

March 12, 2012

Ms. Haiyan Qian
Director, Division of Public Administration and Development Management,
Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
United Nations Public Service Award
United Nations
New York, New York

Dear Ms. Haiyan Qian,

*Subject: Recommendation for an UNPSA 2012 for Turkey Ministry of Justice Submission
Modernization of Information and Communication Technology in the Judicial System for
Bringing Public Services Closer to the People (UYAP Project)*

I would like to support the application of Turkey regarding UYAP program in the following category: Project "Informatics System for Users of Judicial Services" and Category "Improving the delivery of public services".

At the World Bank, I have been involved in the design and implementation of judicial reform and governance programs for about twenty years in Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, South Asia and Africa. As part of this work I have also been responsible for detecting and distilling good practices and knowledge for sharing with clients and other stakeholders.

I generally became aware of Turkey's e-justice efforts in the early 2000's when my clients in Azerbaijan and Ukraine wanted to learn about this experience and I was trying to obtain first hand information on ICT investments in the judicial system that conformed to EU requirements. This initial interest, later field visits (as recent as end 2010) and other experiences have continued my engagement with Turkey till today.

I have found the Turkish approach and methodology for successfully introducing technology as "suitable" for a public sector institution such as the judiciary that typically faces complex set of social, economic, and political economy challenges.

In my view, Turkey's e-Justice program has made significant contributions to the improvement in the administration of justice by bringing services closer to the people. The program started in 2000, when policy makers decided to upgrade the justice system to meet EU membership requirements, and was conceived as part of the country's e-government project. The main goals of the program were to minimize the procedural error in the judiciary, to increase the accuracy and speed of judicial proceedings, and to improve the public's trust in the system.

The success of the program in implementing a new way of providing justice services to citizens is due to several factors, among others, by a clear policy direction and leadership at the top; appropriate reforms to norms and standards that permitted the introduction and use of electronic signature and the undertaking of needed organizational changes; and a strategy that first tested ICT solutions at the highest levels of the judicial system. Key components of this strategy were to focus on in-house skill building through the constant training of judges, staff and other stakeholders; and on securing sufficient funds for investments in technology and facilities.

I see, the National Judiciary Informatics System (UYAP) as the central pillar of the e-justice program. It has several features and applications for courts and prosecutor offices, and other justice sector agencies. The UYAP system was mainly implemented in two stages.

The initial step of the UYAP was to introduce ICT technologies and modern work processes and systems at the central headquarter offices of the Ministry of Justice and at the higher and lower level Courts located in Ankara. This first step included the creation of electronic signatures for the users of the system, as well as observational visits on e-justice systems in good practice locations in Europe and Singapore by the MOJ. During the second stage, the UYAP system was upgraded to UYAP II, the UYAP II was rolled-out to courts and prosecutor offices in cities and towns throughout Turkey, and UYAP II use by other Government agencies and institutions was promoted by integrating the UYAP II with other Government ICT systems (e.g. police, land registry, business registry and financial management systems).

Given that Turkey is a large country, the benefits of technology are being deployed all levels and all across the territory. I think currently about 6000 judges, about 4000 prosecutors, and about 50,000 staff use the e-justice system regularly. In terms of the lawyers in private practice about 70,000 are being served through the system.

As regards policy makers easy and instant access to knowledge (e.g. relevant data and statistics on the workings of the judiciary and other justice institutions) the ICT system is helping them with good decisions. The integrated information is helping managers plan the deployment of human resources, skills training and assess productivity of various units. Accurate and timely reporting of key statistics such as crime rates, case workloads, staffing levels, court use patterns, etc. are helping balance staff workload, achieve higher productivity and promote a culture of service and transformation in the justice sector.

Now e-justice services are also easily available to the general public, local and international investors and other stakeholders. Through the UYAP system and its interface thousands of citizens appear to benefit from basic information about the courts, and their public services. One of the central focuses of the e-justice program is to link the users with the judicial system. Lawyers can file cases, pay court fees, submit documents and check case status without physically coming to the court. This e-access to the judicial system has cut down the need for visits to court buildings. As a result, lawyers that I have talked to have noted savings in time and money; and court staff have acknowledged

fewer interruptions by visitors. It also has benefits of security and is truly helping instill the concept of “juditecture” in locations such as Istanbul where new investments in technology, court architecture and human capital development are being done in an integrated manner that enhance transformational impacts.

The institutional impacts of the UYAP system are also remarkable. For example, the number of errors in the preparation of court judgments and miss-location of court files has been significantly reduced. The efficiency of court operations has experienced major improvements, especially in large first instance courts where delays and huge workload was the norm. Video conference applications of courts with other justice bodies (e.g. prisons) are also cutting down delays and helping save transportation costs.

Over these years, I have perceived a deep sense of pride and satisfaction in the judges and staff that I met and who have been engaged in the reform process. Policy makers also expressed a sense of satisfaction with the fact that they were actually responding to the needs of the population by improving the performance of the judicial system. Nonetheless, judges, court staff and members of the bar are all proudly expecting further improvements to the UYAP system they are using, which would further cut the costs of bar members, and bring it one step closer to excellence.

For any further information I can be reached at wmalik@worldbank.org and telephone no 2024739237.

Sincerely,



Waleed Haider Malik
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