



## Purpose of the *Framework*

Developed by the Consortium, the *Framework* is a resource for assessing the performance of a court against seven detailed areas of excellence and provides guidance to courts intending to improve their performance. The term court is used for all bodies that are part of a country's formal judicial system. It includes courts and tribunals of general, limited or specialised jurisdiction as well as secular or religious courts. The *Framework* applies to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as well, if the ADR is provided or overseen by a court or court system.

### Members of the Consortium include:

- **The Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration (AIJA)**  
[www.aija.org.au](http://www.aija.org.au)
- **The Federal Judicial Center (FJC)**  
[www.fjc.gov](http://www.fjc.gov)
- **The National Center for State Courts (NCSC)**  
[www.ncsconline.org](http://www.ncsconline.org)
- **The Subordinate Courts of Singapore**  
[app.subcourts.gov.sg](http://app.subcourts.gov.sg)

In addition, assistance in developing this *Framework* was provided by:

- **The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice of the Council of Europe (CEPEJ)**  
[www.coe.int/cepej](http://www.coe.int/cepej)
- **Spring Singapore**  
[www.spring.gov.sg](http://www.spring.gov.sg)
- **The World Bank**  
[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)



## Benefits of adopting the *Framework*

Courts have a specific role to play in society. This includes upholding the law, resolving legal disputes, enforcing obligations, determining the consequences for unlawful behaviour and safeguarding legal rights. Adopting the *Framework* will help to ensure that courts are able to deliver high quality services that are essential to achieve their critical role and function in society.

Because courts are unique and have a higher degree of freedom from scrutiny compared to other public institutions, there is a need for a regular review of court procedures, administration and performance measurement. The *Framework* addresses this need. It helps to promote judicial independence and accountability and provides guidance to courts seeking to earn and maintain a high level of community confidence.

## Court Values

**Successful courts are guided by ten core values: equality before the law, fairness, impartiality, independence of decision-making, competence, integrity, transparency, accessibility, timeliness and certainty.** These values guarantee due process and equal protection of the law to those who have business before the courts. That is why it is important that—from a user perspective—the core values for courts and judicial proceedings are made explicit and public.

These court values are embedded in the seven areas of excellence identified by the *Framework*. A journey towards court excellence is also a journey towards strengthening these values and to an improvement of the court performance. In fact, the *Framework* makes the values more concrete and provides a signpost to measure the progress on the journey.

## The Seven Areas of Court Excellence

### 1. Court Management and Leadership

Strong court leadership implies the promotion of an external orientation, a proactive and professional management culture, accountability and openness, an eye for innovation and a proactive response to changes in society.

### 2. Court Policies

Excellent courts formulate, implement and assess clear policies and strategies.

### 3. Court Proceedings

Excellent courts have fair, efficient and effective court proceedings.

### 4. Public Trust and Confidence

Excellent courts enjoy a high level of public trust and confidence.

### 5. User Satisfaction

Excellent courts systematically assess the needs and perceptions of court users and use the information received to improve the processes and services they offer.

