Framework

A Guide to Budgeting and Financing for
People-Centered Justice for the Justice Sector





BACKGROUND BRIEF 1.1

1.1 Outcomes Focused on the Resolution of People's Justice Problems



Introduction

The Justice Financing Framework proposes that countries should develop:

- Outcome objectives focused on resolving people's most pressing justice problems.
- Justice sector budgets based on the functions needed to deliver outcome objectives (rather than the needs of justice institutions).

This background brief:

- Discusses setting **outcome** level objectives based on the resolution of people's most pressing justice problems and the required functions to achieve these objectives.
- Discusses the current data challenges in measuring the resolution of justice problems and proposes a possible solution.
- Discusses **output** level objectives and indicators.
- Discusses the merits of **input** level objectives and indicators, including measuring service quality.
- Provides examples of cooperation and coordination between justice sector organizations in planning and setting objectives.

1.1 Core outcome: Resolution of justice problems

The JAC's forthcoming *People-Centered Justice Measurement Framework* will help countries collect and use data and evidence to implement people-centered justice systems. The JFF is aligned with the Measurement Framework, which is currently under development (referred hereafter as Measurement Framework). It identifies resolution of justice problems as the first core outcome objective, with two additional core outcome indicators based on the perception of fairness and trust.

The JAC [Actions We Must Take to Achieve People-Centered Justice](#) proposes a long-term outcome target "to cut the number of unresolved justice problems in half." How quickly such a target could be achieved will depend on the country context and financing available. Recent in-depth analysis by the Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (HiIL) lists twelve categories of the most pressing global justice problems. HiIL identifies these problems by taking into account both prevalence and impact (measured by the hardship unresolved justice problems cause). The most pressing justice problems include, for example, problems relating to security, family, and work.

1.2 People-centered justice functions

The forthcoming Measurement Framework identifies key functions required to resolve these justice problems (function-based intermediate outcomes):

Table 1: People-Centered Justice Functions and Outcomes

Functions and Outcome (JAC Measurement Framework)	Description of Function (Hiil)
1. INFORMATION Outcome: People with justice problems have access to the information they need.	Information is aimed at both preventing disputes and helping to resolve them when they do occur (e.g., legal education, legal empowerment, and sociolegal advice services). Providing information may enable the resolution of disputes through self-help, or with help from family and friends.
2. ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE Outcome: People with justice problems have access to the advice and assistance they need.	Advice and assistance can include diagnosis, and support aimed at resolving disputes by negotiating fair outcomes. Agreements in the shadow of the law are the most frequent way to resolve justice problems in every jurisdiction.
3. INFORMAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION Outcome: People with justice problems have access to the informal dispute resolution services they need.	In some cases, disputants need third-party neutral assistance with resolving their justice problem. Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) such as mediation or community, traditional, and customary justice mechanisms provide an alternative to formal state dispute resolution in appropriate cases.
4. FORMAL STATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION Outcome: People with justice problems have access to formal state dispute resolution services they need.	State institutions provide the backstop for more informal resolutions, dealing with justice problems which are inappropriate for informal resolution.

These intermediate function-based outcomes provide the basis for determining both how resources are allocated through outcome-based budgeting, and what is measured. The outcome data generated through application of the Measurement Framework will inform the outcome-focused resource allocation process described in the JFF.

An in-depth analysis of the current state of evidence on justice needs, functions, and service providers can be found in recent Hiil analysis, as referenced above.

2. Current Data Challenges in Measuring the Resolution of Justice Problems

The forthcoming Measurement Framework focuses on the resolution of people's most pressing justice problems. However, measuring this core high-level objective is currently challenging. The Measurement Framework relies heavily on justice or legal needs surveys as a key data source. Legal needs surveys are expensive, and while most OECD countries have undertaken such a survey, only half of all low- and middle-income countries have done so. Where a legal needs survey has been done, they tend not to be repeated, with many countries only undertaking one nationwide legal needs survey in the last ten years.

