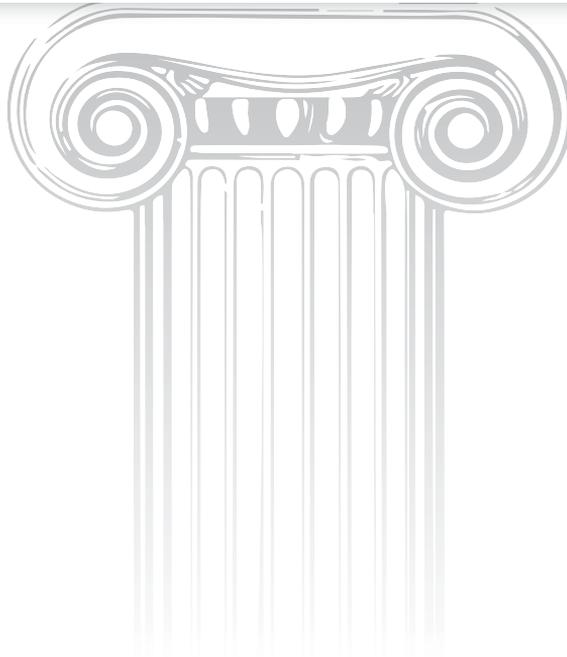




# GUIDELINES

FOR CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN  
OF MOLDOVAN COURTHOUSES



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## INTRODUCTION

In 2011 the Parliament of Moldova adopted the Justice Sector Reform Strategy 2011-2016 and the Action Plan for its implementation. The main goal of this strategy is building an affordable, efficient, independent, transparent, professional and accountable Justice Sector that meets European standards, ensures the rule of law and the observance of human rights and contributes to safeguarding society's trust in government. The government understood that the state of courthouse infrastructure has serious physiological and fairness implications for court users and the public. Solemn, well-maintained and well-run courthouses inspire citizens' trust that, in such a building, justice will be done.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, physical modernization of courthouses is an important step in its efforts to reform the justice sector and improve the quality of justice.

Several recent initiatives to examine the courthouses' conditions by the Government and its international donor partners under JSRS have included:

The Moldova Governance Threshold Country Program (MGTCP)<sup>2</sup>, which produced the Courthouse Facility Assessment Report in 2009, a detailed evaluation of the condition of all Moldovan courthouses and recommendations for renovations, and which sponsored the actual modernization of three pilot courts: Ungheni, Rezina, and Comrat.

<sup>1</sup> Surveys of court users in many countries, for example in Croatia in 2010, found that the condition of the courthouses and adequacy of public spaces, had an important impact on the perception of the fairness of the judicial process.

<sup>2</sup> A 2.5-year initiative funded by the US Government through the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), managed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Millennium/IP3 Partners, LLC.

- The USAID-funded Rule of Law Institutional Strengthening Program (USAID ROLISP)<sup>3</sup>, in which program staff visited every court in Moldova to develop a profile of each court for a wide range of administrative areas, including the condition of facilities as the conditions affected the functioning of the courts and the implementation of other Justice Sector modernization initiatives, such as installation of information technology equipment and systems.<sup>4</sup>
- The information from USAID ROLISP regarding courthouse conditions served as the basis for a subsequent report, *Courthouses Prioritizing Report 2013* dividing the courthouses into priority categories, based on severity of conditions, which the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) and the Department of Judicial Administration (DJA) under the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) have used to make decisions for facility investments.
- In 2014, the *Study on the Optimization of the Judicial Map in the Republic of Moldova*,<sup>5</sup> reporting on various scenarios for closing some locations and consolidating those courts with other courts.

<sup>3</sup> Conducted by USAID ROLISP and specifically directed to the intervention area 1.1.1 *Optimizing the map of courts' displacement, to strengthen institutional capacities of courts, optimizing the number of judges and ensuring a more efficient use of available resources* and intervention area 1.1.12 *Strengthening institutional capacities of courts, including examination of the opportunity of building a common office for all Courts from Chisinau, and construction / renovation of court offices across the country.*

<sup>4</sup> The profiles of each court were published in Assessment Report of the Courts of Law in the Republic of Moldova.

<sup>5</sup> Developed by the Legal Resources Center of Moldova.

- Assessment Report of the Courts of Law in the Republic of Moldova, 2012
- Quality Services for Citizens in Courts: User Guide, 2013
- Centralized Procurement Guide for the Justice System of the Republic of Moldova, 2013
- Courthouse Facility Assessment Republic of Moldova, 2009 (Moldova Governance Country Program Millennium Challenge Corporation)
- Courthouses Prioritizing Report, 2013
- Guidelines for Effective Court Administration, 2013
- Study on the recent practice of funding the Judicial System, taking into account international practices of funding the Judicial System, 2013

The administration of the Moldovan Justice Sector is currently divided among the SCM, the DJA, and the Presidents and Chiefs of Secretariats of the local courts. The Presidents and Chiefs of Secretariats of the local courts, however, bear the largest share of the responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the courthouses, and for their maintenance and renovation, including identifying needs, initiating funding requests, and procuring the necessary goods and services to implement facilities works. As in most countries, these functions are covered by many laws and regulations addressed both to public and private buildings.

The official Design Standards for Moldovan Courthouses are published in *Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007 (MSP 3.02-101-*

2001) and in *Construction norms. Administrative buildings. Projection rules* (NCM C.01.04-2005). Formal revisions must be submitted to the Technical Committee of the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction for consideration. These standards are under continuing review by the SCM, DJA, and Presidents and staff of individual courts, as well as international donor partners. In May 2014 USAID ROLISP organized a formal focus group among representatives from Court Presidents, Chiefs of Court Secretariats, the SCM, DJA, and State Prosecutor's office to discuss areas of courthouse design needing special attention or emphasis. The views of the focus group are taken into account in these Guidelines.

The purpose of the design guidelines is to complete the current design standards for courts and present international design examples. These Guidelines are most applicable to newly constructed space but address issues pertaining to renovations of existing facilities. In existing buildings, it is often difficult to provide the optimum solution and meet all of the standards. Even in existing space, however, when the space is renovated or modernized, every attempt should be made to comply with as many of the guidelines as possible, and within budget and facility constraints. Failing to meet particular space standards in a particular facility is not, by itself, justification for requesting construction funds for correcting the deviation from the standard. The extent to which particular facilities fail to meet critical standards set forth in this document and affect the efficient

operations of the court may be a factor in prioritizing budgetary requests for construction funding based on other critical facility problems.

These Guidelines provide an overview of the capital investment process (incorporating lessons learned from international experiences) from the perspective of Court Presidents and their staffs, especially the Chiefs of Court Secretariats, to assist them and others involved in carrying out their responsibilities related to court facilities. They will also be useful to contractors hired by courts, such as architects, engineers, and construction contractors, to design, and construct or renovate courthouses.

These Guidelines are intended for the use of judges and court staff, architects, engineers, space planners, budget planners, and others who want to understand the appropriate characteristics of the spaces needed for efficient court operations and for promoting the goals of judicial efficiency and reform. The guidelines were developed to:

- Provide guidance about criteria for allocation of funds for maintenance and repair of court buildings;
- Assist in the design and furnishings of new courthouses and courtrooms;
- Provide guidelines for renovations of existing court facilities;
- Ensure uniform design practices in courts;
- Present best international court construction and design practices.

These Guidelines complement and make references to other manuals in such areas as procurement, court management, and budgeting. They consist of two sections: a review of the elements of the capital investment program and the steps in

creating a managing a construction project; and design guidelines for Moldovan Courts, summarizing the current standards and supplementing them with international best practices in courthouse design standards.

SECTION I.

**COURTHOUSE  
RENOVATION  
PLANNING AND  
BUDGETARY  
CONSIDERATIONS**

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## 1.1. A comprehensive capital investment program

The discussion in this section generally describes the elements of a comprehensive capital investment plan. Such a comprehensive program for judicial facilities typically incorporates seven components:

### *Functional Assessment/Profile*

The Justice Sector and its international donor partners have examined and documented in the reports described above how courts work within the courthouse, including the typical activities that occur in each type of space; how people circulate within the space and where circulation must be restricted; which groups

or functions must be adjacent to which others; the typical furniture, both fixed and movable, likely to be found in each space; the use of special equipment, such as computers and video displays, that will affect electrical, telecommunications, and lighting; and so on. The Justice sector has been examining in these studies and others not only how the space is used today, but also how activities are likely to change in the future.

### *Design Standards/Design Guide*

Once the Judiciary documents its functional needs, design professionals can translate those functional needs into space standards, i.e., the type and amount of space needed to accommodate court functions, to complement a country's other building codes. By using space standards, the Judiciary is able to assess the adequacy of its current locations and to project the size and configuration of its future needs. Design standards serve as a tool, also, for the Judiciary to control the design of new space; to prioritize reno-

- **Functional Assessment/Profile:** For example, *the Optimum Judicial Map for Moldova 2014* study conducted by the Legal Resources Center for Moldova examines three scenarios for trial court consolidation for government consideration, each with 2 options. Scenario 1 proposes consolidating 10 courts with 10 courts, or 11 courts with 10 courts. Scenario 2 proposes consolidating 16 courts with 15 courts or 15 courts with 15 courts. Scenario 3 proposes consolidating 25 courts with 13 courts, or 23 courts with 14 courts. None of the facilities at the combined locations, however, are adequate to house the combined courts; thus, implementing the study would require new construction to extend current locations or to build entirely new facilities.

● **Design Standards/Design Guide:**

Official design standards for Moldovan court facilities are published in the building code for civil construction: Buildings of district and city courts) CP C.01.04-2007 (MSP 3.2-101-201). Formal revisions must be submitted to the Technical Committee of the Ministry of Construction for consideration. In the various studies conducted by international donors mentioned above, as well as the continuous reviews by the DJA and SCM of courthouse projects, current international practices have been applied to Moldovan projects whenever possible.

vation of existing space; and to evaluate potential leased space. A more detailed discussion of specific design guidelines for Moldovan courthouses is included below.

## *Long Range Facilities Plans*

Each current courthouse in the Judiciary's inventory has been assessed for its capability to provide space for the activities of Judges, staff, litigants, members of the public, jurors, and others who visit them—not only for the current types of activities and numbers of people, but for the future, based on a projection of caseload increases (or decreases) and new activities, such as potential consolidation of some courts as a result of the current courts mapping study. The assessments of current facilities have included evaluation of all building systems and structures, and of the functionality of the facilities, e.g., are the courtrooms and public spaces adequate, is there secure circulation for judges and so on. Information about the facilities current capabilities can be examined against the expected future workload and number and type of staff. From these efforts the Judiciary knows for each facility in its inventory the work that must be done and at least a preliminary estimate of the cost to make it useful for current and post-reform activities. It has also become ap-

● **Long Range Facilities Plans:** In 2013, USAID ROLISP published the *Courthouses Prioritizing Report*, drawing from its assessments of 50 courts in May–June 2012, with the coordination of the SCM and DJA. The report divided Moldovan courthouses into four categories, from those in urgent need of attention (Category 1) to those needing no repair or attention (Category 4). This report, along with the earlier assessments in 2009, has been used by the SCM and DJA to help direct capital investment funds. Further, the Optimum Judicial Map Study published in 2014 by the Legal Resources Centre of Moldova, assessed the capabilities of the current facilities for the courts in which consolidations could take place under various scenarios to accommodate the combined courts.

parent which facilities cannot economically be modernized and renovated, or expanded, and should be replaced immediately.

### **Multi-Year Capital Investment Plan**

Using the Long Range Facility Plan for each current courthouse, the Judiciary is able to develop a Capital Investment Plan of needs by funding year well into the future. Such a Capital Investment Plan enumerates the locations (and size and cost) of where new facilities must be built, and the locations (and cost) where renovations, modernization, and expansions are needed. The SCM has been assigned responsibility for submitting the Judiciary's budget request to the Ministry of Finance, in accordance with the overall budget deadlines.

#### ● **Multi-Year Capital Investment**

**Plan:** The current budget legislation calls for the MOF to issue budget guidance by April 20th, which the SCM must "translate" into internal guidance for the courts. Generally, the SCM has to submit the draft budget request to the MOF by June 1. The MOF must submit the draft budget to the Government by August 25. A full discussion of the budget cycle and the responsibilities of court Presidents and Heads of Court Secretariats are in *Guidelines for Effective Court Administration* (USAID/ROLISP, 2013).

### **Transparent Prioritizing**

Since funding constraints will probably not permit accomplishing the entire Capital Investment Plan in one funding year, it will be necessary for the Judiciary to prioritize the projects in its Capital Investment Plan for funding purposes, perhaps over a five or ten year period. Criteria for prioritizing projects for the national budget, as reflected in the studies indicated above, include unhealthy or unsafe working conditions; lack of security; inoperable building systems; lack of adequate space for conducting judicial proceedings; and so on. Further factors might also include expected increases in workload and personnel; high operating costs; and focus on locations where the *Study on the Optimization of the Judicial Map in the Republic of Moldova* recommends consolidations. In addition, under current procurement arrangements, the individual courts are responsible for all aspects of contracting for design, construction, and quality control. Therefore, the capacity of courts requesting funding to accomplish the facilities works must be taken into account in developing a yearly schedule of projects for the national budget.

### **Planning for Operation and Maintenance**

The Capital Plan must also account for the long-term operation and maintenance of the Judiciary's facilities. Rehabilitated and newly constructed facilities can quickly deteriorate if they are not maintained and

major repairs (roof replacements, for example) made when needed. Since an “adequate” repair and maintenance budget is generally accepted to be 2 to 3 percent of the replacement cost of a facility, it can be a major cost factor in a Judiciary’s budget. Most countries (including the United States) typically do not budget enough money to maintain and repair adequately its public buildings. Thus, the Judiciary must provide in its capital planning process a method for prioritizing and allocating the funding that is actually provided by the government each year for this purpose.

### **Technical Support Staff.**

A comprehensive facilities program requires a long-term commitment—both for maintaining and updating the components and for implementing the capital investment plan. Thus, while the technical skills needed for developing a capital plan, and for designing, constructing, and operating facilities can be obtained by contract with private sector firms, the Judiciary must have a staff of trained professionals to assist in defining requirements, overseeing the contracts, and evaluating the results. The Government is now determining where such technical assistance could best be located—in the SCM or the DJA/MoJ. Until a final decision is made and adequate staffing is provided, local courts must rely largely on their own resources in carrying out their facilities responsibilities.

## **1.2. Creating and managing a Courthouse construction project**

The discussion in the section above generally describes the elements of a comprehensive capital investment plan. This section looks at each step in the processes that must be followed in creating and managing a courthouse construction project within regulations implemented in Moldova. As noted above, currently the management of capital projects is quite decentralized in the Moldovan courts. The President of the Court and the senior staff, particularly the Chiefs of Court Secretariats, have the major share of responsibility for the various phases of any courthouse repair, maintenance, and construction. Investments above MDL 5 million have very specific regulations guiding the various stages of the project, from identification to assessment of completed works.

Below MDL 5 million, however, the general steps that the courts must go through are the same, although simplified, and without a single set of applicable regulations. The steps apply whether the proposed project fits within the court’s own budget or whether funds must be requested through the SCM for inclusion in the Judiciary’s national budget request:

- identify the need
- define the overall scope of the project and develop a preliminary budget estimate



*Cycle of a capital investment project (MDL 5 million+)*

*SOURCE: Ministry of Finance*

- submit the funding request to the SCM for possible inclusion in the Judiciary's budget request
- prioritize the projects requested for final inclusion in the Judiciary's budget request
- negotiate the final budget with the MoF and with Parliament
- implement the individual, funded projects: procure design and construction; works monitoring for quality; purchase furniture; arrange for utilities; move in
- assess the overall effectiveness of the completed project some months after occupancy.

### **1.2.1 Identify the need for a construction project**

The ROLISP *Guidelines for Effective Court Administration* contain a chapter of helpful guidance for court Presidents and Chiefs of Court Secretariats on managing court facilities, including checklists for organizing and managing periodic assessments of courthouse conditions: exteriors and grounds; administrative offices and storage areas; courtrooms and judicial offices; security; and building operating systems. Regular use of standardized Courthouse Facility Checklists is one way for Chiefs of Court Secretariat to become familiar with their building's unique operational requirements. They can also be used to help Chiefs of Court Secretariat organize and manage their building's maintenance programs, and the inspection results can be integrated into the court's annual operating and capital operations budgets. (For easy reference copies of the checklists are included in Annex 2 of these Guidelines). By using these checklists to update earlier assessments discussed above, courts can identify and document work that needs to be done, either immediately or in the near future. Just as the Judiciary must prioritize needs for the national budget, local courts might also rank the work that needs to be done in a similar way, giving preference to items that affect the health and safety of court users; that affect the integrity of the facility; that upgrade building systems; that increase the level of security; that provide "missing" func-

tional areas; and so on. It also might be possible to solve some facilities problems with alternatives to capital investments. For example, some modern office furniture is pre-wired for electrical and data connections, and with vertical storage on the workspace. Compact, movable filing equipment can provide additional needed storage for active records and archives.

