



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Office of the Court Administrator
Manila

OCA CIRCULAR NO. 12-2002

**TO: ALL JUDGES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURTS,
SHARI'A DISTRICT COURTS, METROPOLITAN TRIAL
COURTS, MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURTS IN CITIES,
MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURTS, MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT
TRIAL COURTS AND SHARI'A CIRCUIT COURTS**

**SUBJECT : JUDICIAL SERVICE TEAMS OF THE TRIAL
COURTS**

The Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement System¹ focuses on the need for the court personnel, together with their respective presiding judges, to work as the court's Judicial Service Team. Each court branch shall constitute a Judicial Service Team (JST) in line with the Total Quality Management strategy. Through their effective management of time, resources and facilities, these teams can provide the appropriate working environment where justice can be efficiently and effectively administered.

The JST should be able to assess their performance in five (5) areas:

1. Access to justice;
2. Expedition and timeliness;
3. Equality, fairness and integrity;
4. Independence and accountability; and
5. Public trust and confidence.

As part of the Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement System, the following activities should be undertaken by the JST:

1. Presiding judges should conduct regular monthly meetings (at least once a month) with their court personnel on the last working day. Minutes of the monthly meeting shall be prepared by the assigned Recorder-Secretary, a copy of which shall be submitted to the Office of the Court Administrator.
2. The first staff meeting pursuant to this issuance shall be called during any week of June 2002. At the said meeting, the members of the JST shall as a group accomplish the "Court Performance Inventory" form² (Annex "A"). A copy of the accomplished "Court Performance Inventory" form shall be sent to the Court Management Office, Office of the Court Administrator,

¹ A discussion of the "Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement System" can be found in the Chapter on "Court and Case Management: Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement" of the Benchbook for Trial Court Judges (pp. 8.1 - 8.4).

² The "Court Performance Inventory" form has been reproduced from the Program Brief of the "Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement System" published by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

COURT PERFORMANCE INVENTORY*

The Court Performance Inventory is intended to familiarize individuals with the Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement System. The inventory is designed to collect individual perceptions (that maybe pooled with the perception of others) about specific trial court performance. Results of the inventory graphed onto the Court Performance Profile at the end of this exercise can be used to target further diagnostic efforts and management strategies.

DIRECTIONS: Read each of the attached statements. Based on your experiences with your court or of another court of interest to you, determine whether you believe the statement is **BROADLY TRUE** or **BROADLY FALSE** about the way the court performs. If you believe the statement is **BROADLY TRUE**, place an "X" in the corresponding numbered box on the Court Performance Inventory Response Form that follows the last statement. For example, if you believe the first statement to be generally true about the court you are rating, place an "X" in the box with the "1" on the response form. Once you have completed the response form, add the number of boxes marked as **BROADLY TRUE** for each of the five columns. Each column refers to one of the performance areas. Use the five sums to complete the Court Performance Profile.

1. An observer sitting in any courtroom's public setting area will have no difficulty hearing judges, attorneys, litigants, witnesses, and other participants in the proceedings.
2. The total elapsed time it takes the court to dispose of cases once they are filed complies with national standards.
3. The allocation of personal resource is defensible and based upon logic and reason.
4. The general public (a) perceives the trial court and the justice it delivers as accessible; (b) has trust and confidence that basic trial functions are conducted expeditiously and fairly and that the court's decisions have integrity; and (c) knows that the trial court is independent, accountable, and not unduly influenced by other government components.
5. An undercover law enforcement official dressed in plain clothes will not be able to breach either the court's security system that protects the public or confidential court files and records.

* The "Court Performance Inventory" form has been reproduced from the Program Brief of the "Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement System" published by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

