

APPENDIX E: Self-Assessment Checklist

How to undertake the self-assessment

Involve

Courts should seek to involve as many of the Court's judges, registrars, court officials and administrative staff as possible in the self-assessment process. A copy of the Checklist should be given to each member of the court participating in the self-assessment (self-assessment team).

Plan

The self-assessment team will need to convene at least one planning session to determine the procedures and schedule for carrying out the self-assessment exercise. They will also need to review the Checklist to identify the basic information that needs to be gathered to facilitate the process of self-assessment.

Assess

Based on the information gathered and their observations and judgment, each member of the self-assessment team should consider each of the Seven Areas for Court Excellence and the Checklist actions identified for each Area and determine the extent of implementation for each action. They then need to consider in relation to each item whether the court has taken action to implement the item and the extent of success of each action taken and results achieved.

It needs to be remembered that these items are simply a checklist and a distinction must be made between things done and things done well. It is important in carrying out the self-assessment that the court asks itself whether a particular action could have been more effective or improved in some way. The appropriate box should then be ticked. To claim a checklist item as being met there should be documentary or other evidence that supports the claim. Similarly a claim that a particular action is effective requires evidence by way of measurement or other objective facts demonstrating the positive impact of the action.

After completing the individual assessment, the team members should meet to discuss the ratings they have given for each statement. Where the scores given by the team members for a particular statement are different, the team members should discuss and reach agreement on the appropriate score, preferably by consensus.

Having completed the Self-Assessment Checklist, the court will have identified the areas where improvement is required. Some courts may choose to concentrate their efforts in discrete areas while others may proceed with a full court review and reform. In either case, prioritising court issues is highly recommended. This will allow the reform process to focus on specific performance areas over a period of time.

Clearly those Areas with the lowest total score relative to the possible maximum score should receive initial attention. However, it is important to appreciate that some of the Areas for Court Excellence are regarded as being of greater relative importance to a court's success. The following list reflects the relative order of importance of the Seven Areas:

- Area 7 (Public Trust and Confidence)
- Area 5 (Client Needs and Satisfaction)
- Area 6 (Affordable and Accessible Court Services)
- Area 1 (Court Leadership and Management)
- Areas 2, 3 and 4

In settling the priorities for improvement action courts should have regard both to the scores identifying greatest potential for improvement as well as the relative importance of the areas. Lower scores in Areas 1, 5, 6 and 7 should generally receive priority attention. To assist courts the following table has been devised to enable proper weighting of scores obtained and to also give a final total score out of 1,000 points. Scores should be retained and used as a benchmark to enable a court to track its progress when undertaking a subsequent self-assessment.



Weighted Scoring Table

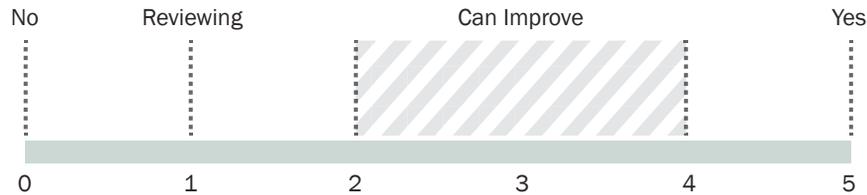
	AREAS	MAXIMUM POINTS	SCORE ACHIEVED	MULTIPLIER	RESULTING SCORE	MAXIMUM WEIGHTED SCORE
1	Court Leadership and Management	70		2		140
2	Court Planning and Policies	40		3		120
3	Court Resources (Human, Material and Financial)	80		2		160
4	Court Proceedings & Processes	50		2		100
5	Client Needs and Satisfaction	50		3		150
6	Affordable and Accessible Court Services	60		3		180
7	Public Trust and Confidence	50		3		150
Total						1,000

Sample of Weighted Scoring Results



Score and Prioritise

Checklist Scoring Scheme



The scoring scheme above represents a sliding scale and courts should assess whether some action has been taken and if so how much more needs to be done. A score for “can improve” should be given between 2 and 4 points which reflects how much improvement remains to be made. The Checklist should be used to undertake the self-assessment (initial health check) of a court.