### **1.2.2 Define the scope of the work and develop a preliminary estimate of cost**

Once a need is identified, the court might be able easily to define the scope of the work, for example, to repaint some interior spaces or to repair an outside pathway. Other work can quickly become quite complicated, however. For example, needing to replace windows might also require assessing the condition of the surrounding structure and might require identifying the source of moisture that is causing the window structure to fail. Sources of technical assistance in developing a scope of work for more complicated projects might include local contractors or vendors who can make a preliminary (and *pro bono*) assessment of the situation the court has identified and recommend the actions that will be needed. (It's usually prudent to have more than one contractor or vendor inspect the problem, and to make clear that any work will eventually be competitively procured). The DJA does have some limited number of professional staff who

might be able to schedule an onsite visit. If the requirement is for replacement of an existing heating system, for example, in addition to consultation with local vendors/installers, some other courts might have recently faced the same requirement and could offer advice. Similar vendor sources and colleagues in other courts might assist in developing an estimate of costs to see if the work can be accomplished within the court's own yearly budget for repairs and maintenance or whether a request must be included in the annual budget request to the SCM. However, if the scope of the work appears to be more complicated than a simple repair or replacement, it might be necessary to hire, from the court's annual budget, a consultant (engineer or architect) to help define more fully the scope of the required work and to develop an estimate of costs. Such cost estimates must be in accordance with the *Order of the Ministry of Regional Development and Constructions No. 34 of 04.03.2013 to approve the normative document NC L.01.01-2012 "Rules to determine the value of construction objects"*.

If the work can be accomplished within the court's own budget, procurement can proceed within the applicable procurement regulations. If the estimate exceeds the court's budget, funds must be requested through the Judiciary's budget process. Generally, funding requests to be included in the following year's Judiciary budget must be made by June.

### ***1.2.3 Submit the project description and budget estimate from the court to the SCM for funding in the next Judiciary budget***

The SCM is responsible for developing and defending the Judiciary's funding request. The SCM will issue each year the specific budget instructions, including documentation required, benchmarks, and deadlines. The courts, however, should consider that their requests will be required in June prior to the beginning of the budget year. Therefore, planning for facility investments should begin at least by the beginning (January) of the budget request preparation year, and earlier if the project is likely to be a large one. The more complete the documentation for the court's budget request, in line with the feasibility study requirements for capital investments over MDL 5 million (even for projects estimated to cost less), the more likely the request will be approved by the SCM and, subsequently, included in the Judiciary's annual funding.

In addition to the project description and budget estimate, the preparation of the budget request should also include developing a procurement plan, incorporating the various timeframes needed for each step in the procurement, to see what portion of the project can be contracted for in a given budget year. For most large projects, funding will be needed in multiple years: year 1—hiring an architect/engineer to develop detailed contracting documents and bill of quantities, along with a

detailed cost estimate in accordance with government regulations and to do construction work oversight; year 2—hiring a firm to do the construction and monitoring the work, which might also extend into year 3.

### ***1.2.4 Prioritize capital investment requests***

The SCM and DJA have been using the prioritizing criteria reflected in the *Prioritizing Report Courthouses Prioritizing Report 2013* for requesting funds in the Judiciary's national budget. In addition to those criteria, the Government has also been taking into consideration the *Study on the Optimization of the Judicial Map in the Republic of Moldova*, regarding likely locations to be closed when those courts are combined with others.

As noted above, a number of additional factors might also be taken into consideration in prioritizing funding requests from courts, such as future caseload growth, costly building system operating costs, total project costs, among others. Each factor used might also be weighted to show the relative importance of the factor. Regardless of the specific factors used or the weights given to them, the most critical aspect of a prioritizing method is that it be open and transparent, so that Court Presidents understand the ranking received by their project funding requests. In this regard, it would be useful for the SCM to provide the factors and weights to be used in a given budget year when the

Court Presidents are notified to submit their budget requests.

Governments in most countries must prioritize their capital investments because of limitations on resources. Since 2009, the Moldovan Judiciary has laid a firm foundation for assessing the condition of its court locations and then using that information to prioritize requests for funding construction projects. The *Courthouse Facility Assessment Republic of Moldova 2009 (Moldova Governance Country Program Millennium Challenge Corporation)* assessed the condition of every courthouse and identified actions necessary to correct deficiencies. The *Assessment Report of the Courts of Law in the Republic of Moldova 2012* provided assessments of a range of administrative functions, including the condition of courthouses (although not in the detail of the 2009 report). The 2012 report was the basis for *Courthouses Prioritizing Report 2013*, which categorized every courthouse based on the severity of the courthouse's physical deficiencies. The *Study on the Optimization of the Judicial Map in the Republic of Moldova 2014* identified locations for combined courts and indicated the condition of each facility that was a candidate for retention as a combined-court location. The SCM, the DJA/MoJ, and the MoF have used the information from these analyses in deciding which construction projects to fund in the Government's budget. For example, the *A Courthouses Prioritizing Report 2013* divided all court buildings into four categories based on analysis of such factors as the condition of the exterior, water

supply, electrical, sewage and heating systems, interiors (including functionality) and the roof:

- **CATEGORY 1** – Courts which are in urgent need of repair or urgent need of expansion/relocation.
- **CATEGORY 2** – Courts which are in satisfactory condition and are in need of repair and/or reconfiguration within the next 3 years.
- **CATEGORY 3** – Courts which are in good condition or in which reparation is desirable, but not urgent.
- **CATEGORY 4** – Courts which are in excellent condition and which do not need any repair or expansion.

In addition to factors about building conditions, however, a greater range of factors must be taken into consideration in developing a prioritizing system, such as:

- the timeframe in which the space is needed;
- the total staff affected by the deficiencies;
- the estimated costs of the projects;
- caseload, current and future projected;
- and the population served.

SECTION II

**DESIGN  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR MOLDOVAN  
COURTS**

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## 2.1. International Practices: Areas of Focus

**D**esign guidelines for judicial facilities have been developed, for example, by the UK; the US federal courts and many of the individual US state court systems; Australia; Ireland; and Canada. Creating design guides has been a part of the judicial modernization projects in countries such as the Philippines; Romania; Montenegro; Macedonia; and Saudi Arabia. While these Guidelines are specific to the courts of these countries, they do share many areas of special focus.

### 2.1.1 Automation

Automation of administrative processes and automation in the courtroom for evidence presentation; recording of proceedings; sound enhancement; and remote appearances of participants has become a critical tool in modern judiciaries. To be most effective, it is essential that this automation be integrated into the design of new buildings from the beginning.

### 2.1.2 Security

Providing courthouse security involves a combination of architecture, people, procedures, and electronic systems to protect against the many risks against courthouses: vandalism; theft; personnel security; intimidation and disruptions among litigants; judicial security; prisoner movement; and terrorism.

As with automation, security in judicial buildings must be integrated into the design from the beginning to ensure the necessary separation of judges and staff, the public, and defendants in remand so that each group can move about the building without crossing paths, and come together only in the courtroom for judicial proceedings. Security in judicial buildings is also dependent increasingly on electronic systems which must be accommodated. Such accommodation affects the design of the electrical systems (including capacity); lighting (if video surveillance cameras are used); plumbing; and space layout (for example, providing enough space in the entrance lobby or outside courtrooms to place a metal detector, and subsequent queuing).

● **Security:** Designers must make sure that electronic security systems and the buildings' environmental controls, for example, for fire safety, are compatible to ensure that neither system compromises the functioning of the other.

### ***2.1.3 Accessibility for infirm and disabled court users***

If court buildings are to promote access to justice for all citizens, the buildings must not only be barrier free, but must contain the kinds of architectural features that make them welcoming to citizens with sight, mobility, and hearing impairments. Moldova has adopted EU accessibility requirements in its public buildings, but full compliance is sometimes difficult to attain in existing buildings. While it might be difficult to bring existing buildings in to full accessibility compliance without great expense, some simple (and generally inexpensive) actions can remove many barriers. For example, making sure pathways leading to the courthouse are free of potholes and free of snow in the winter; building a simple ramp to at least one building entrance; providing adequate seating in public areas; designing interior signs with large type and placing them at an appropriate level for wheelchair users; making doorway thresholds flush with the floor when interior space is renovated.

### ***2.1.4 Use of courtrooms***

The practice of holding court proceedings in judges' offices—either from tradition or because of a lack of sufficient courtrooms, is now viewed as a practice to be discouraged, in order to improve transparency and physical access by court users and to reduce opportunities

for inappropriate communications and corruption. Thus, the appropriate number, size, and location within the building of courtrooms are important aspects when designing modern judicial buildings.

### ***2.1.5 Public spaces***

As part of promoting greater access to justice for all citizens, an expected outcome is that more citizens will come to the court buildings, either to attend proceedings or to submit or review materials about court proceedings. In modern court buildings designers must give careful thought to providing sufficient and appropriate spaces for the public: waiting areas; adequate signs; help desks; lifts; toilets; spaces for reviewing documents; and perhaps a canteen in very large courthouses.

### ***2.1.6 Accommodations for children and vulnerable witnesses***

Many judiciaries are extremely concerned to provide non-traumatic ways for children and vulnerable witnesses to testify in court proceedings. Most often these ways include special non-threatening rooms from which they can “appear” in the courtroom through video connections between the special room and the courtroom. Usually one such special room is sufficient for a courthouse.

### 2.1.7 Flexibility of spaces

Judiciaries in many countries are experiencing fluctuations in caseloads and, subsequently, fluctuations in numbers of judges and staff. Court buildings must be designed with strategies in mind for future flexibility. These strategies include using interior building materials that make reconfiguring spaces and accommodating automation less costly; constructing foundations adequate for adding floors to the building as more space is needed; considering how the building might be extended onto adjacent land or contracted within the current building without violating separated internal circulation paths.

### 2.1.8 Sustainability/ Maintainability

Although judicial buildings are expensive to construct, costs of operating and maintaining the buildings over their lifetimes are estimated to be three times the initial design and construction costs.<sup>1</sup> The costs of operating and maintaining the facilities can be ameliorated in the design phase by careful selection of materials and building systems, using techniques such as life-cycle costing and value engineering that take into account energy usage of heating and air conditioning systems, for example; passive design features to lessen heat gain and loss; the use of natural lighting and ventilation; use of technologies

<sup>1</sup> International Facilities Managers Association, quoted in the Whole Building Design Guide at [www.wbdg.org](http://www.wbdg.org)

- **Flexibility of spaces:** Court managers should also consider modern office furniture as another means of providing space flexibility. For example, clerical workstations that have built-in electrical and data connections, vertical storage, and occupy 6 square meters or less might be used in lieu of more extensive interior renovations. Compact files in courts with large storage needs can also be “space stretchers.”

for environmental controls; wall and roof insulation; insulated windows and exterior doors; and use of solar energy where possible.

### 2.1.9 Accommodations for defendants in remand

Unlike most other kinds of buildings—with the exception of prisons and jails—judicial buildings must have appropriate accommodations for prisoners for the safety of other users of the facilities and the prisoners themselves. Such accommodations include secured, separate paths for prisoners to move within the court building without encountering judges, court staff, and members of the public—especially potential witnesses. There must be an adequate number of holding cells that can provide separation of male and female prisoners and juveniles. The cells themselves require special construction, such as concrete floors, walls, and ceilings; stainless-steel toilets (rather than

breakable ceramic ones), securely attached; covered, difficult-to-access lighting fixtures, and doors that permit observation at all times. There must be space for guards. There might even be a requirement for food preparation facilities if large numbers of prisoners are kept at the courthouse during meal times. There must be secured spaces for prisoners to consult with their lawyers. There must be secured parking for vehicles transporting prisoners to and from the courthouse, and a secured way of unloading and loading them.

Below is a further discussion of the application of these general principles in the functional areas of Moldovan courthouse and the design implications for building systems. While these guidelines are most easily implemented when new courthouses are constructed, most are applicable to some degree for renovations, as well. In order to make this manual most useful to Judges, court staff, architects, and others involved in designing court space, the current Moldovan standards (Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001)) are summarized at the beginning of each functional area discussion.

## 2.2. Design Implications for various functional areas

### 2.2.1 Courthouse exterior and landscaping

#### *Current standards<sup>2</sup>*

- Courthouse location in accordance with the master plan of the city or district
- The recommended site surface for a courthouse: **0.15 – 0.4 ha**
- The courthouse footprint: at least **25%** of the site area
- The site layout includes: main area, public area and staff area
- Parking space capacity: at least **1 car** per 15 staff members
- **10%** of the parking lots allocated for persons with disabilities
- The staff area should have a controllable entrance for vehicles with defendants, with a continuous fencing at least **2.5 m** high
- The staff area should have a garage for service cars and an area for waste containers
- The area for waste containers should be covered with concrete or asphalt and surrounded with curbs and planted vegetation.

<sup>2</sup> Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001), Chisinau, 2007

## Supplemental Guidance

The appearance of the courthouse, both inside and out, speaks with architectural symbolism about the importance of the judicial system and its relationship to the citizens; the dignity and independence of the Courts of Moldova; the transparency and fairness of the judicial process; and the openness of the judicial system to the citizens. Any newly constructed courthouses will have an opportunity to exhibit the best in current Moldovan architecture and design, using materials that are durable and reflect local materials, and the urban context in which they are built.

The interior and exterior maintenance of the courthouses, whether new or existing, also makes a symbolic statement about the importance of the judicial system in Moldova's public life, and affects the efficiency of the operations of the court staff. The buildings should be clean, periodically painted, well-lighted, heated or cooled as appropriate, with any needed repairs to the building systems (such as the roof and heating systems) made in a timely way to prevent deterioration to the facility and subsequent inefficiencies in court operations, damage to court equipment, and more costly facility repairs.

The exterior of the building has important symbolic function in conveying access and public confidence, while culturally significant buildings or layout may lessen a sense of anxiety. Gardens, parks and trees nearby may be calming and well-

maintained settings contribute to feelings of safety<sup>3</sup>.

**Siting/location:** Selecting a site for construction of a new courthouse can be the single most important decision affecting the cost of the project. Factors affecting “constructability” include topography of the site; soil conditions; seismic requirements; access to utilities; and size (and allowing adequate space for landscaping, parking, security setbacks from streets, and future expansion). The location should also be easily accessible by public transportation, as well as automobile, and the surrounding neighborhood should be appropriate for public buildings. The selection of a site and the placing of the building on the site should also take greatest advantage of the probable effects of passive heating and cooling.

**Appearance:** An exterior appearance and façade that are clean and neat, contribute positively to the permanence, stability, and seriousness of the justice system, but can still be welcoming to the public. The entrance should be clearly defined, and the pathway to the entrance clearly marked and barrier free. Exterior signs, visible from the street, should identify the courthouse. Thus, even in existing buildings, there can often be opportunities to upgrade and maintain the exterior to reflect a more “judicial” appearance. The preference of the USAID ROLISP focus group was for exterior features that recall neoclassical public buildings, such

<sup>3</sup> Enhancing court safety by managing people, places and processes, Report on study funded by Australian Research Council, September, 2014, p. 57



*Building used for administrative purposes, built in XIX century. In 1940 it hosted Lapusna County Court. Chisinau*



*Gedebe, Azerbaijan, Trial Courthouse, Arch. MDM, Baku*



*Classical Elements in Modern Courthouse: Sharjah Supreme Court, UAE*

as a raised entrance, columns, and pediment. There are many successful examples of such features in otherwise modern designs, as well as in Moldova's own architectural past.

**Exterior construction materials:** The selection of materials for façades deserves consideration from several aspects. The use of local materials, easily obtainable and with local knowledge of construction techniques can be very cost effective over imported materials requiring high transportation costs. Ease of maintenance and durability is another aspect in selecting exterior materials, especially for the roof. Appropriate windows can contribute to long term savings in heating and cooling costs. Thus, as with all other aspects of materials and equipment selection, a life-cycle approach might result in slightly higher original costs, but provide long term savings in maintenance and energy costs. For security reasons, especially to prevent break-ins, windows on the two lowest floors are often fitted with bars. However, bars can detract from a desired welcoming appearance. Therefore, break-resistant glass or glazings are more appropriate.

**Landscaping:** A well-landscaped and maintained site contributes to the overall appearance of the courthouse building itself. As with other exterior features, the design of the landscaping should make use of indigenous plantings, and consider the long term maintenance costs. Plantings can assist in guiding the public to the courthouse entrance, can contribute

to energy conservation by shielding the building from the sun in hot months, and can be used to provide additional low cost vehicular barriers. For security reasons, however, plantings should not provide opportunities for individuals to hide or to break into the courthouse unobserved.

**Exterior lighting and signage:** Lighting should ensure the safety of the citizens and staff of the court as they enter and exit the building. Illumination is also required at vehicle and pedestrian sites. Signage should be clear and visible to the public. The name of the “Republic of Moldova”, the name of the court, the national symbol and the flag of the Republic of Moldova need to be placed at the building in which the court is located. At the entrance in the court, in a visible position an information board should be placed, which contains the list of hearings scheduled in the court, working hours and other important public information. At the entrance of each office a sign should be placed that will mark the department and the name of the judge.