6. An examination of court financial records will reveal that the various types of funds for which the court is responsible are disbursed in a timely manner.
7. An examination of relevant case file documents and court records will reveal that the court closely adheres to key legal requirements.
8. Justice system representatives perceive the trial court and the justice it delivers as accessible have trust and confidence that basic trial functions are conducted expeditiously and fairly, and that the court is independent, accountable and not unduly influenced by other components of government.
9. Interpreter services provided by the court are performed by individuals with language proficiency, interpreting skill, and knowledge of professional conduct.
10. The court promptly implements changes in substantive and procedural laws.
11. A statistical analysis conducted of data collected from closed files for bail bond, and release on recognizance decisions will reveal that these decisions are not based on extralegal factors, such as the defendant's gender, the judge assigned to the case, or the geographic location of the court.
12. The court does a good job in disseminating information to the public about its programs and operations.
13. Court employees (a) perceive the trial court and the justice it delivers as accessible; (b) have trust and confidence that the basic trial functions are conducted expeditiously and fairly and that the court decisions have integrity; and (c) know that the trial court is independent, accountable, and not unduly influenced by other components of government.
14. Observers of court proceedings are likely to find all court personnel courteous and responsive.
15. The court keeps up with its incoming caseload disposing of as many cases as filed each year.
16. Record examinations and statistical analyses are likely to reveal that sentence decisions of the court are based mostly on legally relevant factors and not extralegal factors such as the defendant's gender, the judge assigned to the case, or the geographic location of the court.
17. A group of knowledgeable persons within and outside the court would conclude that the court has acted responsibly in responding to public policy issues of concern within its jurisdiction, such as domestic violence, discrimination, substance abuse, or others that could have affected the fair and effective administration of justice by the court.

18. Individuals who have had contact with the court such as litigants, witnesses, victims or those conducting other business with the court consider the court's decisions and treatment of individuals as fair and equitable.
19. The court takes measures to reduce costs and facilities affordable access to the judicial system for financially disadvantaged persons.
20. Selected knowledgeable individuals are likely to conclude that the trial court maintains its independence and institutional integrity, but that it still has good relations with other units of government.
21. Regular users of the court (i.e., court employees, attorneys, probation officers, and jurors) are likely to say that they are able to conduct their business with the court with relative ease and convenience.
22. A person relatively unfamiliar with the court will have no difficulty in locating and actually entering the courtroom in which a particular hearing is taking place.
23. The court promptly implements changes in administrative procedures required by the Supreme Court and the administrative office of the courts.
24. The court does a good job of communicating clearly the terms and conditions of criminal sentences.
25. The court's responses to requests for information from the media are accurate and timely.
26. The results of survey of regular court users, court employees, attorneys, probation officers, and jurors are likely to conclude that judges and other trial court personnel are courteous and responsive to the public and all others with whom they come into contact.
27. A person who attempts to determine the specific time and location of a particular court event will have no difficulty getting this information from the court by telephone.
28. Cases scheduled for trial are heard on the first scheduled trial date.
29. The court is well positioned and organized to enforce or facilitate the enforcement of its orders and judgments.
30. A group of knowledgeable individuals are likely to conclude that court personnel practices and decisions are fair.
31. Citizens are likely to report that access to court services is generally not hindered because of costs or complexity of procedures.
32. Persons with physical disabilities are able to conduct transactions in the court with relative ease.