In countries where legal needs surveys are at present not regularly carried out, measurement of the resolution of justice problems (i.e., rates of agreement, and satisfied/fair resolution rates) could be achieved through the development of a shorter form of the current legal needs survey. This would reduce costs and enable monitoring of progress on an annual basis.

The development of such a mechanism could be a key low-cost element of a people-centered justice implementation plan (discussed in [Background Brief 5.1](#)). It would enable high-level outcomes to be the foundation of such plans, as in other sectors such as health and education (see [Background Brief 0.2](#) for the health sector).

3. Output Level Objectives and Indicators

As in other sectors such as education and health, in addition to outcomes it is also useful to measure outputs. The Measurement Framework will develop detailed output indicators that will: "... measure the results of specific justice and legal services, evaluated from the perspective of the users (individuals, communities, businesses, organizations), focusing on their satisfaction, accessibility, affordability, perceptions of fairness, process and outcomes, quality of service, timeliness, and enforcement."

3.1 Accessibility of justice services: coverage

An output indicator widely used in the education and health sectors is accessibility: measuring the coverage of a service, i.e., use of the service relative to need. An example from the health sector would be the number of pregnant women receiving antenatal care. This requires data on both the number of pregnant women and the number receiving care (see [Background Brief 0.2](#)).

The concept of service coverage seems highly relevant to measuring the accessibility of justice services. A service coverage indicator could be, for example, the **percentage of the population with a significant justice problem that received advice and assistance**.

There are several advantages to an objective framed in this way:

- A coverage objective enables the justice sector to compare and contrast levels of coverage with other sectors. An illustrative argument would be whether it is right that while 100 percent of children are in school and 50 percent can access health care, only a much lower percentage can access a basic justice service.

- It is relatively cheap and easy to measure progress: service providers record the number of people supported, and their collective effort can be compiled each year through a simple national online reporting system or through networks (e.g., LAPSNET in Uganda or LawWorks in the United Kingdom). Since the numbers needing support only change gradually, they can be estimated using less frequent legal needs surveys. A reasonable estimate of coverage can therefore be calculated with greater ease.

4. Input Objectives and Indicators

As well as outcome and output level indicators, the Measurement Framework will also identify input indicators “to measure the implementation of the justice systems, policies, institutions and structures.”

This is in line with other service delivery sectors, which have found it helpful to complement high-level outcome and output objectives with input level objectives or indicators that specify the level of service provision required to deliver the high-level objective. Input level indicators force an assessment of what level of service is needed. This is essential both for planning the development of these services and costing the overall strategy.

In the education sector, a key input is teachers. It follows that a common input level indicator is the ratio of pupils to teachers. Similarly, in the health sector, a common input is primary health care centers, and a common input level indicator is the percentage of the population living within ten kilometers of a primary health care center (see [Background Brief 0.2](#)).

Possible examples of input level indicators for front line people-centered justice services are:

- Proximity to a basic justice center.
- Ratio of community justice workers to number of people needing front line justice service.

4.1 Risks around input indicators

While there is value in adopting input indicators, there are also risks. For example, input indicators focus on current service providers. Therefore, they can result in an overemphasis on inputs provided by the formal justice system rather than more informal justice systems, which are harder to measure.

Another risk is that input indicators can reduce the focus on efficiency. More inputs may be required, but ensuring the most efficient use of existing inputs is also critical.

4.2 Measures of equity and quality

Measuring the equity and quality of people-centered justice services is a key issue being addressed in the forthcoming Measurement Framework. One aspect of measuring equity is the disaggregation of objectives by relevant markers of disadvantaged groups (e.g., gender, age, subnational regions, ethnicity, refugees, etc.).

In addition, the experience of other sectors demonstrates that input level objectives are not only helpful in determining what inputs are needed to deliver high-level objectives; they can also help to address issues of equity and quality.

For example, in equity of justice services, indicators such as proximity to a basic justice center or the frequency of a village visit by a paralegal can help to ensure that progress in delivering national access to people-centered justice is not achieved by intense focus on only a few urban centers.

Box 1 below provides more detail on the use of indicators in the health sector.