**Security:** Appropriate security on the exterior of the building can contribute significantly at a relatively low cost to the overall security of the facility, both during and after working hours. The number of exterior entrances should be kept to a minimum and securely locked when not in use or under the direct observation of security personnel. The general rule is at least two entrances are minimum necessary for each court: 1) a public entrance

at the front of the building; and 2) a back entrance for employees and detained persons. The following division of external entrances is considered to be the optimum: 1) a public entrance at the front of the building; 2) a back entrance for employees; 3) back or garage entrance for detained persons. Windows of the new facilities to be protected with metal grille or break-resistant glass. The windows that are on the ground or basement levels should also be protected with newly projected metal façade, added to the existing facility<sup>4</sup>.

**Handicapped access:** Courthouses that are accessible and accommodating to all citizens express the judiciary’s concern for all the citizens it serves and furthers the goals of transparency, openness, and support of human rights. It is sometimes very difficult to adapt older, existing buildings to accommodate handicapped citizens, but often low-cost actions can be taken to make almost any facility more accommodating. For example, cracked or broken sidewalks and pathways for the public access to the building can be repaired and kept free of snow, ice, and tripping hazards; handrails and rails for handicap chairs can be installed at steps; building entrances can be well-lit and well-marked; drop-off points for the handicapped can be designated; signs can explain about assistance available from court staff. Advocacy

<sup>4</sup> Projection, design, investment, maintenance, and functional operations guide for the courts of Macedonia, 2007, page 10

groups may possibly be of assistance to the court in suggesting other ways that existing facilities can be made more accommodating<sup>5</sup>.

## 2.2.2 Access and Circulation

### *Current standards*

Most of the provisions of the current standards do not comply with the internationally accepted requirements to access and circulation. For instance, the standard sets that working offices of judges shall be located next to staircases and elevators to facilitate visitor's access (see Annex 1). This provision is unacceptable, as according to international standards, judges' offices must be located in a restricted circulation area.

### *Supplemental Guidance*

The figure below, taken from the US Courts Design Guide, graphically illustrates the separation of circulation paths necessary for efficiency and security in a modern courthouse:

- **Public circulation:** public lobbies, waiting areas, public lifts, courtrooms, public restrooms, cafeterias, mediation rooms, public reception rooms, chancellery offices for filing and reviewing documents.
- **Restricted circulation (judges and court staff):** judges' offices, court-

rooms, non-public corridors; library; conference rooms; staff offices; archives; evidence rooms; judges' parking.

- **Secured circulation:** defendants in custody and custodians (police); prisoner transport vehicles; holding cells; secured corridors, courtrooms.

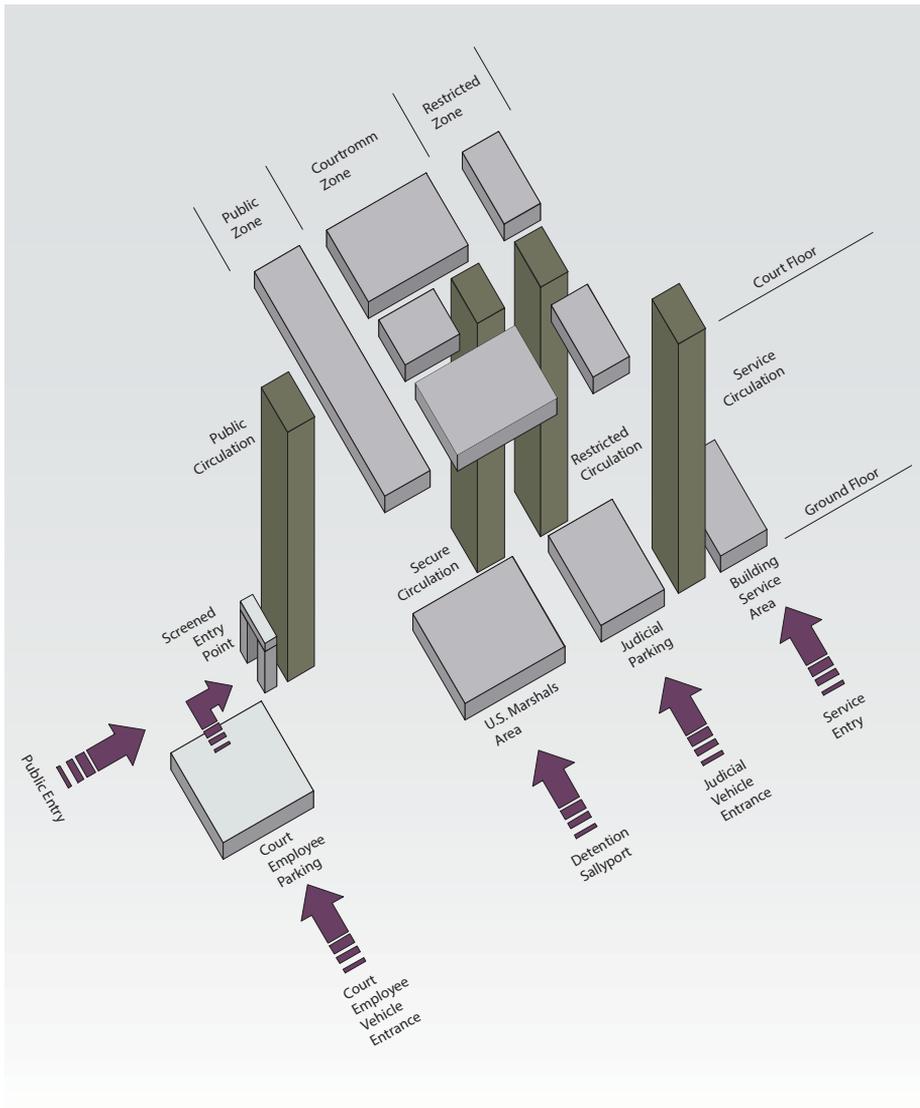
Thus, the courtrooms become the only spaces where the separate pathways come together.

Thus, locating as many court operations as possible that will be visited by the public on the ground floor makes sustaining the separation of circulation paths easier, and is more convenient for members of the public in finding their way. Offices most visited by the public, such as the Chancellery offices and rooms for reviewing documents should be immediately adjacent to the main entrance and public lobby.

Similarly, the courtrooms should be located in the courthouse so that judges, litigants, and the public can conveniently access them without passing through non-public spaces. Usually, such a location would be on floors immediately above the court operations visited by the public. Judges' offices and other spaces that are restricted from public access can be located either on the same floor as courtrooms (if the public can be restricted from the offices) or on separate floors which are entirely restricted to public access.

The most appropriate location of other functional areas in the courthouse, e.g.,

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, page 11



*Separate Circulation paths: Public, Restricted, and Secure*

archives, library, and holding cells, will be addressed as part of the pertinent sections below. The sample courthouse floor layouts in Annex 1 show how a multi-story courthouse might be arranged to make it

easy for court visitors, Judges, and court staff to access the areas they need, while maintaining the necessary separation of circulation paths.

## 2.2.3 Courthouse interior

### A. Main entrance and public lobby

#### *Current standards<sup>6</sup>:*

- Audible signals (via the electric doorbell) must be installed at the main entrance of the building
- Foyer area: **0.22 m<sup>2</sup>** per public seat in the courtrooms plus **20 m<sup>2</sup>** in courthouses with up to 4 judges and plus **10 m<sup>2</sup>** more for every four judges beyond this number
- Wardrobe area: **0.1 m<sup>2</sup>** per coat hook
- Public hall (adjacent to the courtroom) area: **0.3 – 0.4 m<sup>2</sup>** per seat for the public in the courtroom

The main entrance and public lobby area are important spaces in providing a positive overall experience with the courthouse for the court visitor. Since most courthouses will have steps leading to the main entrance, accommodation must be made for the infirm, particularly wheelchair users. Such accommodation might consist of a ramp of appropriate slope leading from ground level to the entrance, or installing an outdoor lift.

The main entrance and public lobby area should be large enough to permit the number of people who normally attend

court functions to get out of the weather, and to familiarize themselves with the location of the pathways to the chancellery offices and the courtrooms. Although not widely used in Moldova, the space might also have to accommodate a metal detector and the space needed for queuing to go through the metal detector, without visitors standing outside in the weather. The area should have sufficient electrical capacity and outlets to support a metal detector if one is to be used. This area will also have a number of signs and posters to help visitors find their way in the building. Even though many entrance and lobby areas are currently very cramped, some things can be done to make them more inviting. Painting and reflooring the space, along with some additional lighting fixtures, can refresh such spaces. Further, in some courthouse it might be possible to build a covered “foyer” to the entrance for the public to queue in. Finishes in the public lobby should be of durable material and easily maintained and cleaned, because of the number of people passing through. Thus, tile or laminate flooring, rather than carpet, is recommended for floor coverings, and tile, heavy vinyl wall covering, or wood wainscoting are recommended for the walls and all public spaces.

<sup>6</sup> Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001), Chisinau, 2007



*Outdoor wheelchair ramp, Ceadir-Lunga District Court, Moldova*



*Example of outdoor self-operated wheelchair lift*

## B. Intake office

### *Current standards<sup>7</sup>*

- Should be located in one building block
- Area: **8 m<sup>2</sup>** per one staff member
- Waiting areas for visitors: 12-20 seats for the chancellery room. The floor area can be larger if the room hosts computers and other equipment
- Separate rooms for the criminal chancellery and for the civil chancellery in courts with more than four judges
- Should include public areas fenced with a barrier
- Should include 1 or 2 places for lawyers

### *Supplemental Guidance*

**Location:** The intake office area of the court is most frequently (and for many members of the public the only area) visited. It is where papers are filed and requests made to examine court documents. Therefore, a well-identified location convenient from the public entrance and with a pleasant appearance contributes much to a visitor's overall impression of the building and, thus, of the judicial system. The input office area should be accessible from both the public and restricted circulation pathways. The intake office should be located on the ground floor of the courthouse immediately adjacent to the public entrance. The positioning of the intake office in the space should provide functional unity of the active and passive archive, the area designated for the reviewing documents by the parties and their representatives, area for printers and photocopying machines, and if possible the area for electronic search of documents and information by the parties and the public.

<sup>7</sup> Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001), Chisinau, 2007



*Chancellery signage and working hours.  
Ialoveni District Court, Moldova*



*Public chancellery counter (view from public side). Ialoveni District Court, Moldova*

While the intake office area should be in a single block of space if at all possible, the work area and, especially, the public interaction area should be separate for the criminal and civil units. The area where documents are filed and other public interaction takes place should have a counter to separate the public from the restricted work area. The size of the public interaction area will depend on the average number of visitors at any one time. The public interaction area

should contain, in addition to the counter, a space where documents can be examined, under the direct observation of the intake office staffs. The location of the area should permit the intake office staff easily to observe the activity in the examining area to prevent any damage to the files. In most courts, the space will need to accommodate 2 to 4 people at any one time. The space should be equipped with small tables and movable chairs or with work carrels.

**Number of beneficiaries:** Beneficiaries include office staff; attorneys; litigants; members of the public; judges; and other court personnel. Intake offices should establish specialized “windows” to accommodate various activities efficiently, particularly during rush periods. When renovating or building a new court intake office, separate areas for attorneys or the public to review court documents and a copy machine should be considered. This area should be accessible to the public but secure enough to prevent any theft of materials from the files.

**User access:** Office staff should be able to access the space from a non-public entrance. Visitors from within the courts will access the office from their own offices within the courthouse. Outside visitors and the general public should be able to access the office from the public entrance in a direct and straightforward route. If funds allow, a case-file elevator should service the archive level from the intake office and from the intake office to the floors where the judges’ cham-

bers and the courtrooms are located. It would also be of assistance to staff in the movement of large numbers of files when necessary. The elevator should be well secured and available only to the court employees. If the elevator does not connect to the archive, a well-lighted and clean stairway should allow for sufficient and safe access.

**Furniture:** The intake office staff is responsible for originating and maintaining case files and other official court records. Their work area should be well-lighted and ventilated. The work area for staff handling criminal filings should be separated from the work area for staff handling civil filings. The work space must accommodate a desk, work chair, and computer, with attendant electrical and data connection requirements. The work areas are entered from the restricted circulation pathway and should be located close to the active cases archives room(s). If there is no separate staff entrance for the courthouse directly to the restrict circulation path, there should be an entrance from the public lobby through a locked door. The specific furniture in an intake office will depend on the number of employees in the office. Below is a listing of typical office furniture.

- **Desk:** Desks should be provided to all clerks working in the intake office. Desks should measure approximately 120cm to 180cm wide/ 75cm-80cm deep/ 75cm -77cm high.

- **Drawer Unit:** Drawer units may be provided to intake office staff to accommodate office materials as well as reference materials necessary. Units may also be built-in to the desk and should contain more than one drawer.

- **Filing Cabinets:**

Filing Cabinets or lockers should be lockable and should remain closed during business hours and locked after business hours. If resources permit, fire and water proof filing cabinets may ensure greater security of court documents.

Cabinets should be designed according to the dimensions of the court file covers

It may be helpful to have dividers within each shelf so as to arrange the files for each judge or in other manners beneficial to the efficient management of the court.

- **Desk Chair:**

- Adjustable and wheeled desk chairs should be provided for all intake office employees.
- Chairs should be no less than 60 cm in width and be similar in style with the rest of the intake office.

- **Visitor Chairs:**

Visitor chairs should be available in the intake office for small meetings.

The chairs should be stackable for easy storage when not in use and identical in style and color.

- **Coat Racks:**

If there is sufficient space available in the intake office, a closet is recommended for the storage of coats and supplementary clothing. A closet, or large cabinet, will be more cost efficient than multiple coat racks, will keep the office area neater, and will encourage the dignified appearance of the court facility. If it is not feasible to have a coat closet for employees, sufficient coat racks for all intake office employees should be provided throughout the intake office.

The number of coat racks or closets provided should be based on the number of intake office staff so as to provide all staff with sufficient space to store their belongings<sup>8</sup>.

**Electricity:** In addition to the normal number of outlets required by building codes, sufficient outlets are required for computer work stations as well as copy and fax machines. The intake office will be at the forefront of the court automation movement and it is imperative that any renovations or new buildings make every attempt to accommodate the need for electrical outlets, telephone lines, and data lines at every desk to ensure proper connectivity.

**Security:** The intake office is a primary point of public contact and security must be of concern in planning the space. The

office should be easily accessible to the court police. The public counter serves as an access barrier between the public space and the office work space. Some additional measures, such as a gate, may be necessary to allow staff to control admission to the work space of visitors needing to consult with staff at their desks. At minimum, all doors to the office should have a secure lock and windows should be lockable. If on the ground floor, windows should have exterior security with projected and designed metal façade or resistant glass.

**Climate control:** Climate control technology should be installed as it is throughout the court facility. In especially hot regions, air-conditioning systems and/or special built-in ventilation systems should be considered due to the large number of users in the intake office.

**Handicapped access:** Every attempt should be made to make the public areas of the intake office as accessible as possible, since the intake office is one of the offices in the courthouse most often visited by the public. Recommended height of the counter accessible for handicapped persons is 80 cm<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Projection, design, investment, maintenance, and functional operations guide for the courts of Macedonia, 2007, page 32

<sup>9</sup> Projection, design, investment, maintenance, and functional operations guide for the courts of Macedonia, 2007, pages 19-30

## C. Courtrooms

### Current Standards<sup>10</sup>

Designation of courtrooms	Places for the public in the courtroom	Floor area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Courtrooms number per judges number									
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Civil proceedings	20	40	-	-	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
	30	48	-	1	-	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Criminal proceedings	40	60	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
	60	70	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	2	2
	90	110 (135)*	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
<b>Total number of courtrooms</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Total places for the public</b>			<b>40</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>480</b>

\* In case of an increased number of case participants

Number of court-rooms	Number and total floor area of the rooms for case participants			
	Rooms for prosecutors		Rooms for lawyers	
	Number	m <sup>2</sup>	Number	m <sup>2</sup>
1-2	1	12	1	12
3	1	18	2	24
4	2	24	2	24
5	2	30	3	36
6	2	36	3	36
7	3	42	4	48
8	3	48	4	48
9	4	54	5	60
≤10	4	66	5	60

### Adjacent Rooms

- **Deliberation room:** Area: minimum 12 m<sup>2</sup> Adjacent to the courtroom from the procedural side Separate entrance into the courtroom
- **Witnesses' room:** Area: minimum 12 m<sup>2</sup> Adjacent to the courtroom.
- **Public hall:** Area: 0.3 – 0.4 m<sup>2</sup> per seat for the public in the courtroom Adjacent to the courtroom from the public side
- **Room for equipment** (courtrooms with a floor area larger than 50 m<sup>2</sup>): Area: 9-12 m<sup>2</sup>
- **Case participants' room (for lawyers and prosecutors):** One for 2 or 3 courtrooms

<sup>10</sup> Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001), Chisinau, 2007

- Window frames in courtrooms, deliberation rooms, escort rooms, defendants' rooms, the corridors and stairwells along the defendants' routes, and peepholes on cell doors should have metal railings
- The area for defendants during court proceedings:
  - Should be surrounded from 4 sides by metal railings **220 cm** high.
  - The surrounded area should accommodate between **3** and **20** defendants
  - The railings should have a door **200x80 cm** in size and a roof. The railing bars should be metal **14 mm** thick
- To ensure that the judges' chambers walls and doors are soundproof, the walls of the witnesses' room should be covered by sound insulator.
- The visitors' area in the rooms allowing the public should be isolated by a barrier or a partition with a window.
- Doors between witnesses' rooms and courtrooms should be double.
- Entrances in courtrooms should have backlight plates with the inscription "**KEEP QUIET! A COURT SITTING IS UNDERWAY,**" usually placed over the doorway.