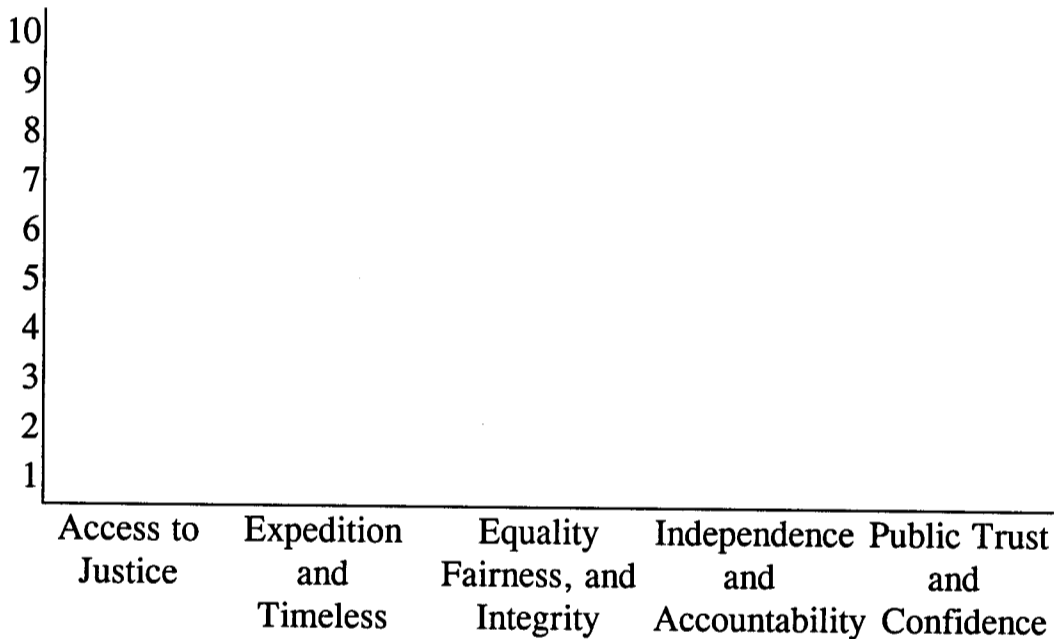
33. The various services available from the court (such as indigent defense services and inquiries, interpreter services) are provided promptly.
34. A test of the timely retrieval of individual case files will reveal that the court's file control system is reliable and efficient.
35. The court has adequate statistical reporting capacity to make useful assessments of the relationship between the court's workload and the distribution of court resources.
36. Members of the bar who have appeared regularly in the court in the past year would assess the court's actions and decisions as fair and equitable.
37. Court observers are likely to find that litigants are treated with a high degree of courtesy and individual respect by judges of the court.
38. The number of pending cases exceeding national time standards for case processing is low.
39. The court clearly states the terms and conditions of obligations imposed as a result of adjudication of a civil dispute.
40. Court employees and media representatives are likely to be satisfied with policies and practices of responding to media inquiries.
41. Court staff will rate highly the degree of independent control that the court exercises over its fiscal operation, personnel, and services related to caseflow.
42. Indigent persons have never tried to obtain legal assistance with relatively routine legal problems.
43. The court complies with established schedules for routine court reports such as statistical reports required by the Office of the Court Administrator.
44. An examination of a sample of case file data will show that most files are complete and accurate.
45. The court conducts periodic internal and external audits of its financial practices and responds to auditor's suggestion for improvements.
46. Court employees responses to structured questions about fairness in personnel practices related to employee morale and competence are likely to reflect general satisfaction.

Court Performance Inventory Response Form

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50
Access to Justice	Expedition and Timeless	Equality, fairness, and Integrity	Independence and Accountability	Public Trust and Confidence

DIRECTIONS: Add the number of X's in each column.

COURT PERFORMANCE PROFILE



DIRECTIONS: For each performance area, place a dot next to the total number of X's recorded on the response form. For example, if the total number of X's in the Access to Justice column on the response form is 3, place a dot next to the 3 in the first column of the graph. When the total score for each of the five areas has been recorded on the graph, connect the five dots, starting with the dot in the first column and ending with the dot in the fifth column. The lines will depict which areas are rated highest and which are rated lowest. The results can be used to compare perceptions of court performance across court official and staff and to initiate discussion regarding priorities for targeting improvement efforts.

COURT ACTION PLAN

ANNEX "B"

Court/Branch _____

Station _____


AREAS	ISSUES/PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED	PROPOSED MEASURES	OFFICE/OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR PROPOSED MEASURES

within ten (10) days after the staff meeting. Thereafter, the inventory form shall be accomplished every quarter.

3. After responding to the "Court Performance Inventory" form, the JST shall discuss the issues/problems in the areas which are rated lowest and the measures proposed to address the same. The list of issues/problems and the proposed measures which would require intervention or action by the Court Administrator or the Supreme Court shall be sent to the Court Administrator through the Court Action Plan (CAP) (Annex "B"). The JST shall carry out those measures which can be implemented at the court level.
4. The agenda for the monthly staff meetings shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:
 - a. Jail visitations;
 - b. Review of the status of cases and caseflow charts;
 - c. Preparation of decisions and monitoring of deadlines;
 - d. Submission of reports pursuant to Administrative Circular No. 1-2001 dated January 2, 2001 (Lists of cases filed/raffled, disposed, archived, transferred/reraffled, and with suspended proceedings) and Administrative Circular No. 61-2001 dated December 10, 2001 (Revised SC Form No. 1, Monthly Report of Cases);
 - e. Submission of financial reports (Fiduciary Funds and JDF) and forfeited bonds;
 - f. Determination of clearance rates;
 - g. Submission of semestral inventory of cases;
 - h. Submission of inventory of equipment and office supplies; and
 - i. Problems of the court branch.
5. The JST shall monitor changes in their assessment of their court's performance; review measures implemented to address issues/ problems; and formulate and carry out new measures to resolve new issues/problems.

Strict compliance herewith is enjoined.

June 3, 2002.



PRESBITERO J. VELASCO, JR.
Court Administrator