



NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR EFFECTIVE UNDERTAKING OF SERVICE DELIVERY INITIATIVES IN THE JUSTICE SECTOR

2026



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NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE (NCAJ)



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The preparation and launch of this Standard Operating Procedures was supported by:



MANDATE

The National Council on Administration of Justice (NCAJ) is established under the Judicial Service Act, Cap 8A, as a high-level body mandated to ensure a coordinated, efficient, effective and collaborative approach to the administration of justice, and reform of the Kenya's justice system.



VISION

A coordinated and cohesive justice sector serving the people in Kenya.



MISSION

To ensure a coordinated and consultative approach in the administration of justice by bringing together key actors to collectively develop and pursue reform priorities and strategies.



VALUES

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Accountability | ☐ Constitutionalism |
| ☐ Consultation | ☐ Interdependence |
| ☐ Public Service | ☐ Innovation |

FOREWORD



The effective delivery of justice services in Kenya is critical to upholding the rule of law and fostering social-economic development. This is in line with Kenya's constitution, which requires accountability to the people and a timely response to their justice needs. However, justice sector institutions continue to face challenges that hinder their ability to realise the desirable service delivery levels.

To address these challenges, justice sector agencies need to leverage efforts and reduce duplication and disparities while carrying out joint assignments or Service Delivery Initiatives (SDIs).

Although justice system institutions have made remarkable strides in implementing joint initiatives in a coordinated way, the desired and maximum results are often not achieved. Some of these crucial collaborative assignments or SDIs, whose execution requires a harmonised approach, are rapid-results initiatives, case backlog reduction exercises, decongestion of prisons, upscaling the fight against corruption, and the provision of legal aid. Since the implementation of these initiatives requires the participation of two or more justice sector agencies, a joint approach is vital to achieving the desired results.

It is against this backdrop that the National Council on the Administration of Justice (NCAJ) has developed the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to support seamless implementation of SDIs. The SOPs provide a standardised approach for planning, implementing, monitoring, reporting and evaluating the success of SDIs across the justice sector. Further, the SOPs will enhance accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness of the interventions carried out to improve administration and access to justice. Moreover, they will strengthen the realisation of a people-centred justice system.

Therefore, I urge all justice sector institutions to use these SOPs extensively, as they are essential to ensuring that justice is timely and accessible to all Kenyans. The justice seekers deserve a system that works for them, one that is accountable and minimises delays.

Hon. Justice Martha K. Koome, EGH
Chief Justice of the Republic of Kenya &
Chairperson - National Council on the Administration of Justice

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the effective undertaking of Service Delivery Initiatives (SDIs) marks a significant achievement in strengthening service delivery in Kenya's justice sector. The development of these SOPs was a collaborative effort involving extensive consultations with actors in the justice system.

I sincerely thank the National Council on the Administration of Justice (NCAJ) for its commitment to timely and people-centred service delivery in Kenya's justice system.

Special appreciation goes to the leadership and staff of justice sector institutions and stakeholders for their invaluable contributions that have immensely enriched these SOPs. The contribution has rendered the SOPs to be the ideal reference document for improving the justice sector's responsiveness to clients' needs.

I acknowledge the NCAJ Technical Committee for its critical input and review of these SOPs. Particular thanks go to Dr Moses Marang'a, Executive Director of NCAJ, and Ms Cynthia Olwande, Head of Strategy, Monitoring, and Evaluation, who oversaw the technical development of these procedures. The incredible support of the other NCAJ Secretariat staff and Mr Eliud Githua, the graphic designer, is greatly appreciated.

Lastly, I thank our development partners, particularly the International Law Development Organisation (IDLO), for technical and financial support.

As the SOPs guide the implementation of SDIs, I am confident they will reduce delays in service delivery across the justice sector. Moreover, their successful implementation will contribute to a more responsive, citizen-centric, and efficient justice system.

Hon. Winfridah B. Mokaya, CBS
Chief Registrar of the Judiciary &
Secretary - National Council on the Administration of Justice

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



These Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been developed to guide justice sector agencies in undertaking Service Delivery Initiatives (SDIs).

Their primary objective is to address challenges affecting efficient and effective service delivery. Specifically, they provide a practical approach for institutions to conduct SDIs to ensure timely access to justice. The SOPs reflect the

collective commitment of justice sector institutions to adopting a well-coordinated approach in improving service delivery.