### *Supplemental Guidance*

The court facility should ideally provide one courtroom per judge; however one courtroom for every two judges is acceptable if existing facilities cannot accommodate one courtroom per judge.

**Location:** The courtroom should be located in the courthouse so that judges, litigants, and the public can have easy and convenient access. Whenever possible, the courtrooms should be located so that detainees/prisoners can be transported through the courthouse to the courtroom with no contact with the public or judges. Judges should be able to access the courtrooms through a secure corridor that is not shared with the public<sup>11</sup>.

**Number of beneficiaries:** Courtrooms are the one space in the courthouse where all the participants come together: judges; public; attorneys; and defendants in criminal trials, the public and attorneys entering through an entrance from public circulation; judges and staff entering through another entrance from restricted circulation; and defendants in custody and their escorts entering through a separate entrance from the secured circulation. Courtrooms, therefore, are usually the most formal space in the courthouse, in terms of dimensions, furniture, and finishes.

<sup>11</sup> Projection, design, investment, maintenance, and functional operations guide for the courts of Macedonia, 2007, pages 30-38

### User Access:

- *Judges:* There should be a separate entrance/exit for judges to access each courtroom.
- *Witnesses:* Witnesses should be able to enter the courtroom without public contact. All attempts should be made to include a separate entrance for witnesses, as well as a secured area for witnesses to remain during the trial.
- *Litigants and Attorneys:* Except for prisoners, litigants and their attorneys can enter the courtroom through the public entrance.
- *Prisoners:* Security staff should be able to bring the detainees/ prisoners into the courtroom without bringing them into contact with the public or with witnesses. It is very important to maintain a holding area separate from the public for detained defendants, as well as a separate entrance/exit that will keep them out of contact with the general public.
- *Court staff:* Court staff can enter the courtroom through the public entrance, but might also use the separate entrance for judges.
- *General Public:* Except in rare circumstances as defined in the law, trials are open to the public. Public access to trials is an important component of the goals of openness and transparency of the judicial reform program of the Courts of Moldova. Easy public access to judicial proceedings contrib-



*Rezina District Court, Moldova*



*Ceadir-Lunga District Court, Moldova*

utes to the overall level of confidence of the public in the judicial system. Therefore, adequate accommodations for the public must be provided in the courtroom, and the access way to the courtroom from the public entrance of the courthouse should be straightforward and well-marked. The public's right to observe court proceedings does not mean that the public cannot be subject to appropriate security screening both before entering the courthouse and before entering the courtroom.

● The ratio of courtrooms to judges has many aspects, including economic and functional. However, if judges are in a fully occupied court and are responsible for managing their own cases after assignment, then it is difficult to argue that not having ready access to a courtroom will not decrease judges' productivity (case processing)—thus, one courtroom per judge. A lesser ratio makes it more difficult to hold judges accountable for their performance; requires additional staff time for scheduling courtrooms (and rescheduling when a session goes on longer than anticipated); makes it more difficult for attorneys, litigants, public, and defendants-in-custody custodians; and judges' courtroom staffs (court secretaries, for example) to know which courtroom to go to from day to day; and the tendency to conduct some proceedings in judges' offices increases. The scheduling aspect becomes more complicated if there is a mix of courtrooms for civil and for criminal cases, and a mix of courtroom sizes. It has been argued that above a certain number of judges, a ratio of courtrooms to judges of less than 1 to 1 can be determined, so that a judge is always able to plan on a courtroom assigned for the duration of a particular case.

**Size:** The Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001) provides for several sizes of courtrooms, based on whether they will be used for criminal or civil proceedings, and the likely number of members of the public attending pro-

ceedings. In addition to the sizes in the current standards, a smaller courtroom of less than 40 m<sup>2</sup> should be considered for use in proceedings with few participants.

**Number of courtrooms:** Just as courtrooms are the most formal and distinctive rooms in the courthouse, the number and placement of courtrooms becomes the most basic and important design decision. The current regulations on courthouse design suggest numbers of courtrooms based on a mix of civil and criminal and total number of judges in the courthouse. Once the number of courtrooms needed is decided, the next decision is about the number of courtrooms per floor, which must take into consideration the total number of courtrooms to be built, whether judges' offices are to be on the same floor as the courtrooms; and the eventual building height (will vertical transportation shafts be needed for public, staff, judges, and perhaps separate ones for prisoners; will a different type of construction be needed above a certain building height).

The number of courtrooms per floor essentially establishes the building floor plate or footprint. For example, for 8 courtrooms with judges' offices on separate floors, and using a minimum standard of 40 square meters, two floors of courtrooms with a floor plate of approximately 2000+ square meters would be needed. From this, the number of floors of 2000+ square meters needed to accommodate the rest of the court can be determined. In most designs,

2000 square meter footprints are pretty minimal. For larger courthouses a much larger footprint should be explored, with perhaps six to eight courtrooms per floor (larger numbers of courtrooms would require more public waiting space on each floor, for example). A 20 judge courthouse would require, then, 4 floors of courtrooms, plus floors for all other court staff, each floor of 2400+. Such a large building will require not only a larger piece of land, but more parking, a different type of construction, more circulation space (elevators, for example), additional fire-safety measures; larger capacity building heating, electrical, plumbing systems.

**Furniture:** Furniture in the courtroom for the public is usually fixed bench seating. For security reasons, the seating should be firmly attached to the floor. Similarly, attorneys' tables and chairs should be heavy enough not to be easily picked up and used as a weapon. Seating in the defendant's box should be firmly attached to the wall or floor. Judges, court staff, and other participants in court proceedings are increasingly using sound recording equipment, laptops, PC's, and audiovisual equipment in the courtroom. All this equipment requires more electri-

● A platform, raised two or three steps above floor height, symbolically contributes to the stature of the proceedings, but also provides another degree of separation and security for judges.

cal outlets in the courtroom (including at attorneys' tables), and consideration of the effects of lighting levels (and glare) on video monitors used in evidence presentation and for remote appearance of witnesses.

**Electricity:** In addition to the normal number of electrical outlets, there should be at minimum an outlet at the judges' bench, at the secretary's desk (to support voice recording equipment and a computer workstation), at the counsel tables, and at the witness/expert/defendant podium. There should be an outlet appropriately located outside the courtroom to accommodate a metal detector or x-ray machine for screening by the security staff if necessary. Every opportunity should be taken to prepare courtrooms for future automation. Additional electrical outlets, telephone and computer network outlets should be included in plans for any renovation or new building.

**Climate control:** Courtrooms are not always in constant use, but when they are, they contain more people than other spaces in the courthouse. Therefore, the space does not have to be heated or cooled continuously, but the system must be able to quickly bring the room temperature to acceptable levels when it is occupied.

**Construction materials and finishes:** Courtrooms should be free of columns, for reasons of security, furniture (fixed and movable) placement, and line-of-

sight; and have a higher ceiling (slab to slab) than normal office space to accommodate, among other requirements, a raised platform for judges. “Squarer” courtrooms provide greater flexibility than other rectangular ratios of width to length. This shape also permits designing the courtrooms with sufficient distance between the public and the “working” area of the courtroom; between the attorneys; and between the defendants in criminal trials and the judges (this is especially critical since low railings around the defendants’ space rather than “cages” made of metal bars, as described in the current standards, are now being used in the courtrooms).

Courtrooms traditionally are paneled in wood, which contributes to the dignity and formality of the space, but is also easier to maintain than painted walls. Floor finishes in the courtroom might be a mix

of hard surfaces (wood laminate, tile), or carpet (within the work area of the courtroom).

Wood paneled walls and fixed furniture, hard floor surfaces, and high ceiling heights can cause acoustical problems for the recording equipment, sound enhancement systems, and audiovisual presentations. An acoustical engineer can suggest ameliorating strategies if these problems exist.

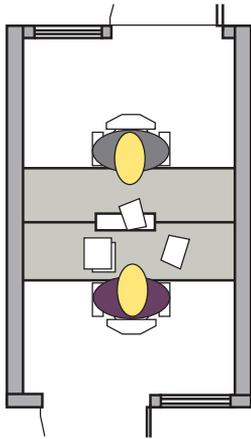
**Signage:** A sign outside the courtroom, either attached to the public entrance door, the wall, or free standing, should indicate that the space is a courtroom; its number, or other appropriate identifier in multiple-courtroom facilities; and whether the courtroom is in use. A printed copy of the daily court calendar should be posted in the hall and on the courtroom door.<sup>12</sup>

**Handicapped access:** Newly designed and constructed courtrooms and, to every extent possible, existing courtrooms should be accessible to all Moldovan citizens, including those with mobility restrictions, and/or sight and hearing impairments. Such accessibility applies both to travel to and from the courtroom and within the courtroom. Consideration should be given to the width of aisles and between furniture to accommodate assistance devices such as wheelchairs or crutches. In the aisles space should be planned to accommodate a wheelchair



*Signage on a courtroom door, Riscani District Court, Chisinau, Moldova*

<sup>12</sup> See *Quality Services for Citizens in Courts* for other suggestions about appropriate and helpful signage in courthouses.



*Attorney interview room,  
California State Courts design guide*



*Attorney/Defendant Secure Interview Room,  
MDM Group, Baku*

and also at the witness podium there should be enough space to maneuver with the wheelchair.

**Ancillary rooms:** In addition to the courtroom itself, a space for judges to deliberate is required immediately adjacent to the judges' bench and can also serve as the judges' entrance to the courtroom from restricted circulation. In addition to the deliberation room, there should be space for witnesses to wait to appear, located on the public circulation path.

The sample floor plan in Annex 1 shows a courtroom arrangement with a deliberation room immediately adjacent to the courtroom and witness rooms on either side of the foyer/entrance to the courtroom.

Secure rooms 5 to 7 square meters in size should be provided for attorney/defendant private interviews and conferences. They may be provided at the central holding area or on court floors near courtrooms. The entrance to the attorney side should be from the public circulation and the defendant from the secured. The room should be divided by a security panel but have some contact space to permit review and signing of documents. Typically these rooms at least on the defendant's side should have vandal-resistant work surfaces and stools, lighting fixtures and ventilation openings. In the sample courthouse floor diagrams shown in Annex 1, the witness rooms located in the courtroom foyer adjacent to the holding cells could be constructed to provide such rooms.

## D. Judges' Offices

### Current Standards<sup>13</sup>

Room	Floor area, m <sup>2</sup> , per the number of judges, persons		
	Up to 5	5-7	8 and more
Chamber of the court president	18-24	24-30	Minimum 36
Anteroom of the court president	18	18-24	Minimum 24
Office of the assistant of the court president	12	12-14	Minimum 16
Judge's chamber	18	18	Minimum 24
Judge's anteroom	18	18	Minimum 20
Room for relaxation	12	18	24
Office of the logistics and HR consultant	-	-	12-14

### Supplemental Guidance

**Location:** The judge's office should be located next to the courtrooms and near other judges. Judges' offices should be also located together and in close relation to court secretaries' offices and the offices of the judge's assistants. Additionally, a copy machine and restroom facilities located within the secure area of the courthouse should be reasonably near to all judicial chambers.

**User access:** Judges should be able to safely access their offices without coming in contact with witnesses, litigants, and/or members of the public. Access of persons other than judges, court secretaries and judges' assistants should be prohibited.

**Electricity:** In addition to the number of office outlets required by building codes, there should be at least two outlets at the judge's desk for a computer and at the court secretary's workplace for computer, sound recording equipment, and if needed, a network printer.

**Climate control:** This should be similar as provided in the rest of the facility.

## E. Chief of the Court Secretariat

### Current standards

The current standards do not contain any specific provisions related to the requirements to the office of the Chief of Court Secretariat.

In 2012, Moldova established in each court the position of Chief of the Court Secretariat to provide dedicated management of all non-justice administrative activities.<sup>14</sup> As the senior manager of the court, the Chief of the Court Secretariat has daily contact with the Court President and other judges, the court staff, and, on an as-needed basis, members of the pub-

<sup>13</sup> Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001), Chisinau, 2007

<sup>14</sup> Law on Amending and Supplementing Some Legislative Acts No. 153 of July 5, 2012 (Official Gazette 185/620 of August 31, 2012, and the Chief Justice's letter to the SCM of April 30, 2013 (No. 378)

lic, including vendors and contractors, and attorneys. The office of the Court Secretariat consists of a private office area of 18 to 24 square meters. The furniture likely to be found in the office includes a desk and office chair; book cases; filing cabinets; visitor chairs; and a work table for holding small meetings with 4 to 6 staff members. (For larger meetings, the Judges' conference room or other staff meeting/training rooms might be used.) Thus, the location of the Head of the Court Secretariat's office must be on the restricted circulation pathway, but with easy access to the public area for meetings. In addition to a private office, the Chief of the Court Secretariat area will include an ante-room for a secretary/assistant with desk, office chair, and filing equipment; and 2 to 4 visitor chairs.

## *F. Judges' assistants and court secretaries' offices*

### *Current standards*

The current standards do not contain any specific provisions related to the requirements to the judges' assistants and court secretaries' offices.

### *Supplemental Guidance*

**Location:** The judge's assistant's office should be located nearby to the judge's offices. If space within the court facility is insufficient, 2 or more assistants may share an office, or the assistant may share



*Judges' assistants' office.  
Nisporeni District Court. Moldova*



*Judges' assistants' office.  
Taraclia District Court. Moldova*

an office with the judge that they work with or the court secretary that serves the same judge. If the court secretary is not located in the judge's office, the court secretaries' office should be located in a place convenient to the judges.

**User access:** The office will primarily be used by the assistant, court secretary and the judge with whom they work.

**Electricity:** In addition to the normal number of office outlets required by building codes, there should be no less than two additional outlets at the desk for a computer and printer.

**Security:** All doors to the office should have a secure lock. Windows should be lockable. If on the ground floor, windows should have exterior security double metal façade construction.

**Climate control:** As mentioned above for other functional areas of the courthouse.

**Handicapped access:** The assistants' offices should be made as accessible as possible as judges and court staff will visit the office.

## G. Archive

### Current standards<sup>15</sup>

- Should have separate entrances
- Area (archives for cases *under examination*): **4 m<sup>2</sup>** per judge; minimum **9 m<sup>2</sup>**
- Area (archives for *disposed* cases): **6 m<sup>2</sup>** per judge
- Archive without windows, with a floor area larger than **36 m<sup>2</sup>** should have draft chimneys for smoke evacuation with a section area minimum **0.2%** of the room area
- Archives should have reinforced doors
- Archive rooms must not have natural lighting

### Supplemental Guidance

**Location:** Rooms for storing files for active cases (under examination) and inactive cases (disposed) are required in every courthouse. In larger courts or in courthouses where a sufficiently large block of space is not available, separate archives might be required for criminal and civil cases. Archives will contain open or compact shelving for files and perhaps a small work table. Moldovan courts are developing an increasingly large inventory of recorded discs of judicial proceedings, which will require specialized shelving for efficient storage. Overhead lighting should be adequate for shelving and retrieving the files. Careful consideration must be given to the location of the archive, because of the extremely high floor loading of filled multi-tiered shelving. For this reason, the archive is often placed at the basement level of the court facility. The archives should be located on the restricted circulation pathway. Active archives should be easily accessible to the chancellery space, and located near the public information counter and public document review area. However, careful consideration must be given to the location of the archives for active and inactive records (and libraries), because of the extremely high floor loading of filled multi-tiered shelving, for normal shelving and twice that capacity per square foot for compact shelving). For this reason, inactive archives are sometimes placed on the basement level. It might be necessary to consult a structural or civil engineer to determine the actual floor load requirements and the best location for the

<sup>15</sup> Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001), Chisinau, 2007

archives. Further, water lines for the building's plumbing system should not be run in the ceilings or walls of archives; and fire suppression systems, if used, should be either "dry" lines or use a chemical suppressant. Archives should have sturdy lockable doors.

**Number of beneficiaries:** Primarily the archivist, court staff, and judges will be using the archive. The public and attorneys should not have access to the archive.