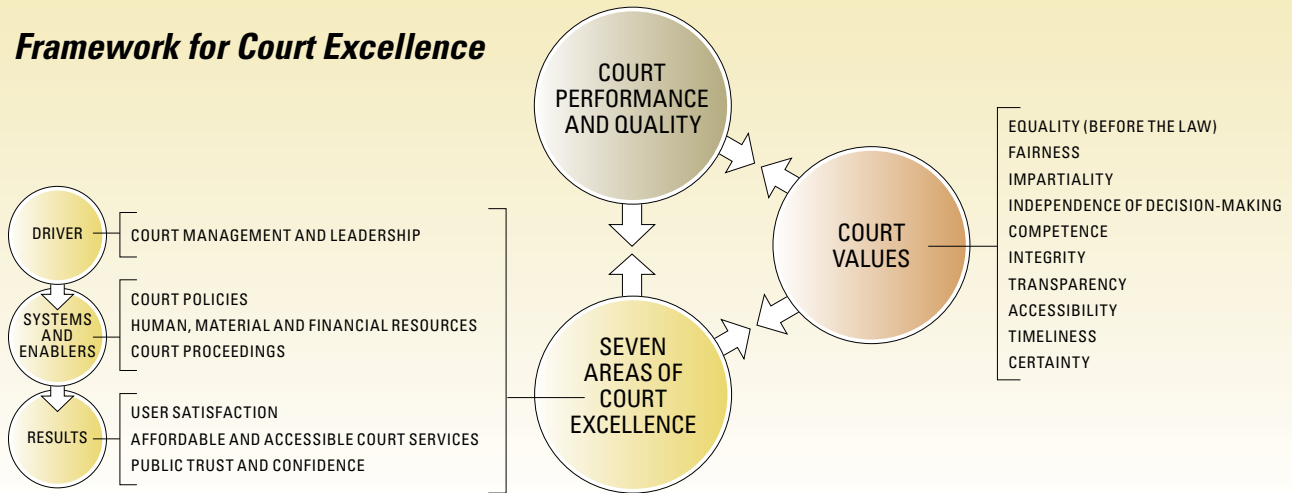
### 6. Court Resources

Human, material and financial resources are properly, effectively and proactively managed by excellent courts.

### 7. Affordable and Accessible Court Services

Excellent courts are affordable and easily accessible to their users.

## Framework for Court Excellence



## How to become an Excellent Court

The first step in the journey towards court excellence involves an assessment of how a court is currently performing. The *Framework* incorporates a self-assessment tool, which allows a court to undertake an assessment of its performance measured against the **Seven Areas of Court Excellence**.

Courts may engage professional assistance in undertaking the assessment, but such assistance is not strictly necessary. The self-assessment questionnaire is designed to be easily undertaken by your court. For optimal results, the *Framework* promotes broad participation during the assessment: judges, administrators and other court employees. In addition, the active involvement of the court's professional partners (the bar, public prosecutors, law enforcement agents, etc.) is welcomed too.

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**Appendix A: Court Excellence Self-Assessment Questionnaire**

International Framework for Court Excellence		APPROACH					DEPLOYMENT					RESULTS							
		NONE	REACTIVE	DEFERRED	INTEGRATED	INNOVATIVE	NONE	SOME	SOME KEY	BIG KEY	ALL KEY	ALL	NONE	LIMITED	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	
<b>AREA 1: COURT LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>		0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.1	Develop a visionary and aspirational mission statement setting forth the court's fundamental purposes and values including Accessibility, Expedition and Timeliness, Equality, Fairness and Integrity, Independence and Accountability, Property and Public Trust and Confidence.																		
1.2	Demonstrate external orientation of the court, by developing cooperative working relationships with legal professional and other partners (i.e., the bar, public prosecutors, law enforcement, government agencies).																		
1.3	Demonstrate external orientation of the court, by communicating the court's vision, goals, programs, and outcomes to court users, society, and legal professional and other partners.																		
1.4	Promote a professional management culture, including training and education in management skills.																		
1.5	Anticipate and identify challenges facing the court and formulate and adopt innovative policies and programs in response.																		
1.6	Actively involve all court employees in communicating and implementing the court vision, goals, programs, and outcomes and identifying challenges and solutions, through two-way communication.																		
1.7	Establish a case registration and management system that promotes efficiency and effectiveness and makes it possible to monitor and evaluate the court's performance with reliable quantitative data.																		
1.8	Establish a program of collecting reliable information pertaining to quality indicators (e.g., surveys of court staff, users, professional partners, and, the public).																		
1.9	Establish processes to regularly review and improve all seven areas of court excellence.																		
<b>AREA 1: COURT LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SUBTOTALS</b>																			

The full version of the *Framework* document and the self assessment questionnaire is available on the Consortium's website: [www.courtexcellence.com](http://www.courtexcellence.com).

## **What to do after the assessment**

The assessment of the court performance will identify strong points and areas where improvements are necessary. To help with the journey towards court excellence, practical tools for each of the seven areas of measurement have been developed or will become available in the near future. Examples of tools are accessible on the Consortium's website [www.courtexcellence.com](http://www.courtexcellence.com).

## **Where to find further information or request help**

The full text of the *Framework of Court Excellence* can be downloaded from the Consortium's website. The website also lists examples of courts that have already applied quality measures or a court quality system.

Questions or comments concerning or applying the *Framework* can be forwarded to Daniel J. Hall, National Center for State Courts (email [djhall@ncsc.org](mailto:djhall@ncsc.org) or phone 1.303.293.3063). Or, to contact one of the other Consortium members, visit [www.courtexcellence.com/contact.html](http://www.courtexcellence.com/contact.html) or email [info@courtexcellence.com](mailto:info@courtexcellence.com).

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