

APPENDIX 9

Sample action plan outline

Foreword (written by the head of the administrative agency, mayor, head of municipality or similar functions)

Executive summary

1. Introduction and overview

2. Action steps priority I

3. Action steps priority II

4. National-level recommendations

5. Risk analysis

6. Monitoring

Annexes (official executive order to implement the action plan, additional charts, graphs and tables, problem tree)

Executive summary

Describes the main action steps and recommendations to address rule of law challenges identified in the assessed agency and the specific area—for instance, granting of environmental and mining licenses at local level.

Introduction and overview

The introduction should clearly state the aim of the action plan. It can essentially serve two functions: 1) transform assessment results into actionable strategies, thereby guiding and supporting agencies and relevant management groups in prioritizing what to do, why and when; and 2) communicating results and actions externally to a wider group (e.g. local communities, CSOs and networks, relevant ministries, donors and assistance providers). The operationalization of the action plans requires political and administrative action at the municipal level, as well as lobbying and advocacy at higher levels for reforms that improve the mandate and/or competency level of agencies at local/regional level.

Differences in terms of political commitment and local resources, including staff capacity, are likely to affect the pace and character of how recommendations are implemented and if they lead to significant reform. Communication between political and administrative decision makers and officials is critical for the successful implementation of the action plan. Possibilities for external coaching could be

considered for the implementation of specific action points.

The introductory section could, furthermore, refer to various stages of drafting the action plan. These could include:

- analysis of self-assessment results in workshop formats using cause and effect diagrams;
- identifying and prioritizing action points with the highest feasibility (i.e. political commitment, technical capacity, resources);
- identifying recommendations for authorities at national level pertaining to the national legal framework etc.;
- carrying out a risk analysis;
- drafting a timetable/work plan; and
- drafting and issuing the official executive order to implement the action plan.

The Advisory Committee is responsible for all stages of the action plan process. To facilitate implementation, action points can be divided into two priority levels: 1) action points of priority I may include tasks with high feasibility outcomes and short-term implementation time-frames; and 2) action points of priority II might require authorization from authorities at higher levels, additional resources and/or longer implementation time-frames.

The action plan can also include recommendations to address rule of law challenges at national level that could potentially have an impact on the respect for the principles of the rule of law at local/regional level.

Action steps priority I

This section can include a brief analysis of core issues identified through in-depth problem analysis workshops undertaken jointly with the Advisory Committee, external experts and/or CSOs. Action steps may include tasks related to the streamlining of legal procedures, management and internal workflow issues within the agency, as well as possibilities to improve communication channels between targeted communities and the agency.

Example:

Step 1	Improve internal regulations, including develop standards on conflicts of interest
Responsible person/unit	Legal department
Time-frame	Within 6 months
Specific tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend procedure for processing requests for public information from the agency and its executive offices; • Draft a resolution regarding the provision of free legal aid assistance as part of the authority's services; • Develop a code of conduct for civil servants to handle conflict of interests and provide required training for civil servants.

Action steps priority II

Steps listed under the second priority level could complement action points already listed. For example, in case one of the first priority steps aimed at drafting standards or streamlining internal procedures, actions mentioned here would aim at their implementation and, thus, in addition to formal approval, might require additional financial support.

Example:

Step 1	Agency introduces free legal aid services on concerns related to environmental and mining impact
Responsible person/unit	Legal department
Time-frame	Within 12 months

National-level recommendations

Typically, certain findings from a self-assessment carried out at local/regional level will point to rule of law challenges observed in the national legal framework. Including recommendations for national authorities can provide further advocacy and lobbying opportunities.

Risk analysis

Possible risks should be outlined for each proposed action step. Along with an analysis of the likelihood and potential impacts of identified risks, possible mitigation/risk response strategies should be included.

Monitoring

Action plan monitoring can take place in the form of workshops, informal briefings and/or (formal) reporting. Regular monitoring is critical to facilitate an iterative implementation process, assessing both progress and challenges, as well as documenting quick wins.

Engagement from local CSOs and media presence during action plan presentations and relevant stakeholder meetings could also be encouraged to promote public monitoring of the action plan implementation process.