**User access:** Ideally, court staff should be able to access the archive through a private or secure entrance. If funds allow, an elevator should service the archive level to assist staff in the movement of large numbers of files when necessary. If an elevator does not connect to the archive, a well-lighted and clean stairway should allow for sufficient and safe access.

**Furniture:** The furniture of an archive should include a desk and a chair for the archivist, static shelving risen off the ground to ensure the documents are not affected by flooding. Mobile shelving may also be considered.

**Electricity:** In addition to the number of outlets required, sufficient outlets should be provided for computer, scanning equipment, and a photocopy machine. Special attention should be paid to the firefighting system and the installations both here and in the intake office area.

**Security:** Records stored in the archive are extremely sensitive, and must be safeguarded against damage. The number of entrances to the archive should be kept to a minimum; all doors should have a se-



*Mobile shelving as demonstrated in Ohrid Basic Court, Macedonia*



*Archive with mobile shelves. Balti Court of Appeals, Moldova*

curity lock. External windows are not recommended, however if they are already in place, they should be lockable. If on the basement or ground floor, windows should have double metal grille. A system should be in place to log visitors in and out, as well as any records that are taken from the archive.

**Climate control:** Additional environmental controls over and above those provided throughout the courthouse will be required to prevent records from deteriorating from extreme humidity or temperature conditions. Every reasonable precaution should be taken to ensure hydro and thermo isolation to protect the archived documents.

**Handicapped access:** Although the archive is not accessible to the public, the area should be made accessible for court staff<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Projection, design, investment, maintenance, and functional operations guide for the courts of Macedonia, 2007, pages 44-48

## H. Waiting area

### *Current standards*<sup>17</sup>

#### **Waiting rooms**

- Corridors and the waiting rooms attached to them can serve as waiting areas.
- 8 – 10 places per judge office
- 12 – 20 places per chancellery room

### *Supplemental Guidance*

The waiting areas should have sufficient number of comfortable and durable chairs, positioned in groups and attached to the floor. They have to be located as close as possible to the areas that are most frequently visited by the public, to be close to the restrooms. The size should be proportional to the population served. The noise level from the waiting areas that is being heard in the courtrooms should be minimized. The corridors can be used as waiting areas if they are wide enough and if the noise can be isolated from the courtrooms<sup>18</sup>.

Waiting is central part of the court experience but overcrowded and noisy conditions can induce fear, anger, and frustration. Participants identified as at risk should be given the opportunity to wait separately. The stress of participants wait-

ing can be further reduced by providing access to or views of nature, natural light, dedicated smoking areas and places for children play<sup>19</sup>.



*Waiting area. Telenesti District Court, Moldova.*



*Public waiting area. Basic Court, Tetovo, Macedonia*

<sup>17</sup> Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001), Chisinau, 2007

<sup>18</sup> Projection, design, investment, maintenance, and functional operations guide for the courts of Macedonia, 2007, page 50

<sup>19</sup> Enhancing court safety by managing people, places and processes, Report on study funded by Australian Research Council, September, 2014, p. 77

## I. Public and secured restrooms

### Current standards

- Should exist on every floor
- Should be separated in those for the staff and those for the public
- If there are fewer than **10** staff members on each floor, the courthouse can have one restroom for every two floors
- One of the restrooms on the floors with courthouses designed for the maximal number of the public should have a cubicle for wheelchair users
- The restrooms for escort, defendants, the guard and for deliberation rooms should be equipped with a toilet and a sink
- Doors into staff and public restrooms should have door closers.

### Supplemental Guidance

Separate restroom facilities should be provided for the public and the judges and court staff. Restrooms for handicapped persons, with enough space for wheel chair movement should be also included. The separate restrooms that are located in the secured corridor of the court should be positioned near the judges' chambers.

## J. Holding cells for defendants and rooms for escort

### Current standards<sup>20</sup>

- **Cells: 3** rooms for each courtroom; area of each room – **4 m<sup>2</sup>**
- Separate cells for men ,women and juveniles and to isolate individuals who may not communicate with each other
- Should have special doors with peepholes
- Should have concrete flooring minimum **20 cm** thick
- Light sources should be placed in niches in the upper part of walls or on the ceiling and protected by railings
- Defendants' rooms may be designed without natural lighting
- Light switches should be mounted in corridors, next to the cell door or in the escort room
- Windows and doors should be equipped with sound and light alarm that goes on when somebody opens them
- The defendants' route from cells to courtrooms should be isolated
- Area of the escort room:  
**12 m<sup>2</sup>** per 10 or fewer cells  
**18 m<sup>2</sup>** per more than 10 cells

<sup>20</sup> Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001), Chisinau, 2007

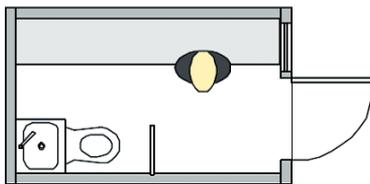
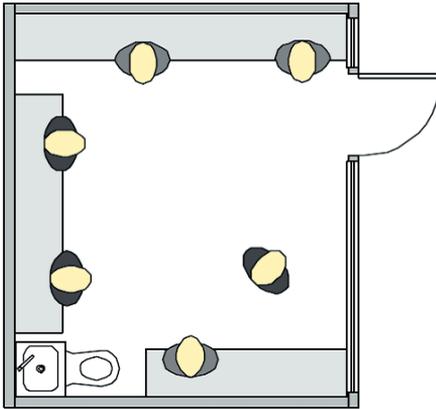
## Supplemental Guidance

In courthouses where criminal trials are held, a secure room near the courtrooms must be created to hold defendants in custody who are brought from jails each



*Multi defendant cell with stainless steel benches*

*Source: MDM Arch., Baku*



*Single and multiple cells with toilets.*

*Source: California state design guide*

day to the courthouse for proceedings. The number and size of holding cells in a courthouse will depend on the number of defendants in custody that must be housed each day. If only one holding cell is provided, it should be designed so that there is an option to divide the room if there are defendants that should not mingle.

Custodians for defendants in custody must have a secured parking place, either immediately adjacent to a secured entrance to the courthouse or within the courthouse parking garage. An outside loading/unloading area and courthouse entrance should be screened from public view and covered so that loading and unloading can take place out of the weather.

Within the courthouse, areas for defendants in custody include central holding cells, space for custodians, and, where possible, smaller holding cells adjacent to courtrooms (see the typical courthouse diagram in Annex 1). Central holding cells and space for custodians are usually located in the basement if there is an outside access. The circulation pathway for all movement of defendants in custody entering and moving within the courthouse should be exclusive, and separated from the restricted circulation pathways for judges and court staff, and the public circulation pathways.

There should be separate central holding cells for males, females, and juveniles, with a minimum of 4 square meters per person. Where space permits, provision

should be made for separating in-custody defendants that should not mix, such as gang members and defendants being tried together, or who will be testifying against each other.

Specification for finishes and fixtures for areas used by in-custody defendants have several objectives:

- **Preventing escape:** Construction materials construction techniques should prevent escape and not be easily damaged, for example, concrete floors, concrete or glazed concrete blocks walls extending slab to slab, and solid ceilings.
- **Preventing “weapons” being created:** Fixtures used should not be a danger to defendants or used as a weapon, for example, stainless steel one-piece benches bolted to the floor and/or walls using tamper-proof fasteners; stainless steel (rather than ceramic) one piece toilets, also securely attached to the floor and/or walls; and encased light fixtures.
- **Easily cleaned and maintained.**

● If the central holding cells are located near parking for automobiles in the basement an adequate system for ventilating the fumes of the automobile engines to the outside must be provided to make certain the automobile fumes are not breathed by those in custody or by court staff.

## K. Secured victims and witnesses rooms

### Current standards<sup>21</sup>

- **Area:** minimum 12 m<sup>2</sup>
- Adjacent to the courtroom
- Doors between witnesses’ rooms and courtrooms should be double.

### Supplemental Guidance

Two victims and witnesses rooms should be provided per each courtroom in order to avoid communication between witnesses. The size of the victims and witnesses rooms should not be less than 10 m<sup>2</sup> each. The rooms should be adjacent to the courtrooms. The victims and witnesses should enter courtroom central door and their path from the entrance to the courtroom to the witness box should be as short as possible. In order to ensure sound insulation the walls and doors of the victims and witnesses rooms should be covered with sound proofing materials. There should be installed an intercommunication system in the courtroom to ensure the communication of the courtroom users with the victims and witnesses rooms.

<sup>21</sup> Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001), Chisinau, 2007

## L. Child Interview Room

The main goal of child interview room is to enable the protection of child witnesses and victims of crime, especially sexual and domestic violence crimes through putting into practice principles of interviewing children in friendly conditions and by competent staff. Child interview room ensures that the interview of a child is carried out only by a judge in psychologist presence. Other persons (prosecutor,



*Example of a secure juvenile hearing room.  
La Strada Centre, Chisinau, Moldova*



*Example of a secure juvenile hearing room.  
La Strada Centre, Chisinau, Moldova*

advocate, accused) are present in separate room and have the possibility to participate in the interview thanks to communication system between rooms, two-side mirror and/or live broadcast of interview. Child interview room must be adjusted to the needs of a child and meet following standards:

- must guarantee privacy (soundproof door between interviewing room and other room/premises);
- shall be equipped in accordance with child needs in order to ensure physical and mental safety of a child during interview;
- shall be painted/maintained in subdued colors;
- shall be furnished in a way to ensure that older and younger children can spend time comfortably (two sizes of tables and chairs, sofa or armchair, soft carpet);
- shall be equipped with materials and equipment useful in gathering information from a child (colored pencils, paper, dolls, etc.).

Child interview room should be accompanied by the waiting room without access for the accused. Waiting room should be equipped in a manner which enables child to spend time in an active way (toys, books, colored pencils, etc.).

Child interview room must be also adjusted to the needs of the judicial system. In particular, recording of interview is available in the room and persons who attend

the interview (prosecutor, advocate) in separated room should be able to communicate with a judge and a psychologist in order to pass them list of questions which will be asked to the child.

In order to ensure above mentioned needs of justice system, child friendly interview room should be equipped with:

- Camera/as to record interview (entire room + child's behaviors and reactions);
- Microphone/s to record sound;
- Audio video recording equipment;
- Microphone in the room next to the room where a child is interviewed;
- Headphones for judge and psychologist<sup>22</sup>.

### *M. Mediators' room*

Many Moldovan courts are now incorporating mediation and other forms of Alternative Dispute Resolution. While mediation can be carried out in "borrowed" spaces, such as courtrooms, judges' offices, and conference rooms, these spaces are already overused in many courthouses. As courts make greater use of mediation, specific rooms should be designated for such proceedings. Space for mediation requires three functional areas:

- A room of 18 to 20 square meters to accommodate up to six participants with a conference table and chairs
- A "caucus" room of 12 to 15 square meters to accommodate up to four people with chairs where each side can meet privately
- A waiting area with appropriate seating.

As the use of mediation increases in a court, there might be need to also have an office of 15 square meters with desk, office chairs, and file cabinet, for the mediator or mediation administrator. Such offices could be located in restricted circulation. The mediation room, caucus room, and waiting area should be accessible from public and restricted circulation.

### *N. Evidence storage room*

#### *Current standard<sup>23</sup>*

- Area: minimum **10 m<sup>2</sup>**
- Evidence rooms, rooms for seized objects, storage for cleaning staff and restrooms may be designed without natural lighting
- Weapon storage rooms must not have natural lighting

<sup>22</sup> Compendium of good practice in the field of friendly justice for children – Poland, <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/childjustice/Poland%20good%20practices.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001), Chisinau, 2007

### *Supplemental Guidance*

All courthouses will require a secure space to store evidence in the custody of the court and seized property. Such seized property may include contraband such as drugs, weapons, and other valuables. The size of the room will depend on the size of the court and the type of materials it has in evidence and that it normally seizes. The space requires minimal heating and air conditioning, electrical service, and lighting, and should be located in a part of the courthouse that is not accessible to the public. It should be furnished with sturdy shelving, lockable cabinets, and/or pallets for storage that are made of fireproof material and humidity-protection material. The space should have a lockable door and no external windows. Any external windows should be outfitted with metal façade, tinted windows, and ideally, bulletproof glass. This room should have fire hose, fire alarm and security lock alarm, and video surveillance of the corridor that leads to this room<sup>24</sup>.

#### *O. Server room*

Wiring, power supply, HVAC, and acoustical designs for a computer or file server room and photocopy equipment room should meet individual equipment and systems specifications. General lighting should be provided. Humidity and tem-

perature should be controlled according to equipment manufacturer's requirements.

All courts are now automated and a special environmentally controlled room should be provided to house servers and other computer equipment serving the courts. The room must be equipped with a secure cipher lock, card reader, or keypad to limit entrance to authorized persons. The telecommunications/computer server room should have controlled temperature and humidity. A/C units should be on emergency generated power and should be independent from the building air. For security and temperature reasons the room should be located away from outside windows and doors and should not be located in the basement to avoid possible flooding or water damage.

All equipment should be protected from power surges and brown outs with the installation of power conditioning equipment and an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) located in the building. The electrical feed for the computer room should be isolated, including neutral and ground, from the rest of the building's electrical system<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Projection, design, investment, maintenance, and functional operations guide for the courts of Macedonia, 2007, page 51

<sup>25</sup> Virginia Courthouse Facility Guidelines, 2001

### *P. Boiler room*

The boiler room should not be considered an all-purpose storage area. The burner requires proper air circulation in order to prevent incomplete fuel combustion and production of carbon monoxide. Therefore, the boiler room must be kept clean and clear of all unnecessary items. All personnel who operate or maintain the boiler room are properly trained on all equipment, controls, safety devices, and up-to-date operating procedures. Boiler operating log sheets, maintenance records, and manufacturers' recommendations should be used to establish a preventive maintenance schedule based on operating conditions, as well as on past maintenance, repairs, and replacements performed on the equipment.

### *Q. Conference meeting room*

A conference room large enough to accommodate all judges should be provided on the restricted corridor near judges' offices. The conference room furniture will typically consist of a round conference table large enough to seat all the judges, and comfortable arm chairs; and a work station for a typist (with an electrical and data outlet for a computer and sound recording equipment and a telephone.); other court staff might also occasionally be present. Other furniture might include a table for serving refreshments, and a table for distributing written materials. Wall and floor finishes should be similar to those in the President Judge's office



*Judicial conference room. Ceadir-Lunga District Court, Moldova*



*Judicial conference room. Ceadir-Lunga District Court, Moldova*

or a courtroom. A telephone outlet is required. The space should have a lockable door. It might be located adjacent to the Court President's office so that it can also be used by the Court President as a conference room. The conference room should also be large enough for the court to receive official visitors and delegations. Suggested sizes are:

- 45 square meters to accommodate 20 people
- 35 square meters to accommodate 18 people
- 30 square meters to accommodate 12 people

- 24 square meters to accommodate 10 people
- 15 square meters to accommodate 6 people

In addition to a conference room, Presidents of Courts also must meet on occasion with the public, including news media. A meeting room large enough to accommodate 10 to 12 people should have entrances both from the public and restricted circulation paths, preferably adjacent to the main entrance. Typical furniture might include a small work table and chairs. The meeting room can also serve the court staff for small meetings and for training. It might be equipped with a large screen monitor and DVD player and computer for presentations during briefings and training.

### *R. Video surveillance*

Effective courthouse security is achieved through a combination of structural elements (such as security glazing), traffic pattern control, security devices (video



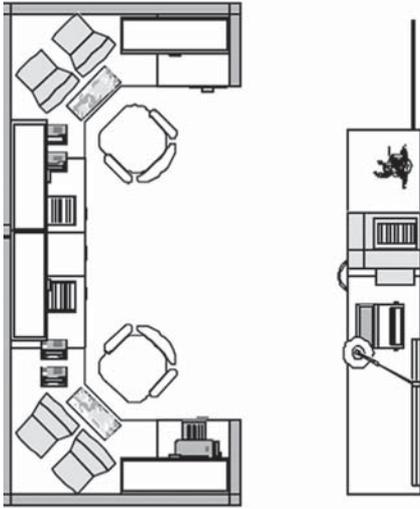
*Split screen video security camera monitor. Oghuz Trial Court, Azerbaijan*

security, metal detectors), and security staff assignments. The level of activity in each courthouse and, to a large extent, the volume of criminal and domestic cases, will determine the level of security required and the means employed to achieve and maintain that security.

Intelligent video surveillance systems can combine human monitoring of scenes in and around the courthouse with software monitoring and analysis of what each camera is capturing. Such systems can detect situations that may require attention and alert security personnel, thereby enhancing security and reducing the number of staff required to monitor video feeds. Among other situations, video surveillance can detect persons entering unauthorized areas, a briefcase or package left unattended, an individual loitering in a particular area or a vehicle sitting in a no-parking zone, and removal of a normally present object<sup>26</sup>.