Self-Assessment

Each of the Seven Areas of Court Excellence is listed on the following page with statements of court practices that embody the accepted court values. They represent the ultimate goals courts should be striving to achieve. It is excellence in each of these areas that a court should be striving for and as this is a continuing process there will always be new and innovative ways for a court to improve its performance.

The statements for each area are followed by a Checklist of actions or activities courts are expected to have implemented to achieve Framework expectations. The actions/activities are not exhaustive but are indicative and provide initial guidance. Courts will identify their own actions as they become more familiar with the Framework approach. The statements are identical to those contained in the full Framework Self-Assessment Questionnaire.

1. COURT LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 1.1 Court has published a statement of its vision and mission (purpose) together with details of how it meets its fundamental values (such as accessibility, timeliness and fairness)
- 1.2 Court’s leadership is actively involved in setting time and service standards and reviewing judicial and administrative performance against those standards
- 1.3 Court holds regular meetings with court users to provide information on the court and seek feedback
- 1.4 Court actively informs the community and court users on its services, standards and performance and seeks feedback to improve its services
- 1.5 Data is kept and published on key aspects of the court’s work
- 1.6 Court plans for the future, reviews feedback and its performance and identifies areas for improvement
- 1.7 Court and its leaders promote a culture of innovation

Actions

		Assess Using Points Below				
		NO (0 points)	REVIEWING (1 point)	CAN IMPROVE (2-4 points)	YES (5 points)	Total Score
Court Leadership and Management						
1	Our court leaders have defined the vision, mission and core values of our courts.					
2	Our court leaders communicate the vision, mission and core values to all staff and stakeholders.					
3	Our court leaders demonstrate the core values of the courts.					
4	We have developed a court culture consistent with our court values.					
Setting Performance Standards and Obtaining Users' Feedback						
5	We set time and service delivery standards and targets for case management aiming to meet and exceed user expectations.					
6	We measure our performance on a regular basis against these standards and targets.					
7	We obtain feedback from court users regularly.					
8	We review our performance data and feedback on a regular basis.					
9	We use data and feedback to plan improvements in our performance, procedures and processes.					
Engaging Court Staff and the Community						
10	We regularly provide information to court users and the community.					
11	Our senior judicial officers are actively involved in our review, planning, court user and community education processes.					
Innovation						
12	Our leaders actively promote an innovation culture in our courts.					
13	We have developed a court culture consistent with our court values.					
14	Our leaders demonstrate and reinforce their commitment to court innovation in day-to-day activities.					
					Total	

2. COURT PLANNING AND POLICIES

- 2.1 Court has a strategic plan setting out its goals, targets and plans for improvement
- 2.2 Court actively involves judges and staff in planning and problem solving tasks
- 2.3 Court regularly reviews the plan and its performance against its targets
- 2.4 Court has published judicial and court policies that support its values, targets and plans
- 2.5 Court regularly reviews its policies to ensure their continuing effectiveness
- 2.6 Court has a court innovation strategy as an integral part of its strategic planning

Actions

		Assess Using Points Below				Total Score
		NO (0 points)	REVIEWING (1 point)	CAN IMPROVE (2-4 points)	YES (5 points)	
Court Planning						
1	We have a strategic plan that identifies the court's values, targets and plans.					
2	We involve judges and court staff in the court's review and planning processes.					
3	We have a process for monitoring and reviewing the strategic plan.					
4	We allocate resources for actions identified in our strategic plan.					
Court Policies						
5	We have judicial and court policies to support our values, targets and plans.					
6	We publish our policies and monitor compliance.					
7	We review our policies regularly to ensure court quality and efficiency.					
Innovation						
8	We have put in place a court innovation strategy, with short and long term goals, as an integral part of our planning that is aligned with our court's objectives and goals.					
Total						