To realise the desirable level of service delivery, the SOPs guide several critical implementation areas, notably:

- **Planning and Execution** by establishing structured mechanisms for designing and executing SDIs.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration** to enhance coordination between justice sector agencies and strengthen engagement with partners and the public.
- **Monitoring, Review and Reporting**, which focuses on tracking progress, measuring impact, and documenting the ensuing decisions and interventions.
- **Sustainability Safeguards** to strengthen human resources and financial support for the immediate and future success.

By providing clear guidance to institutions, the SOPs will help sustain high standards of service delivery, ultimately strengthening the administration of justice in Kenya.

Marang'a W. Moses, Ph.D., MBS

Executive Director

National Council on the Administration of Justice

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The effective delivery of justice is critical to upholding the rule of law and fostering public confidence. Kenya's justice sector continues to face delays in delivering justice and in timely response to the most pressing service delivery needs. These challenges have contributed to, among others, prolonged dispute resolution, prison overcrowding, limited access to legal aid, and low public satisfaction with the justice system.

Although great strides have been made to address service delivery inefficiencies within and across institutions, the desired results have yet to be fully realised. Since addressing these inefficiencies requires the participation of two or more justice sector agencies, a structured and coordinated approach is vital to achieving the desired results.

In response to these challenges, the National Council on the Administration of Justice (NCAJ), established under the Judicial Service Act, CAP 8A, to ensure a coordinated, efficient and effective approach to the administration of justice in Kenya, has developed the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide the effective undertaking of Service Delivery Initiatives (SDIs).

The SDIs are interventions undertaken by justice sector institutions to rapidly deliver services in instances characterised by accumulated workload and delayed access to justice.

They therefore play a crucial role in improving the efficiency of the justice sector, reducing delays, and enhancing public confidence.

The SDIs encompass a wide range of programmes and activities, including, but not limited to, service days and weeks, rapid results initiatives, case backlog reduction initiatives, prison decongestion exercises, execution of pending warrants, legal aid clinics, court circuits, and anti-corruption initiatives.

Typically, these initiatives aim to resolve bottlenecks and improve access to justice by mobilizing time, financial and human capital to execute pending assignments within a given time period. Many of these initiatives are rolled out jointly with other partners and celebrated as sectoral milestones in enhancing institutional performance and responsiveness to client needs.

Despite their potential, the effective implementation of SDIs remains fragmented, and their results are short-lived, with the pre-existing status quo resurfacing soon after implementation. Some of the main challenges include weak joint ownership, poor documentation and monitoring, inconsistent coordination, short preparation timelines, limited stakeholder engagement, and resource constraints, which undermine their impact and sustainability. As a result, many achievements are also underreported, making it difficult to assess outcomes or replicate success.

1.2 Objectives and Rationale of Standard Operating Procedures for Service Delivery Initiatives

The primary objective of these SOPs is to guide and provide clarity on the efficient and effective undertaking of SDIs in the justice sector. Through the SOPs, Kenya's justice system aims to strengthen the administration of justice and contribute to people-centred service delivery. Specifically, the SOPs aim at guiding;

- i) Planning and designing of Service Delivery Initiatives.
- ii) Executing and operationalising Service Delivery Initiatives.
- iii) Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of Service Delivery Initiatives.
- iv) Strengthening reporting, learning and sustainability of Service Delivery Initiatives.

Accessing justice remains a challenge for many, particularly the vulnerable, due to delays in service delivery. While SDIs have been implemented to address these gaps, their impact has often been inconsistent and short-lived. This is mainly due to fragmented implementation, weak coordination, and the absence of shared standards across justice sector institutions.

These SOPs have been developed to address these challenges. They aim to make SDIs more predictable, responsive, and people-centred, ensuring that justice services are delivered in a timely way that also promotes accountability. The SOPs are also expected to improve public trust in the justice system.

1.3 Highlights of the Commonly Undertaken Service Delivery Initiatives in the Justice Sector

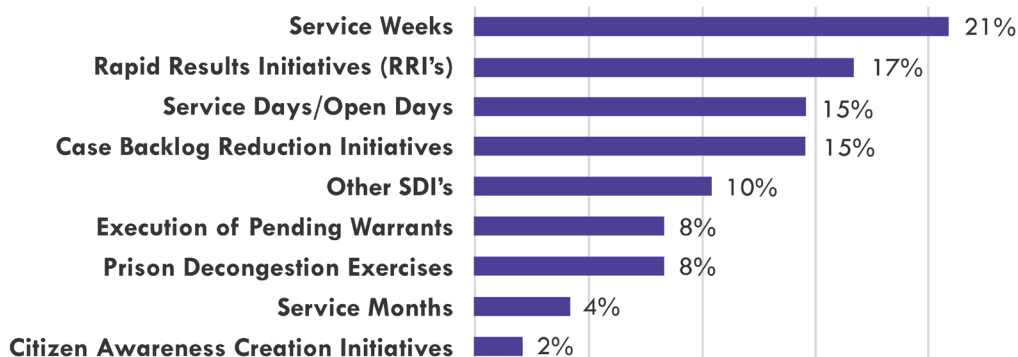
Kenya's justice sector agencies implement a variety of SDIs, mainly depending on institution-specific access-to-justice or service-delivery problems.