Video monitors can supplement, or replace, security staff in public and secure areas. Typically video cameras are used in prisoner holding areas to monitor prisoners and prisoner movement. They may also be located to observe entrances to the building, particularly loading docks and service entrances that may not have a permanent security presence, and they are used to monitor public and private corridors as well as entrances to sensitive areas.

<sup>26</sup> J. Douglas Walker, Intelligent Video Technologies Enhance Court Operations and Security, <http://cdm16501.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/tech/id/580>



*State of California Design guidelines*

Cameras may also be installed in courtroom to ensure security. Normal procedure would be to have the cameras off. They would only be activated if the judge or someone else in the courtroom activated the alarm.

The Judicial Police are responsible for providing security in the courthouse. They perform a number of activities, including monitoring the activity of court visitors, responding to alarms, and operating metal detectors where they are used. The office for the Judicial Police should be immediately adjacent to the public lobby and close to the building entrance. The Judicial Police office is where the building alarms, including the duress alarms from Judges offices; courtrooms, and Chancellery work areas, and CCTV (video) feeds terminate. The work area should have a partial glass partition to permit the Police

to observe the lobby easily. It should also contain a work table for video monitors and recording equipment, with adequate power (with UPS) and data connections. There might also be a space for recharging hand-held radios.

### *S. Room for CDs storage*

The life expectancy of optical discs depends on many factors, some controllable by the user, others not. Factors that affect disc life expectancy include the following:

- type
- manufacturing quality
- condition of the disc before recording
- quality of the disc recording
- handling and maintenance
- environmental conditions

The combination of high humidity and increased temperatures will accelerate the oxidation rate.

The organic dye used in the data layer of R discs degrades naturally but slowly over time. High temperatures and humidity will accelerate the process. Prolonged exposure to UV light can degrade the dye properties and eventually make the data unreadable. Heat buildup within the disc, caused by sunlight or close proximity to heated light sources, will also accelerate dye degradation.

Manufacturers claim that CD-R and DVD-R discs have a shelf life of 5 to 10 years before recording, but no expiration dates are indicated on CD-R, DVD-R, or DVD+R

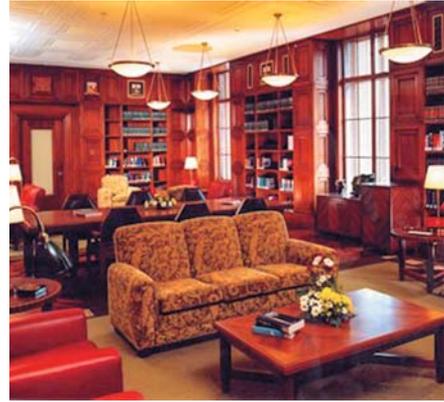
packaging, nor are there published reports of tests to verify these claims. Still, it would be prudent, in light of these claims, to purchase new discs as they are needed rather than to order large quantities and stockpile them for future use<sup>27</sup>.

## T. Court library

### Current standard<sup>28</sup>

- Area:
  - 18 m<sup>2</sup> per 1 or 2 judges
  - 24 m<sup>2</sup> per 3 or 5 judges
  - 30 m<sup>2</sup> per 6 or 7 judges
  - 40 m<sup>2</sup> per 8 or more judges
- The library should be near the librarian's office that should be **12 m<sup>2</sup>** in area

As more and more legal research is done online, the library space is becoming less of a room only for housing books. For some time into the future, however, the library space will still need to provide shelving especially to accommodate heavy legal texts. In addition, however, the room must accommodate computer terminals with internet access. Typical furniture found in libraries includes work tables or study carrels, and comfortable chairs. Many courts are also using library



Judges reading room. Supreme Court of Canada.<sup>29</sup>

spaces as multi-purpose rooms for training and staff meetings. The library should be located on the restricted circulation pathway.

A law library should be available and conveniently located to all users, particularly judges and law clerks.

Even with a central library collection, each judge should have a minimum set of reference materials in chambers. Today, most legal references are available on-line or on compact disk, so that judges can have easy access to a sizable library in their own offices.

The library should be conveniently located to all users and located where court staff can easily supervise its use. Where significant after-hours use of the library is anticipated, it should be designed with a separate after-hours entrance and arrangements made for after-hours security.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub121/sec4.html>

<sup>28</sup> Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001), Chisinau, 2007

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.scc-csc.gc.ca/vis/gal/read-lect-eng.aspx>

It should have a quiet environment. The temperature is very important; it should not be stuffy and hot, nor should there be noisy air conditioners or drafts. The library should be soundproofed and have natural lighting where possible; overhead lighting should be glare-free. Adequate work surface is important.

Free-standing book stacks give maximum flexibility. The units should have adjustable shelves. Because of the weight of the books and other holdings, consideration should be given to the location of the library, particularly when renovating older court facilities or construction of larger court facilities with a large law library.

Large libraries in multi-judge courts may require a full-time librarian, and separate private office space should be located within the library for the librarian. Also, libraries should have space for a photocopy machine. All libraries should be designed with facilities for computer terminals. Occasionally, especially in smaller courthouses, the library may double as a conference room as long as the activities do not interfere with normal library use<sup>30</sup>.

## 2.2.4 Building Support Systems: electrical, data/telecommunications, lighting, finishes

### Current standards<sup>31</sup>

#### Lifts

- Courthouses with 3 or more floors should have passenger lifts
- Minimum 2 passenger lifts
- One of the lifts should have facilities for wheelchair users
- The passenger lift should be maximum **60 m** away from the farthest door
- Exits from the passenger lifts should open into lift halls
- The width of the lift hall should be minimum **1.3** of the lift cabin depth
- The hall width in front of the lifts for wheelchair users should be minimum **2.5 m**.

#### Lighting

- Archive rooms and weapon storage must not have natural lighting
- Defendants' rooms, evidence rooms, rooms for seized objects, storage for cleaning staff and restrooms may be designed without natural lighting
- In special situations determined by the specificity of courthouse design, courtrooms may be designed without natural lighting

<sup>30</sup> Virginia Courthouse Facility Guidelines (2001), page 80

<sup>31</sup> Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001), Chisinau, 2007

### Fire Safety

- Aside from the foyer and restrooms, all courthouse rooms should have automatic fire alarm installed
- The fire alarm system in courthouses should be centralized
- The emergency exits in the areas with defendants' cells should be separate from those in the rest of the building
- Archive and evidence rooms without windows, with a floor area larger than **36 m<sup>2</sup>** should have draft chimneys for smoke evacuation with a section area minimum **0.2%** of the room area
- Courtrooms without windows should be equipped with smoke evacuation equipment

### Engineering Systems and Equipment

- Water systems should include the drinking water system, the utility water system and the firewater system
- Courthouses that are not connected to the central hot water system can have electric boilers
- Judges' chambers, offices of court staff, courtrooms, halls and foyers should be equipped with digital clocks
- The office of the court president, judges' chambers, escort room, chancelleries, courtrooms and witnesses' rooms should be connected by interphone

- Sound signaling systems should connect:
- Deliberation rooms and escort rooms, chancelleries and courtrooms
- Guard room and the main entrance into the courthouse
- Escort room and the staff entrance into the courthouse
- All floors of the courthouse should have common bells system.

### Supplemental Guidance

As in most modern buildings—public and private—court staff make extensive use of IT equipment throughout the courthouse. Such usage requires a large electrical capacity of “clean” (consistent level) power delivered to every room of the courthouse, with outlets at every workplace, not only for IT equipment but also for other business equipment such as copiers and fax machines. Electronic security systems (sensors, locks, video cameras, metal detectors, duress alarms, emergency lights) also require clean power, with emergency power backups in case of power failure. Other building systems, such as heating and cooling equipment, and water pumps, require clean electrical power to operate and for the equipment's electronic controls. Providing the power needed in the courthouse might require an emergency backup generator, and a regulator to ensure even power inputs (no “spikes”). All courthouses now must

have a dedicated server room with environmental controls and lockable doors, located on the restricted circulation path. All IT equipment should have an UPS (uninterrupted power supply) for the equipment to shut down safely in case of a power failure. (The *Guidelines for Effective Court Administration*, 2013, contains a more complete discuss of IT requirements. The pertinent section of the manual is reproduced in Annex 3.). Two items that have been troublesome in courthouse designs internationally require particular attention to prevent accidental damage to electronic equipment: water lines for the building's plumbing system should not be run in the ceilings or walls of server and data communication rooms; and fire suppression systems, if used, should be either "dry" lines or use a chemical suppressant.

Flexible infrastructure for distribution of power, data, and telecommunications is also critical in the modern courthouse, and must be considered in the selection of construction materials. For example, dry-wall interior walls and suspended ceilings make it easier to route (and reroute) cabling, as well as promoting space flexibility. Modern office furniture also is often prewired with electrical and data outlets.

Lighting throughout the courthouse must support the nature of the work being done, much of which involves careful examination of printed or handwritten documents; keying information and using video screens; moving throughout the public areas; and monitoring for security. In the courtroom, where increasing use will be made of video monitors and

other audiovisual equipment for evidence presentation and remote appearance of litigants special attention must be given to preventing glare while providing enough lighting for the equipment's cameras to "see" clearly. Lighting accounts for a major portion of a facility's energy usage, so the selection of the most energy efficient lighting fixtures can yield substantial savings in energy costs, and is a good investment in any renovation project<sup>32</sup>. Other lighting strategies include maximum use of natural light and the use of light colors in wall coverings, ceilings, and even furniture.

Finishes selected for court interiors should be durable and easily maintained, especially in high-traffic areas such as public lobbies and hallways, even though such finishes might be less flexible than others, such as carpeting for floors. Such materials also serve well in overcrowded office spaces which are subject to heavy use.

Fire safety standards applied in any renovations or new construction should comply fully with the most recent Moldovan building construction standards. As noted elsewhere in the Guidelines, however, it is critical that the automated fire safety controls – as well as electronic controls for other building systems – be integrated and coordinated with each other and with any electronic security systems, such as alarms and electronic locks.

<sup>32</sup> See the Whole Building Design Guide website for suggestions about designing with energy efficient lighting fixtures: [http://www.wbdg.org/resources/efficient-lighting.php?r=library\\_st](http://www.wbdg.org/resources/efficient-lighting.php?r=library_st)

## *Sustainability and Energy Conservation*

Sustainability principles<sup>33</sup> that should be incorporated into every courthouse project include

- **Integrated design:** every aspect of project design must consider the long term durability and operating costs of every building
- **Life-cycle costing:** total costs over the expected life of construction materials, finishes, fixtures, equipment, and furniture—not just original purchase price—must be primary in making selections
- **Energy efficiency:** as energy costs increase globally, every effort should be made to conserve energy usage, both in the initial selection of equipment and in its operation
- **Ease of operation and maintenance:** for equipment in particular, ease of operation and maintenance makes it more likely that the equipment will perform at maximum efficiency over time
- **Measure:** in order to ensure that the expected benefits of more efficient buildings, and to identify where the least efficient buildings are located, the actual performance over time must be measured and compared to government goals and to expected results

A report on energy saving strategies incorporated in the Azerbaijan court facilities construction program<sup>34</sup> addressed four areas of potential energy consumption savings: rational design (siting); insulation (including insulation in exterior walls and exterior fenestration, e.g., windows and doors; use of “green” low energy consumption equipment for heating and cooling with “smart” controls; and lighting, including fixtures, natural lighting, and color selections. Some of the findings that are applicable to any courthouse design include that energy consumption varies markedly among the functional areas of the courthouse: administrative areas consume 30% of the total buildings energy consumption; judges’ areas, 20%; public areas, 10%; and courtrooms, 40%. The study also found that the use of light colors for walls and for furniture resulted in significant differences in energy consumption for lighting of over one third in courtrooms alone.

<sup>33</sup> The Whole Building Design Guide website ([www.wbdg.org](http://www.wbdg.org)) contains design and operating guidance for high performing, efficient buildings, including courthouses.

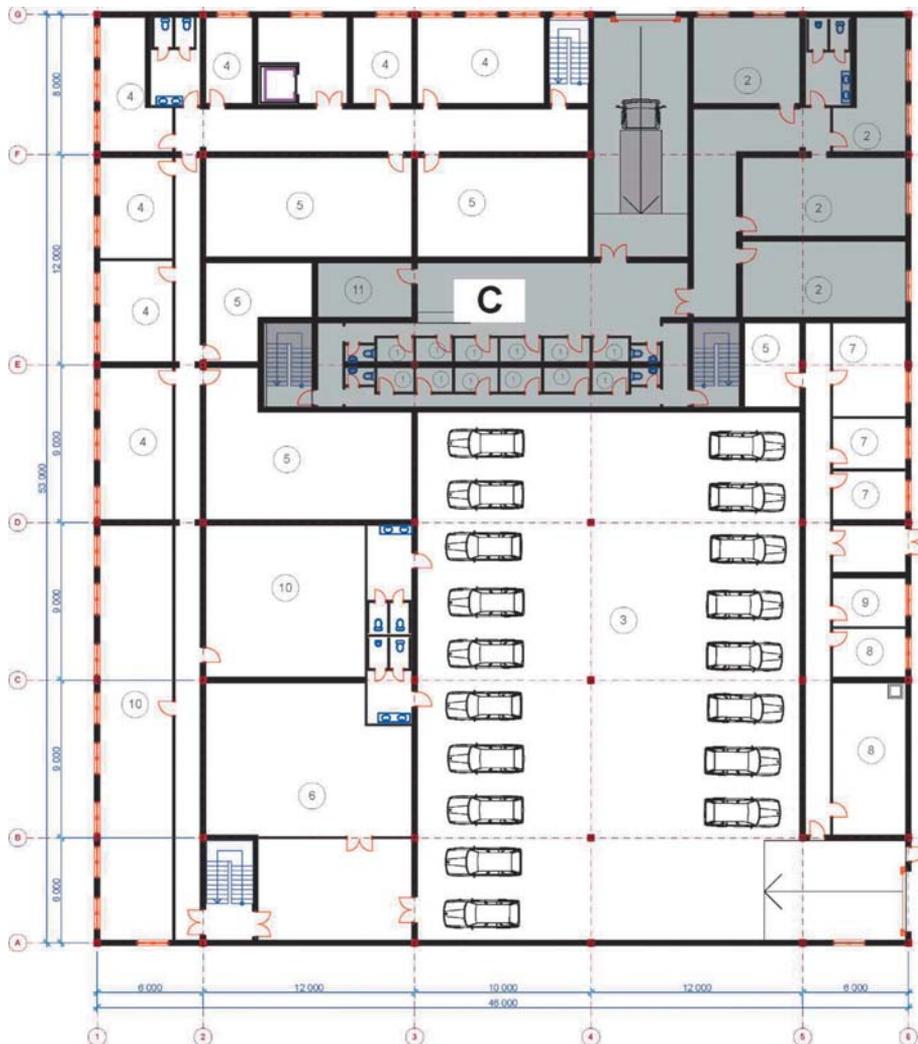
<sup>34</sup> Unpublished study prepared by MDM Group, Architects, Baku, for the Azerbaijan Ministry of Justice.