3. COURT RESOURCES (HUMAN, MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL)

- 3.1 Court manages resources proactively to balance judicial and administrative workloads with timely and quality decision making
- 3.2 Court has identified training needs of court staff and meets them
- 3.3 Court conducts regular professional development for judges and staff
- 3.4 Court provides access to information to support judicial decision making
- 3.5 Court effectively manages material resources
- 3.6 Court facilities are adequate and safe
- 3.7 Court has an appropriate budget process and regularly monitors expenditure
- 3.8 Court provides training, support and recognition for innovation

Actions

Assess Using Points Below				
NO (0 points)	REVIEWING (1 point)	CAN IMPROVE (2-4 points)	YES (5 points)	Total Score
Managing Court Resources and Workload				
1	We manage the workload of judges and court staff so cases are decided in a timely and quality manner.			
2	We predict and manage our resources to meet anticipated workloads.			
3	We manage our financial resources efficiently and effectively.			
Staff Training and Development				
4	We have a professional development program for judges and court staff.			
5	We provide continuing professional education including management training to our judges and court staff.			
6	Our judges learn from, and communicate with, each other.			
7	We provide judges with the information necessary to make fair decisions.			
8	We have identified the training needs of court staff and our training program meets those needs.			

table continued on next page

3. COURT RESOURCES (HUMAN, MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL) continued

Actions		Assess Using Points Below				
		NO (0 points)	REVIEWING (1 point)	CAN IMPROVE (2-4 points)	YES (5 points)	Total Score
Employee Commitment						
9	Court staff and judges are committed to quality of work.					
Courtrooms						
10	We have sufficient courtrooms to permit the timely processing of cases.					
11	Court users feel safe in our courtrooms.					
Court Budget						
12	We allocate our budget efficiently and effectively to ensure that there is money for court initiatives and court innovation activities.					
13	We have a policy on the collection of fees and fines.					
Innovation						
14	We have strategies and mechanisms to engage staff in innovation.					
15	We deliver programmes to meet the learning and development needs for court staff for court innovation.					
16	We recognise and reward staff for contribution towards court innovation.					
					Total	



4. COURT PROCEEDINGS AND PROCESSES

- 4.1 Court ensures it deals with matters efficiently while maintaining quality of decisions
- 4.2 Court has a system for actively managing its cases and looks for improved ways to resolve cases effectively
- 4.3 Court successfully balances workload of judges and court staff
- 4.4 Court maintains efficient case files and records systems
- 4.5 Court encourages innovation in case management

Actions

Assess Using Points Below				
NO (0 points)	REVIEWING (1 point)	CAN IMPROVE (2-4 points)	YES (5 points)	Total Score
Efficiency and Effectiveness of Court Proceedings and Processes				
1	We manage cases against established benchmarks of timely case processing.			
2	We review the role of judges and court staff to ensure efficiency of processes.			
3	We regularly review our processes and procedures.			
4	People are able to get their business with the court done in a reasonable time.			
5	We endeavour to list cases and manage cases so as to minimise inconvenience and expense to court users.			
6	Court orders are enforced in cases of non-compliance.			
Court Records Management				
7	Court records and case files are complete, accurate, able to be retrieved quickly and maintained safely.			
8	Decisions by our court are written clearly and accurately apply the law.			
Innovation				
9	We have a policy and procedure in place to generate, gather and screen innovative ideas from all sources.			
10	We evaluate and improve the court innovation process on a regular basis.			
Total				

5. CLIENT NEEDS AND SATISFACTION

- 5.1 Court surveys and seeks regular feedback from all court users
- 5.2 Court implements changes identified by surveys and feedback
- 5.3 Court reports publicly and regularly on changes made in response to surveys and feedback
- 5.4 Court surveys its users on their satisfaction with its processes, procedures and services
- 5.5 Court uses technology and innovation to deliver higher quality services to all court users