The SDIs take different forms and methodologies, with some notable ones highlighted as follows;

1. **Service Days/Open Days** – These are special days organised by justice sector agencies to engage the public directly, address concerns, and offer a range of services.
2. **Service Weeks/Open Weeks** – These are extended service days providing comprehensive services to a larger number of individuals within 7 days.
3. **Service Months** – These are extensive initiatives aimed at accelerating justice delivery within 30 days, targeting a particular perennial challenge affecting access to justice for the wider public.

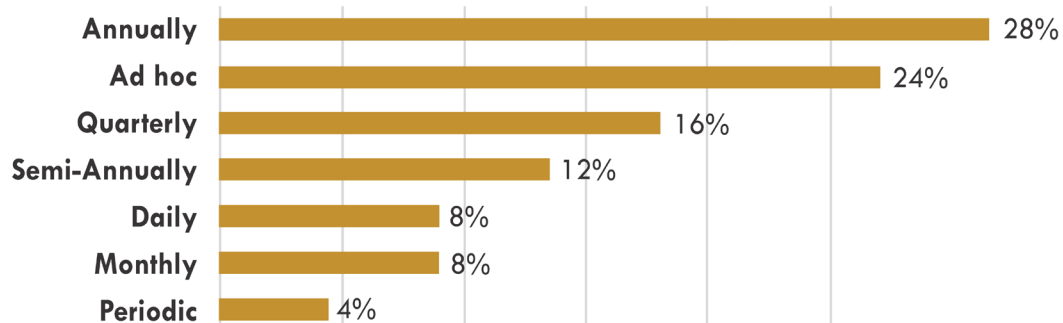
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4. **Rapid Results Initiatives (RRI)** – Are results-driven programs designed to improve justice sector service delivery within a specified timeframe through upscaled service initiatives targeting specific challenges.
 5. **Case Backlog Reduction Initiatives** – These are targeted efforts to resolve overdelayed cases, often through dedicated, special, or extra court sittings, coordinated and collaboratively with other justice actors.
 6. **Prison Decongestion Exercises** are collaborative initiatives to review cases of those in custody or remandees to facilitate non-custodial measures, thereby reducing prison population and overcrowding.
 7. **Execution of Pending Warrants** – Coordinated efforts to execute court-issued warrants, for accountability, upholding the rule of law and ensuring that individuals with pending arrest warrants face the legal proceedings.
 8. **Legal Aid Clinics** – Outreach programs providing free legal assistance and advice, particularly to vulnerable and marginalised persons.
 9. **Customer Service Initiatives** – Programs focused on improving service delivery interactions within the justice sector institutions, enhancing responsiveness, and addressing the primary complaints.
 10. **Court Circuits** – Are planned court sittings conducted in underserved or high case density areas to improve access to justice.
 11. **Child Justice Service Month** – A dedicated month for promoting child-friendly justice processes, addressing case backlog on children cases, awareness creation on children's rights, and other interventions for the best interest of the child.
 12. **Citizen Awareness Campaigns** – are public engagement initiatives aimed at educating citizens on their rights, legal processes, and available justice services.

An assessment of the justice sector revealed that the most commonly undertaken SDI in the justice sector is service week at 21 per cent, followed by RRIs at 17 per cent, with case backlog reduction and service days being third at 15 per cent each. Details of the most commonly undertaken SDIs are highlighted in the figure below.



Percentage of SDIs Undertaken by Justice Sector Actors, 2024

Regarding the frequency of conducting SDIs, most justice sector institutions conduct them annually and on an ad hoc basis, driven by emerging needs and available resources. The frequency of SDI is shown in the figure below.



Frequency of conducting SDIs by Justice Sector Actors

The lack of defined or consistent frequency highlights the need for a more structured and standardized approach to enhance coordination, sustainability and long-term effectiveness.

1.4 Stakeholders' Feedback on the Effective Undertaking of Service Delivery Initiatives

Stakeholders' feedback revealed that the justice sector institutions experience varied challenges in the execution of SDIs. Some of the main ones are as follows:

1. Weak collaboration and participation of all actors at all times.
2. Short timelines or notices for adequate preparation by collaborating agencies.
3. Inconsistent coordination while undertaking the SDIs.
4. Resource constraints for the effective carrying out of tasks.