Box 1: Use of Indicators in the Health Sector

The WHO measures the proportion of the population that can access essential quality health services. It monitors this for a range of services such as immunization. It also monitors key inputs such as the ratio of health workers to population, and various equity measures such as how the health worker ratio varies across the country.

The education sector can provide useful examples for **quality of justice services**. One illustration: while it is important to have all children attending school, if each teacher had to teach one hundred pupils rather than a target of fifty, there would be a clear reduction in the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching would best be measured directly (e.g., percentage of children able to read). In the absence of such measurement, a simpler and readily measurable proxy would be the proportion of schools with the pupil-to-teacher ratio exceeding the 50:1 target. Similarly, it would be beneficial to measure the quality of justice advice; however, cost-effective tools for doing so are not yet readily available (see [Background Brief 4.2](#) on research and development). In the meantime, it may be useful to measure a proxy such as the ratio of the number of people needing front line justice services to the number of available paralegals.

5. Examples of Cooperation and Coordination Between Justice Sector Organizations in Objective-Setting and Planning

Setting and delivering objectives is likely to require cooperation and coordination between justice sector organizations. The nature of such cooperation and coordination will be highly context-specific and will need to be developed in light of the independence of key justice sector organizations, particularly the judiciary. Box 2 below provides country examples of such cooperation and coordination in practice.

Box 2: Justice Sector Cross-Institutional Policymaking, Planning, and Resource Allocation

Since 2014, the justice sector in **Sierra Leone**, including the constitutionally independent judiciary, has adopted a cross-sectoral approach to policymaking, planning, and resource allocation, with the Ministry of Justice's Justice Coordination Office responsible for supporting the development of successive cross-sectoral Justice Sector Reform Strategies and Investment Plans, cross-sectoral implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

In the late 1990s, the Ministry of Finance in **Uganda** encouraged all sectors to develop costed reform plans that linked to the country's national poverty reduction plan and were implemented as part of the national medium-term expenditure framework. With Ministry of Finance leadership (and donor-funded technical assistance), all justice sector institutions including the constitutionally independent judiciary joined together as the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) and worked to develop a costed, prioritized reform program with the aim of increasing access to justice. At that time, priorities were (1) commercial justice, and (2) criminal justice. Cross-sector cooperation and coordination including monitoring and evaluation was spearheaded by a new cross-sector institutional architecture at the political and technical levels (which grew out of Uganda's sectoral budgeting arrangements)—including the newly created Justice Sector Coordination Office within the Ministry of Justice. Twenty-five years later, this cross-sectoral reform architecture still provides a key coordinating mechanism for justice sector dialogue and reform in Uganda. Uganda was the first country to adopt such an approach in the justice sector, and was the inspiration for similar arrangements in others, including Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

Rwanda's cross-institutional Justice, Reconciliation, Law and Order Sector (JRLOS, which includes the independent Judiciary) was formed in the mid-2000s with technical assistance from donors, especially the European Union. Through cross-sectoral policymaking, planning, and prioritization, JRLOS has developed a series of sectoral strategic plans linked to Rwanda's medium-term expenditure framework and supported by donor funding. Institutional reforms to promote front line justice include Access to Justice houses in every district (providing free legal advice and assistance) and Mbuzi (local mediation committees).

Canada's Action Committee on Access to Justice established by the Chief Justice brings together stakeholders from all parts of Canada's justice system to align the work of organizations across the country. The Action Committee coordinates national metrics on justice, tracks progress, and connects people to share innovations.