Actions

		Assess Using Points Below				
		NO (0 points)	REVIEWING (1 point)	CAN IMPROVE (2-4 points)	YES (5 points)	Total Score
Users' Feedback						
1	We use feedback on a regular basis (including surveys, focus groups and dialogue sessions) to measure satisfaction of all court users.					
2	We use feedback on a regular basis to improve our services to all court users including: court website users and the media; litigants, prosecutors and lawyers representing users; witnesses and court experts; and registry/office users.					
3	We analyse surveys and adjust policies and procedures.					
Communication to Court Users						
4	We report publicly on changes we implement in response to the results of surveys.					
5	We communicate clearly to defendants and their lawyers.					
6	We listen to court users and treat them with respect.					
Court Users' Satisfaction						
7	Advocates and court users assess the court's actions as fair and reasonable.					
8	There is a high level of court users' satisfaction with the court's administration of justice.					
9	There is a high level of court users' satisfaction with the court's services.					
Innovation						
10	We have leveraged on innovation and technology in understanding the needs of our court users better and to enhance the delivery of services to court users.					
Total						

6. AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE COURT SERVICES

- 6.1 Court has processes in place that promote affordable court proceedings
- 6.2 Court publishes information on court services and access
- 6.3 Physical access to court buildings is easy
- 6.4 Court provides support for people with disabilities to ensure easy access to its services
- 6.5 Court has policies to ensure equal treatment for all court users
- 6.6 Court provides information to assist those who are unrepresented
- 6.7 Court uses plain language to assist all court users
- 6.8 Court has electronic and remote access available
- 6.9 Court uses technology and innovation to improve access for all court users

Actions

		Assess Using Points Below				
		NO (0 points)	REVIEWING (1 point)	CAN IMPROVE (2-4 points)	YES (5 points)	Total Score
Affordable Court Services						
1	We review court policies on court fees to ensure that court services are affordable.					
2	We ensure court proceedings are resolved in a timely manner to minimise costs to litigants.					
3	We endeavour to limit the court's requirements to what is necessary to resolve cases efficiently.					
4	We have a clear and published policy on the charging, waiver or postponement of fees.					
Accessibility of the Court						
5	We make it easy for people to find the relevant courtroom in which a hearing is taking place.					
6	We provide people with disabilities with support and easy access to the court and our services.					
7	Our hours of operation make it easy for users to get their business done.					
8	Our website is easy to negotiate, contains relevant information and is useful to users.					
9	We treat members of minority groups the same as everyone else.					
10	We provide information to assist litigants without representation.					
Innovation						
11	We have leveraged on innovation and technology to make our court services more affordable.					
12	We have leveraged on innovation and technology to make our court services more accessible.					
Total						

7. PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

- 7.1 Court publicly accounts for its role and performance
- 7.2 Court makes information on performance against time and service standards available
- 7.3 Court ensures all court users understand the court’s processes, services and any decisions made
- 7.4 Court has a complaints policy and reports on its handling of complaints
- 7.5 Court conducts regular independent audits on expenditure

Actions

		Assess Using Points Below				
		NO (0 points)	REVIEWING (1 point)	CAN IMPROVE (2-4 points)	YES (5 points)	Total Score
Public Trust and Confidence						
1	We publish our performance against time/service standards and other benchmarks.					
2	We respond promptly to requests for information from court users.					
3	We can demonstrate that people leaving court understand the court programs and services they have experienced.					
4	We have a policy, which we adhere to, that outlines the process for making and dealing with complaints and we report on complaints received and their resolution.					
5	We publish information on court procedures and our complaints policy.					
6	We publish details of our services, fees and related court requirements.					
7	Our accounts/expenditures are independently audited annually.					
8	Our published annual report includes: a) Performance data and survey feedback b) Details of our purpose, role and procedures c) Information on court reforms/improvements					
9	There is a high level of public trust and confidence in the fair administration of justice in our courts.					
Innovation						
10	We engage the public and court users in an innovative manner, so as to build up public trust and confidence.					
Total						



THE INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR COURT EXCELLENCE