## Listing of regulations and manuals

1. Law on the Superior Council of Magistracy No. 947 of 19.07.1996, published in Monitorul Oficial No. 15-17 of 22.01.2013
2. Law on authorization to perform construction works No. 163 of 09.07.2010, published in Monitorul Oficial No. 155-158 of 03.09.2010
3. Law on constructions quality No. 721-XIII of 02.02.1996, published in Monitorul Oficial No. 25 of 25.04.1996
4. Law on the budgetary system and budgetary process No. 847-XIII of 24.05.1996, republished in Monitorul Oficial, 2005, special edition
5. Law on public procurements No. 96-XVI of 13.04.2007, published in Monitorul Oficial No. 107-111 of 27.07.2007
6. Government Decision No. 352 of 05.05.2009 to approve the Regulation on public procurement of works design services, published in Monitorul Oficial No. 89-90 of 12.05.2009
7. Government Decision No. 1029 of 19.12.2013 on capital investments, published in Monitorul Oficial No. 311 of 27.12.2013
8. Government Decision No. 763 of 11.10.2012 to approve the standard documentation for public procurement of goods and services, published in Monitorul Oficial No. 216-220 of 19.10.2012
9. Government Decision No. 1121 of 10.10.2010 to approve the standard documentation for public procurement of goods and services, published in Monitorul Oficial No. 247-251 of 19.10.2012
10. Government Decision No. 834 of 13.09.2010 to approve the Regulation on public procurement of works, published in Monitorul Oficial No. 169-171 of 17.09.2010
11. Government Decision No. 360 of 25.06.1996 on the state control of construction quality
12. Practical construction guide. Buildings of district courts. CP C.01.04-2007(MSP 3.02-101-2001), Chisinau, 2007
13. Construction norms. Administrative buildings. Projection rules (NCM C.01.04-2005), Chisinau, 2005
14. NC L.01.01-2012 "Rules to determine the value of construction objects", published in Monitorul Oficial No. 60-63 of 22.03.2013

15. Centralized procurement guide for the justice system of the Republic of Moldova, Ecaterina GRIB, Public procurement consultant, Chisinau, 2013
16. Courthouses prioritizing report, Chisinau, 2013
17. Courthouse Facility Assessment Republic of Moldova (Moldova Governance Country Program Millennium Challenge Corporation), Chisinau, 2009
18. Projection, design, investment, maintenance, and functional operations guide for the courts of Macedonia, 2007
19. U.S. Courts Design Guide, 2007
20. Quality Services for Citizens in Courts: User Guide, Chisinau, 2013
21. Guidelines for Effective Court Administration, Chisinau, 2013
22. Assessment Report of the Courts of Law in the Republic of Moldova, Chisinau, 2012
23. Study on the Recent practice of funding the Judicial System, taking into account international practices of funding the Judicial System, Chisinau, 2013
24. Enhancing court safety by managing people, places and processes, Report on study funded by Australian Research Council, September, 2014

### Courthouse layout with 8 courtrooms, basement



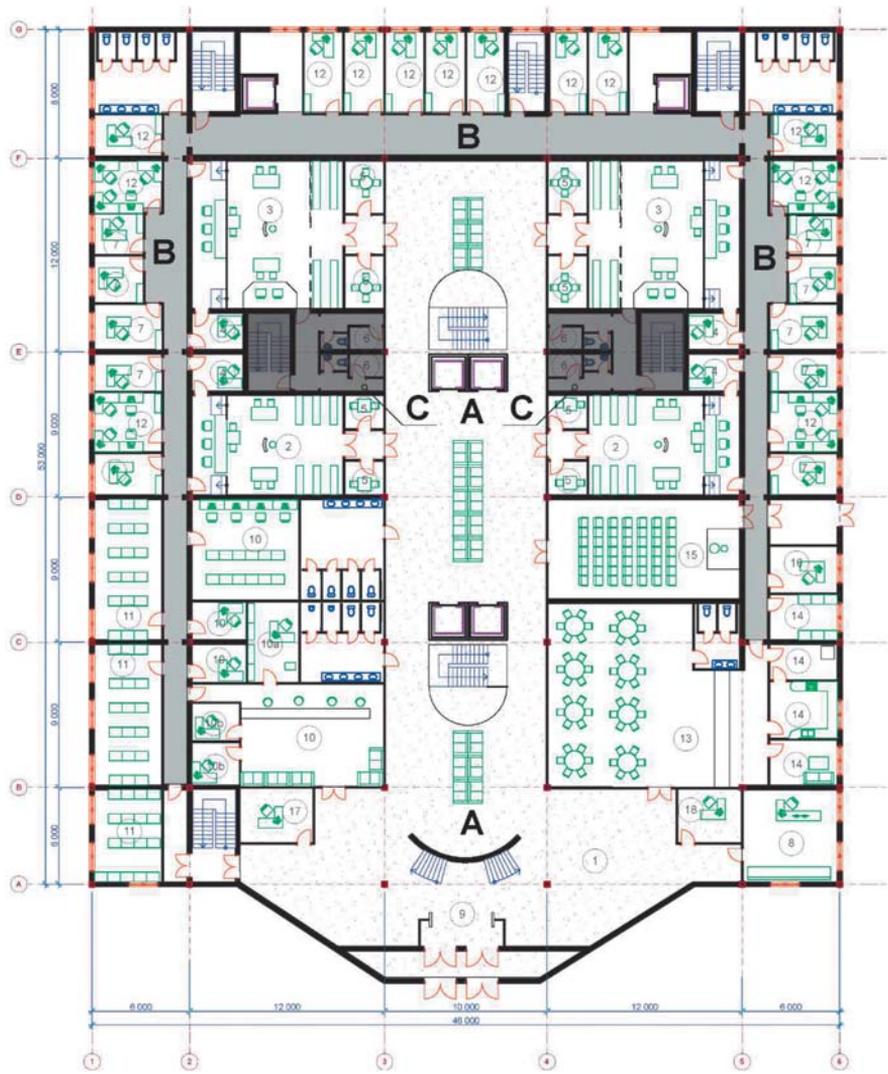
C - Guarded circulation

**Key:**

- 1 - Holding cells
- 2 - Premises for convoy
- 3 - Parking
- 4 - Technical rooms
- 5 - Storage rooms

- 6 - Repair workshops
- 7 - Rooms for the drivers
- 8 - Cafeteria rooms
- 9 - Room for the supply manager
- 10 - Archive
- 11 - Attorney - client meeting room

## Layout of a courthouse with 8 courtrooms, 1st floor (ground floor)

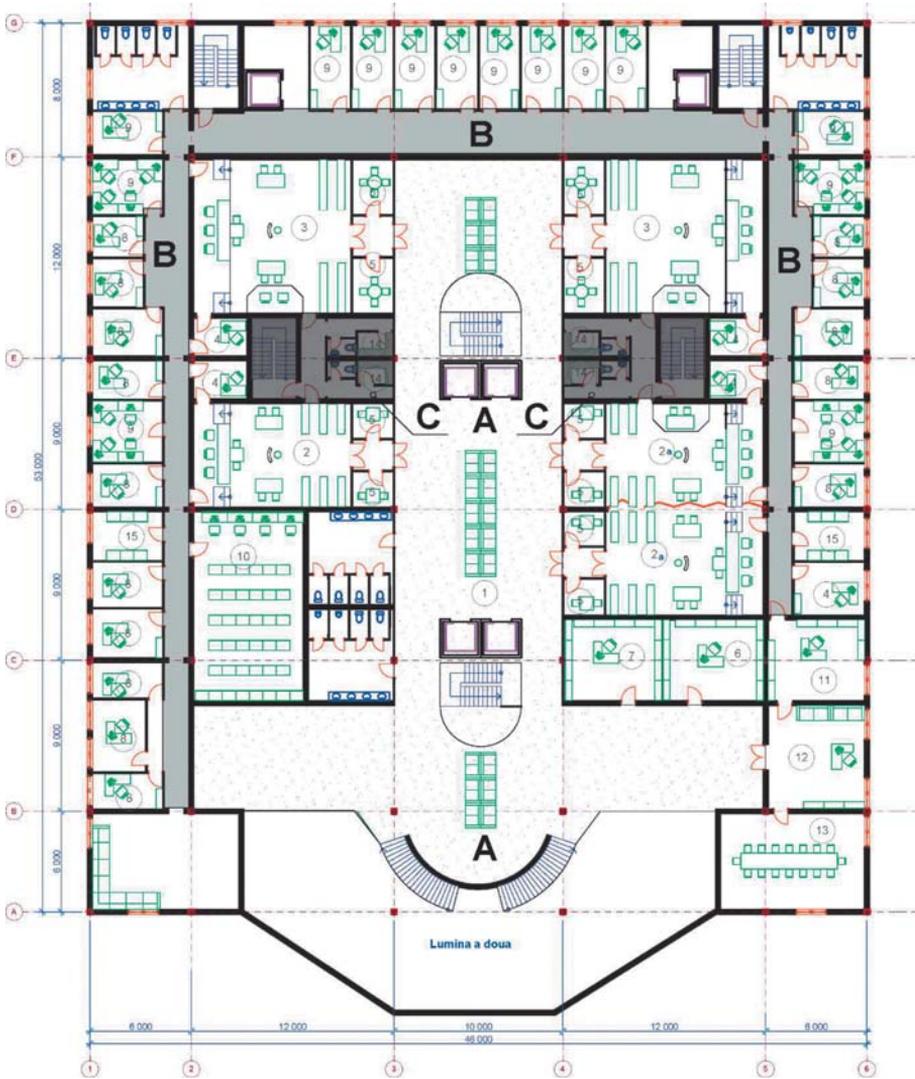


- A - public circulation
- B - restricted access circulation
- C - guarded circulation

**Key:**

- 1 - Wardrobe
- 2 - Courtroom for civil trials
- 3 - Courtroom for criminal trials
- 4 - Deliberation rooms
- 5 - Witness waiting room
- 6 - In-custody defendant holding cells
- 7 - Judges' office
- 8 - Room for guard of the building
- 9 - Checkpoint with metal detector
- 10 - Chancellery
- 10a - Copy room
- 10b - Room for studying the cases
- 11 - Archive of current cases
- 12 - Rooms for the clerks of the court hearings
- 13 - Cafeteria
- 14 - Cafeteria rooms
- 15 - Conference room
- 16 - Hardware room
- 17 - Room for prosecutors
- 18 - Room for attorneys

## Layout of a courthouse with 8 courtrooms, 2nd floor



A - Public circulation

B - Restricted access circulation

C - Guarded circulation

**Key:**

1 - Hallway

2 - Courtroom for civil trials

2a - Multifunctional room

3 - Courtroom for criminal trials

4 - Deliberation room

5 - Witness waiting rooms

6 - Room for prosecutors

7 - Room for attorneys

8 - Judges' offices

9 - Room for the clerks of the court hearings

10 - Library

11 - Court Administrators' office

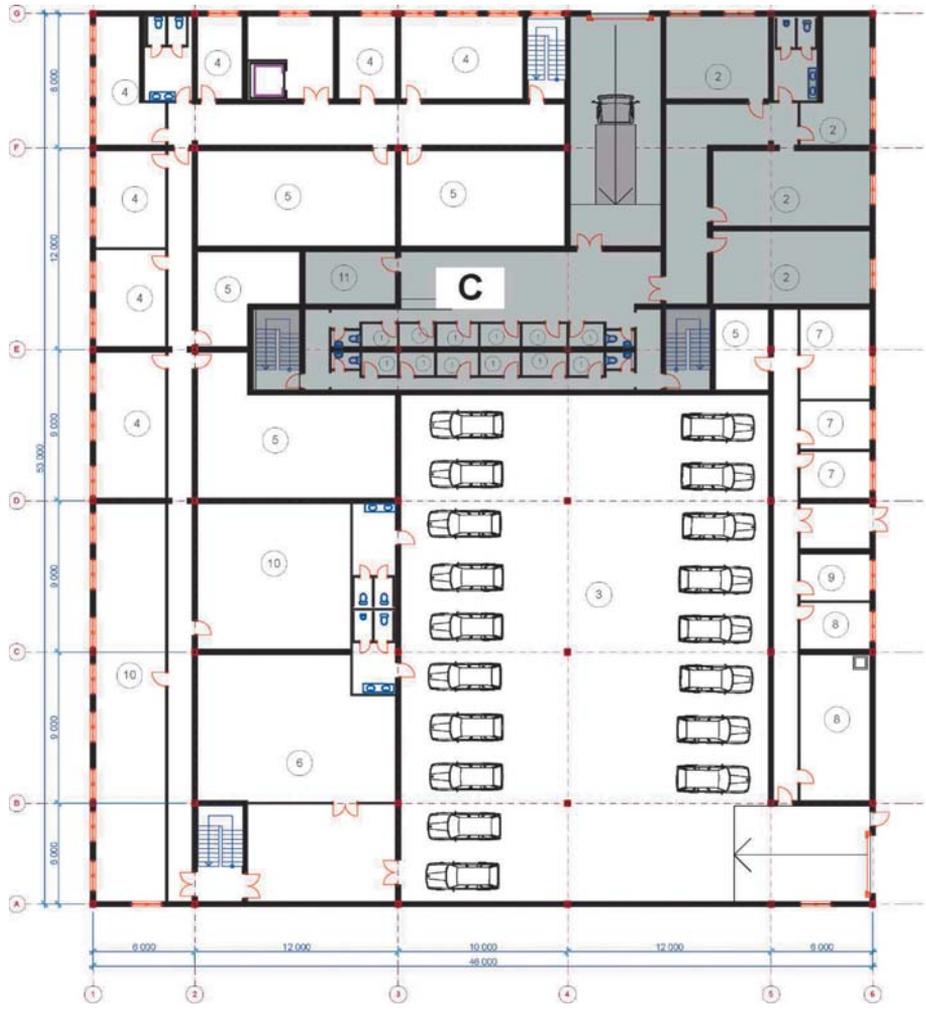
12 - Antechamber

13 - Conference room

14 - In-custody defendant holding cells

15 - Evidence and seized property storage room

### Layout of a courthouse with 12(16) courtrooms, basement floor



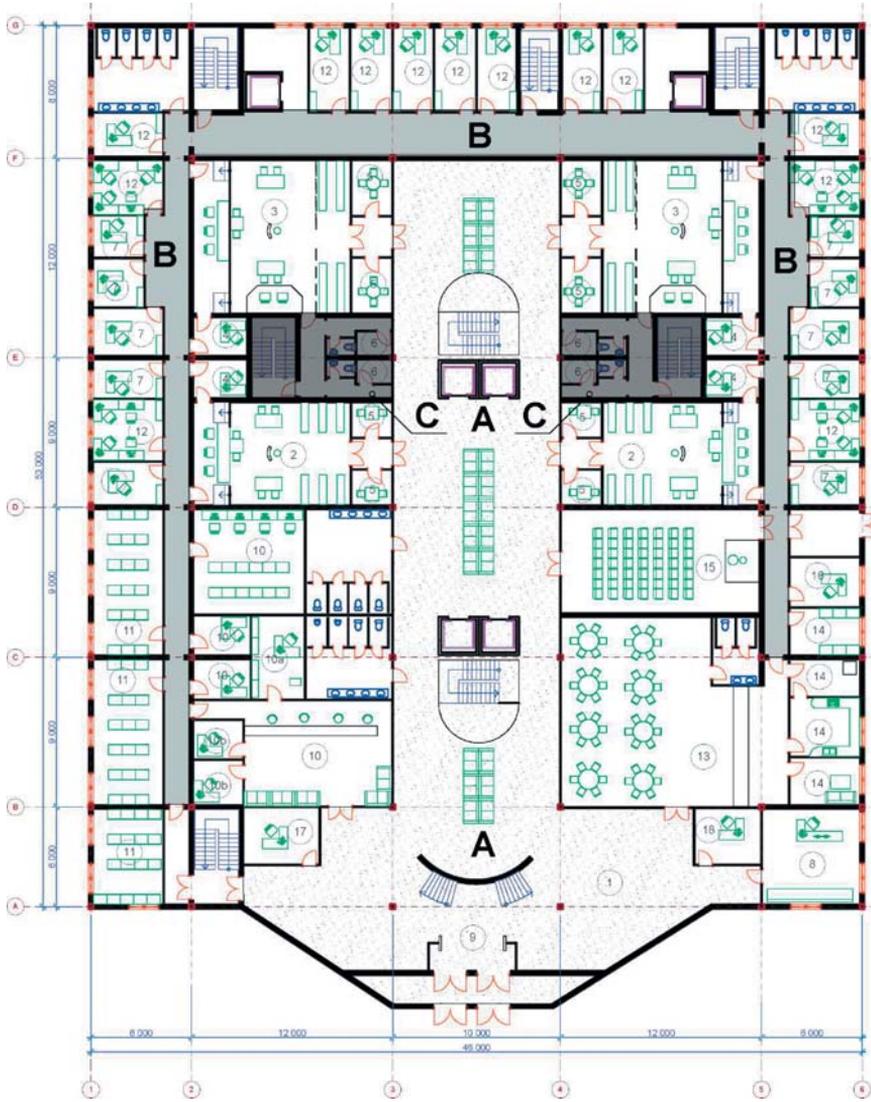
C - Guarded circulation

**Key:**

- 1 - Holding cells
- 2 - Premises for convoy
- 3 - Parking
- 4 - Technical rooms
- 5 - Storage rooms
- 6 - Repair workshops
- 7 - Rooms for the drivers

- 8 - Cafeteria rooms
- 9 - Office of the court administrator
- 10 - Archive
- 11 - Attorney - client meeting room