-
5. Inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
 6. Poor reporting of successes, challenges or lessons learnt.
 7. Limited engagement of all stakeholders.
 8. Narrow focus on vulnerable groups.
 9. Language barriers and cultural differences pose challenges when creating awareness.
 10. Inadequate Judicial Officers to review and determine cases.
 11. Inaccessibility of target clients facing the issues to be addressed by the SDI.

To address the above challenges, stakeholders proposed the following recommendations:

1. **Establishing Standardised Procedures.** Developing transparent, standardised processes for SDI implementation to ensure consistency, enhance coordination among agencies, and improve overall service delivery.
2. **Increasing Financial and Human Resources.** Budgeting for SDIs and mobilising sufficient, qualified staff are essential for their successful execution.
3. **Strengthening Partnerships with External Stakeholders.** Collaborating with development partners, civil society organisations and the private sector can provide additional resources, technical expertise and capacity-building to enhance the effectiveness of SDIs.
4. **Implementing Robust Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms.** Establishing structured monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting frameworks will help track SDI performance, assess their impact, and facilitate data-driven improvements for long-term effectiveness.
5. **Enhancing Community and Civil Society Engagement.** Involving CSOs and community representatives in the planning and implementation of SDIs will foster inclusivity, promote transparency, and improve public confidence in the justice system.
6. **Prioritising Vulnerable Groups in SDI Planning and Execution.** SDIs should incorporate targeted interventions to improve access to justice for marginalised and vulnerable populations, ensuring that justice services remain inclusive and people-centred.

1.5 Scope and Methodology for Developing the Service Delivery Initiatives

These SOPs cover the full lifecycle of SDIs, from planning, execution, and monitoring to evaluation, reporting, and sustainability. They were developed through a consultative and participatory process, grounded in the practical experiences and perspectives of NCAJ agencies and partners.

A comprehensive situational analysis was conducted to guide the process, uncover existing practices, identify the challenges, and provide recommendations. This methodology ensured that the SOPs reflected fundamental dynamics of justice-sector service delivery, both at national and grassroots levels.

2. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR UNDERTAKING JUSTICE SECTOR SERVICE DELIVERY INITIATIVES

2.1 Introduction

Seven primary procedures to guide SDI implementation are provided. For each procedure, key steps or sub-procedures have been outlined. However, not all sub-steps within each procedure will be relevant to every initiative.

Justice sector actors are, therefore, encouraged to assess and select applicable sub-steps during the planning stage, based on the specific objectives and nature of the SDI.

2.2 Standard Operating Procedures

The SOPs cover several interrelated procedures illustrated as follows.



Procedure 1: Planning

The planning procedure lays the groundwork for the successful undertaking of SDIs. During the planning process, the focus is on laying a solid foundation for the SDIs. Hence, there are essential prerequisites for consideration during planning. These essentials include:

- i) Clearly defining the goal and objectives of the SDI.
- ii) Establishing the scope of the SDI, including the identification of the target population.
- iii) Forming an organising committee that encompasses collaborating justice sector actors.
- iv) Creating a detailed SDI plan with a checklist of activities, responsibilities and timelines.
- v) Aligning programmes and activities with the SDI's goals.
- vi) Analysing the financial requirements and budget availability.
- vii) Analysing the human resource requirements.
- viii) Holding of planning meetings.
- ix) Mobilising and allocating resources.

Procedure 2: Execution

The execution procedure represents the core of undertaking SDIs, where planned activities are implemented to deliver intended services and results. The steps under execution include:

- i) Engaging the public and creating awareness.
- ii) Implementing comprehensive communication strategies.
- iii) Ensuring logistical readiness, including venues, transportation and equipment.
- iv) Training and briefing staff and volunteers on their roles.
- v) Systematically implementing activities according to the predetermined schedule and plan.
- vi) Allowing flexibility for adaptation and corrective measures.

Procedure 3: Monitoring

Monitoring is a critical aspect of undertaking any SDI. It involves continuous observation and assessment to provide continuous insights that would guarantee effective implementation. The key steps involved in monitoring include;

- i) Continuously observing and assessing programmes and activities to ensure they align with established plans and objectives.
- ii) Gathering feedback by collecting insights from participants and stakeholders.
- iii) Documenting findings, giving feedback and maintaining records.
- iv) Reporting the SDI's outputs, challenges faced and recommendations for improvement.