Appendix of Background Briefs

Introduction and Purpose

0.1 Justice Financing Framework: Introduction and Purpose

0.2 Lessons for Justice Financing from the Health Sector

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1.1 Outcomes Focused on the Resolution of People's Justice Problems

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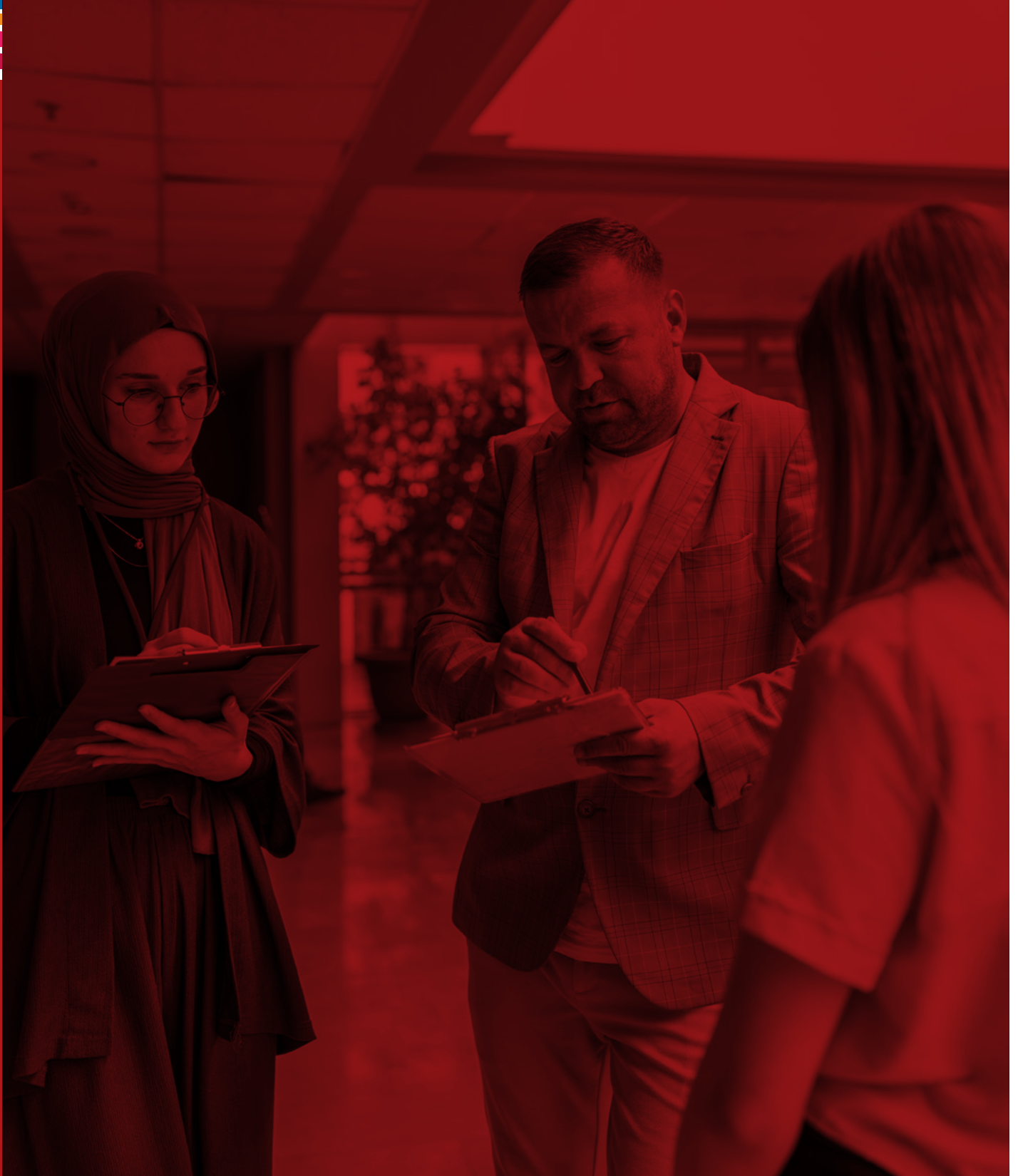
4.3 Systematic Efficiency and Effectiveness Expenditure Reviews

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5 Developing Achievable, Costed, Prioritized, Transparent, and Accountable Plans

5.1 Achievability, Costing, and Prioritization

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This Background Brief is an excerpt from the Justice Action Coalition Workstream IV, "Justice Financing Framework," November 2025. For more information, see www.sdg16.plus/justice-financing-framework.