## Layout of a courthouse with 12(16) courtrooms, 1st floor (ground floor)

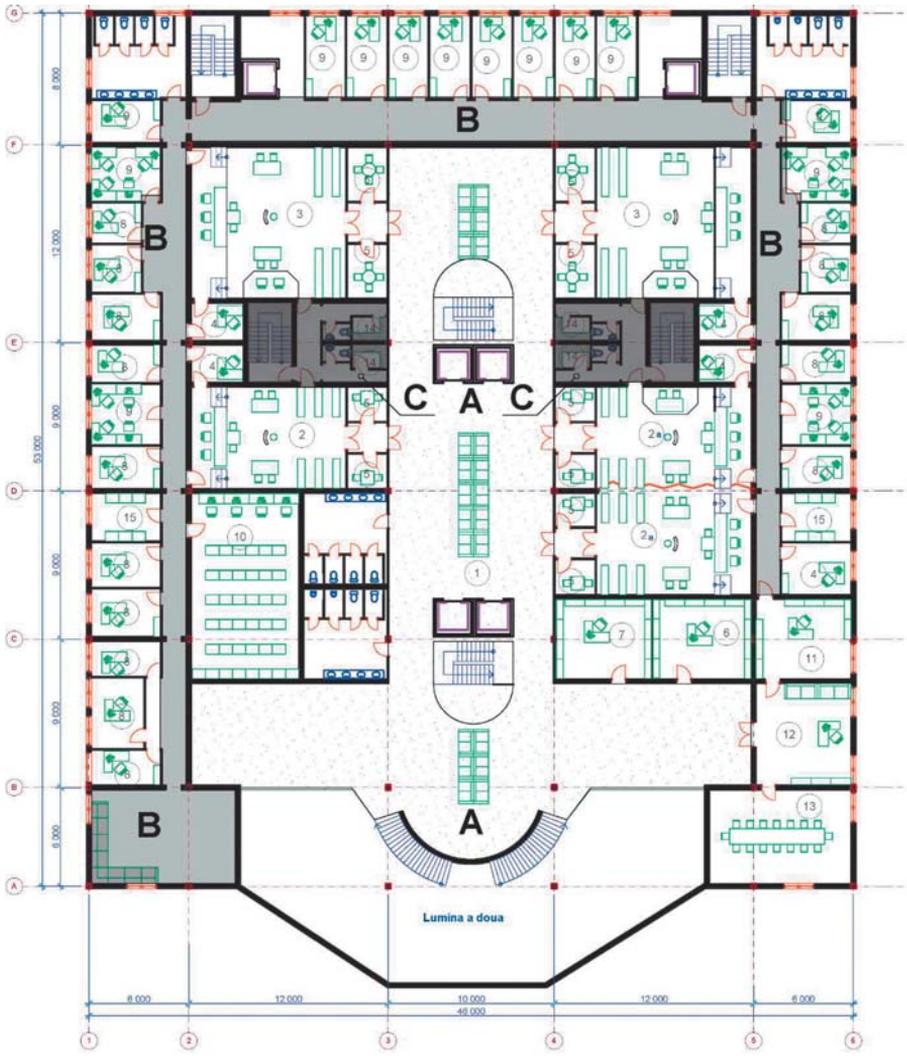


- A - public circulation
- B - restricted access circulation
- C - guarded circulation

**Key:**

- 1 - Wardrobe
- 2 - Courtroom for civil trials
- 3 - Courtroom for criminal trials
- 4 - Deliberation room
- 5 - Witness waiting room
- 6 - In-custody defendant holding cells
- 7 - Judges' office
- 8 - Room for the guard of the building
- 9 - Checkpoint with metal detector
- 10 - Chancellery
- 10a - Copy room
- 10b - Room for studying the cases
- 11 - Archive of current cases
- 12 - Room for the clerks of the court hearings
- 13 - Cafeteria
- 14 - Cafeteria rooms
- 15 - Conference rooms
- 16 - Hardware room
- 17 - Room for prosecutors
- 18 - Room for attorneys

## Layout of a courthouse with 12(16) courtrooms, 2nd floor



A - Public circulation

B - Restricted access circulation

C - Guarded circulation

**Key:**

1 - Hallway

2 - Courtroom for civil trials

2a. Multifunctional room

3 - Courtroom for criminal trials

4 - Deliberation room

5 - Witness waiting rooms

6 - Room for prosecutors

7 - Room for attorneys

8 - Judges' offices

9 - Room for the clerks of the court hearings

10 - Library

11 - Court Administrators' office

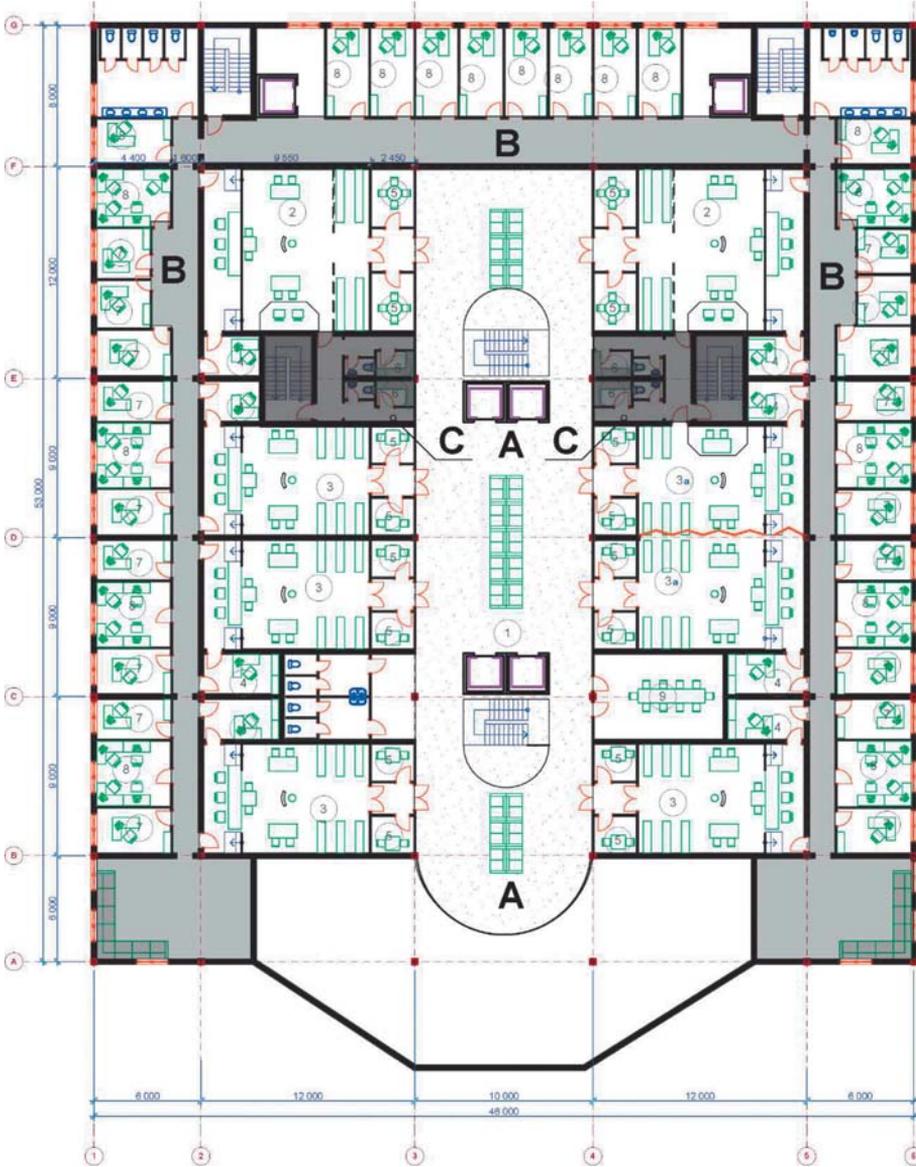
12 - Antechamber

13 - Conference room

14 - In-custody defendant holding cells

15 - Evidence and seized property storage room

## Layout of a courthouse with 12(16) courtrooms, 3rd floor



- A - Public circulation
- B - Restricted access circulation
- C - Guarded circulation

- Key:**
- 1 - Hallway
  - 2 - Courtroom for civil trials
  - 3 - Courtroom for criminal trials
  - 3a - Multifunctional room
  - 4 - Deliberation rooms

- 5 - Witness waiting room
- 6 - In-custody defendant holding cells
- 7 - Judges' offices
- 8 - Room for clerks of the court hearings
- 9 - Room for attorneys

## Court Facilities Checklist # 1 - Court Building and Grounds

**Rating System:** 1 = Excellent; 2 = Very Good; 3 = Acceptable; 4 = Poor; and 5 = Unacceptable

Court Name:		Date	
Office Name:		Office #	

Description			1	2	3	4	5
<b>1. Building structure</b>							
<b>Standards:</b>							
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Description</b>					
		Building is appropriately designed for court operations?					
		Exterior building cladding is uniform with no broken or missing tiles, major spalling on the wall surfaces, or other hazardous conditions?					
		Overall exterior is clean and painted within the past 4-years (if appropriate)?					
		Known structural deficiencies or hazardous conditions are identified and have been reported to SCM and DJA (or the private building owner) for correction?					
		Other?					
<b>Repair Requirements:</b>							

<b>2. Exterior windows and glazing</b>							
<b>Standards:</b>							
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Description</b>					
		Broken or cracked windows are identified and repaired?					
		Windows are uniformly glazed to prevent leaking and water damage?					
		Windows are cleaned at least twice yearly?					
		Other?					
<b>Repair Requirements:</b>							

3. Perimeter sidewalks, stairs and walkways							
<b>Standards:</b>							
Yes	No	Description					
		Courthouse sidewalks, stairs and walkways are routinely swept, cleaned, and repaired as necessary - with no potholes or other hazardous conditions?					
		City owned sidewalks are routinely swept, cleaned, and repaired as necessary - with no potholes or other hazardous conditions?					
		Trash containers and smoking receptacles are available and emptied and cleaned daily?					
		Other?					
<b>Repair Requirements:</b>							

4. Courthouse identification and directory signs							
<b>Standards:</b>							
Yes	No	Description					
		City's street and direction signs lead pedestrians and drivers to the court entrance?					
		Access to the courthouse clearly identifiable from the streets - building identification prominently displaced with SCM and Court specific identification?					
		Public information board with court calendars, schedule of fees, and directory information at the public entrance?					
		Court website indicates the location of the courthouse (identifying key crossroads and instructions on how to get to the courthouse)?					
		Other?					
<b>Repair Requirements:</b>							

5. Entrances, elevators and stairways							
<b>Standards:</b>							
Yes	No	Description					
		Stairs are uniform in construction and with no broken lips or other dangerous conditions, and a non-slip surface or tape is applied to prevent accidents?					
		Handrails are available and in good condition?					
		Wheel chair ramps or electrical lifts are available for handicap citizens?					
		Elevators (where they exist) are operational and have had a safety inspection within the past 12-months?					

		Rest areas/seating is provided in the entrance and on the landings of every other floor?
		Stairs and walkways are swept daily and washed at least monthly?
		Stairs and walkways are salted and de-iced during winter, and snow is removed as required?
		Appropriate drainage prevents water from pooling on the stairs and walkways?
		Other?
<b>Repair Requirements:</b>		

6. Exterior Lighting							
<b>Standards:</b>							
Yes	No	Description					
		Courthouse perimeter lighting is adequate to ensure public circulation and safety.					
		Light fixtures operate correctly and broken bulbs are fixed daily?					
		Emergency lighting is available in the event of a power failure?					
		Other?					
<b>Repair Requirements:</b>							

7. Exterior Grounds and Landscape							
<b>Standards:</b>							
Yes	No	Description					
		Gardeners and other cleaning staff are employed and conduct twice daily cleaning of the courthouse grounds?					
		Landscape, trees and other planting are maintained in good condition and replaced when necessary?					
		Court has a master gardening/landscape plan <b>and</b> an operations budget to improve the grounds and public spaces?					
		Other?					
<b>Repair Requirements:</b>							

8. Ensure access to available public transportation		
<b>Standards:</b>		
Yes	No	Description
		Public transportation (if any) stops within two blocks of the courthouse (if not, discuss re-routing options to improve public access to the courthouse)?
		Surface streets from public transportation drop-off locations are safe, with no major potholes or other safety hazards? <b>Note:</b> In this case, the Secretariat needs to coordinate directly with the City to coordinate corrections and regular maintenance plans.
		Taxi service is available?
		Other?
<b>Repair Requirements:</b>		

9. Establish safe pedestrian drop-off locations		
<b>Standards:</b>		
Yes	No	Description
		Convenient vehicle "drop-off" locations are coordinated with the City and established within one-block of the courthouse? <b>Note:</b> Drop-off locations should not disrupt traffic or cause unsafe conditions for traffic, the vehicle and passengers.
		Court hours of operation are designed to minimize traffic congestion caused by simultaneous arrivals and departures of court staff? <b>Note:</b> Consider staggering hours of operation for court staff to minimize congestions during peak traffic times.
		Other?
<b>Repair Requirements:</b>		
<b>Record of Actions Taken by Court Secretariat</b>		
Date Received		

**Activitatea întreprinsă/realizată:**

1.

## Court Infrastructure Requirements to Support ICMS

### **Network Operating Environment:**

The court staff access ICMS using a username and password by opening a link saved in browser and using an Internet connection secured by VPN connection points. Numerous court employees can access the server-based ICMS simultaneously from their desktop workstations. The audio recording system in courtrooms is linked to the local court server and must communicate with the server to function properly. All audio recordings are saved on the courts' local servers.

In order for this type of system to work, the infrastructure in the court must meet certain standards. All parties involved in operating and maintaining the system must understand these infrastructure requirements if court automation is to be sustained and continue to provide the intended benefits to Moldova.

### **Electrical Utilities:**

One obvious infrastructure requirement is that the court must have a continuous, reliable source of electrical power. The power must be consistent from the standpoint that the volts and amps remain within acceptable tolerance standards of modern computer equipment. All courts have been provided with emergency power back-up units for servers and workstations to prevent data loss in case of sudden power fluctuation or failure. However, these units only allow an orderly shut-down without loss of data for a few minutes after power loss.

### **ICMS Electrical Power Requirements**

- The power coming into the courthouse must be consistent from the standpoint that the volts and amps remain within acceptable tolerance standards of modern computer equipment.
- Request from MOJ or DJA, or hire an electrical engineer to develop a baseline inventory and verification of the electrical power requirements for all of the court's electrical operating equipment, e.g., lights, heating, computers, scanners, copiers, servers, courtroom audio equipment, etc.
- This electrical power assessment represents the minimum incoming electrical power requirements that needs to be continuously delivered to the courthouse on a daily basis – with some surge capacity for anticipated additional equipment or seasonal heating/air conditioning issues.

- Chiefs of Court Secretariat should review courthouse facility management records to determine the frequency outages or power shortages (brownouts) of the city's delivered electrical power coming into the courthouse circuits
- Build a record of power outages and brownouts, and if court operations are frequently or seriously interrupted or degraded, meet with city power officials to upgrade electrical power delivery to the courthouse.
- Coordinate a life-cycle electrical power upgrade strategy with the city. Courthouse internal wiring systems, junction boxes, electrical breakers and power outlets
- Request MOJ or DJA, or hire an electrical engineer to conduct an inventory and inspection of the courthouse electrical wiring systems, electrical junction panel boxes and breakers, and power outlets. Recommend upgrades and improvements as needed.
- Note: It is not enough to have sufficient „incoming power” from the city – courthouses must also have upgraded electrical, data and telecommunications wiring, junction boxes, outlets and connections to handle the „through-put of electricity” to equipment operating requirements.
- Only an electrical engineer can properly inventory and evaluate the „internal courthouse” wiring systems to ensure they are sufficient to support ICMS and other courthouse requirements.
- Develop a life-cycle budget plan to continuously upgrade and modernize courthouse wiring systems and electrical junctions boxes and breaker switches into the court's operating and capital budget cycles.
- Develop emergency notification protocols and continuity of operations plans to anticipate a major or extended interruption of city provided electrical power. Emergency power backup units
- As part of the ICMS initial installation, courts were provided emergency power backup units for servers and workstations to prevent data loss in case of sudden power fluctuation or failure.
- Chiefs of Court Secretariat need to inventory and verify that emergency power backup units are operating and connected to ICMS servers, and to every computer, scanner, copier and network printer. Note: It is an electrical hazard to connect multiple pieces of equipment to a single power backup unit.
- Conduct monthly „operational tests” of each power backup unit and record the results.

- Confer with MOJ or DJA, or the electrical engineer hired to conduct the previous assessments, to establish the realistic operational life of each power backup unit – and build a life-cycle replacement plan integrated into the court’s annual operating budget.
- Develop a life-cycle budget plan to continuously upgrade and modernize emergency power backup units into the court’s operating budget cycles.

**ICMS Server Rooms, Equipment and Security Requirements:** Servers must be placed in locations with adequate ventilation and temperature and humidity controls. Server locations must be secure to prevent tampering by unauthorized personnel or outsiders. Preferably, they should be kept in locked rooms, with limited access controlled by the Chief of Court Secretariat.

**Server room, equipment and security:**

- Servers (and associated Internet connection hub equipment) must be stored in a secured and climate controlled room.
- Install heating and air conditioning units to ensure minimum climate control standards.
- If the server and other Internet servers and Internet connections are not currently stored in a climate controlled and secured room – immediately notify the SCM, MOJ, DJA and CST (the MOJ entity contracted by the judiciary to provide ICMS, Internet and automation equipment support).
- Chiefs of Court Secretariat need to limit access to the server room to essential IT support staff, security and a limited number of others designated in writing.
- Chapter 7 – Financial Management and Control System explains that the Chief of Court Secretariat and Court President have „*managerial liability*” for the safe and secure operations of court equipment facilities.
- Allowing servers to be unsecured is a serious liability issue – and the only way to be legally released from that liability is to put the court’s space and security requirements into writing and forward that demand to the SCM, MOJ, DJA and CST.
- Develop emergency notification protocols and continuity of operations plans to anticipate a fire, flooding, or other major structural or equipment damage to the server rooms and equipment.
- Develop a life-cycle budget plan to continuously upgrade and modernize ICMS application and Internet servers and other electrical equipment into the court’s operating and capital budget cycles.