Procedure 4: Review

The review procedure is an important post-implementation process to reflect and learn. It involves gathering insights on the undertaking of SDIs and identifying opportunities for improvement. The key tasks under this procedure include:

- i) Maintaining engagement and follow-up with participants and stakeholders.
- ii) Conducting a comprehensive debriefing session with the organizing committee to discuss successes, challenges encountered and lessons learned from the SDI.
- iii) Utilising insights from the debriefing session to inform and refine strategies.
- iv) Acknowledging and celebrating the contributions of collaborating agencies, sponsors and partners to foster positive relationships and encourage sustained collaboration.
- v) Emphasising continuous improvement to strategically leverage acquired knowledge for future SDIs.

Procedure 5: Final Reporting

The final reporting procedure for implementing SDIs consolidates and communicates the outcomes. A tool to support final reporting within an agency or to the coordinating body for the sectoral SDI has been provided in the Appendix. This tool, which agencies may customise to suit institutional contexts, is designed to capture key data elements, insights, and assessments generated during the undertaking of the SDIs. The Key components of final reporting in the undertaking of SDIs include:

- i) Utilising the designated reporting tool to ensure a standardised and comprehensive reporting process.
- ii) Gathering and compiling relevant data, including participant feedback and notable successes.
- iii) Conducting a thorough analysis of the outcomes of the initiative, assessing the extent to which goals and objectives were met.
- iv) Documenting challenges and lessons learnt encountered accompanied by reflections on lessons learned.
- v) Customising the reporting tool to align with the unique aspects and goals of the specific SDI undertaken, ensuring that the report captures relevant details.
- vi) Preparing a comprehensive report that synthesises all information, providing a holistic situation of the SDI and its achievements.

Procedure 6: Evaluation

The evaluation procedure aims at systematically assessing the effectiveness and impact of the SDI. This phase employs tools tailored to evaluate the benefits derived relative to the objectives. The major components of this phase include:

- i) Preparing a customised evaluation tool that is tailored to the SDI's set objectives.
- ii) Conducting a data collection process, incorporating participants' and stakeholders' perspectives to gauge the success.
- iii) Evaluating the overall effectiveness of the SDI in achieving its intended goals and objectives, considering both quantitative and qualitative measures.
- iv) Gauging the satisfaction levels of participants, collaborators, volunteers and stakeholders involved in or impacted by the SDI.
- v) Identifying specific areas for improvement based on evaluation findings to contribute to the continuous enhancement of future initiatives.
- vi) Compiling the evaluation report with successes, strengths, weaknesses and recommendations.

Procedure 7: Entrenching Sustainability Safeguards

To ensure long-term impact, SDIs must transition from being occasional to becoming fully institutionalized practices within justice sector agencies. The sustainability of SDIs depends on deliberate actions that embed these initiatives into organizational systems, planning cycles, and performance landscapes. The following strategic actions may be employed to promote sustainability.

- i) Institutionalizing SDIs by embedding them into the core operations, plans, and policies of justice sector agencies.
- ii) Allocating a dedicated budget line for SDIs during the institutional budgeting process to guarantee consistent funding.
- iii) Conducting regular review and coordination meetings using a checklist informed by these SOPs and any institution-specific adaptations.
- iv) Developing and mainstreaming a funding model for SDIs to address and mitigate financial constraints.
- v) Incorporating institutional performance measurement mechanisms to assess the effectiveness and outcomes of SDIs.
- vi) Establishing and ensuring systematic follow-up on the implementation of SDIs.
- vii) Documenting and sharing lessons learned to foster institutional memory and inform future initiatives.
- viii) Tracking internal recommendations and emerging needs to continuously refine and improve SDI implementation approaches.
- ix) Strengthening institutional capacity and ownership of SDIs through leadership commitment and staff engagement.
- x) Promoting shared learning and collaboration across institutions to enhance synergy and avoid duplication of efforts.

3. APPENDICES

Template for Reporting the Performance of the SDI

Section A: General Data

Justice Sector Agency/Station: _____ Reporting Period _____

Type of SDI: _____ Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Justice sector Agencies/Partners Involved in carrying out the SDI

1.3.....
2.4.....

Objectives of the SDI

1.
2.

Section B: SDI Performance (To be populated separately for each SDI undertaken)

Achievements on Objective 1		
Target	Actual Achievement	Variance
Achievements on Objective 2		
Target	Actual Achievement	Variance

Section C: SDI Financing

Resource Required	Resources Mobilised	Resources utilised	Variance

Section D: Summary of Overall Achievements

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Section E: Highlights of Key Challenges

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Section F: Lessons Learned

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Section G: Recommendations and Action Points

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