

MID-TERM  
INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATION  
EU – SRI LANKA JUSTICE REFORM  
PROGRAMME – JURE

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## Project and evaluation information details

Project/outcome Information		
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<b>Corporate outcome and output</b>	<p><b>UN Corporate Framework Outcome 4/ UNDP Country Programme Outcome 3:</b> By 2027, people in Sri Lanka, particularly the most vulnerable, have increased trust and confidence to claim and benefit from enhanced, non-discriminatory, gender-responsive, participatory and efficient governance and justice systems and rights-based development.</p> <p><b>Project level outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Outcome 1:</b> Improved access to justice for all, in particular women, the poor and persons in vulnerable situations</li> <li>• <b>Outcome 2:</b> Improved accountability, transparency, and credibility of the justice system</li> <li>• <b>Outcome 3:</b> Improved efficiency and quality of justice</li> </ul>	
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<sup>1</sup> This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADR – Alternative Dispute Resolution  
AG – Attorney General  
AGD – Attorney General’s Department  
CIABOC – Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption  
CEPEJ - European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) is a body established by the Council of Europe (CoE)  
CSO – Civil Society Organization  
FGD – Focus Group Discussion  
GAD – Government Analyst’s Department  
GBV – Gender-Based Violence  
HRC – Human Rights Commission  
HRBA – Human Rights-Based Approach  
ICTA – Information and Communication Technology Agency  
JICA – Japanese International Cooperation Agency  
JSC – Judicial Service Commission  
JURE – EU Justice Reform Programme  
KII – Key Informant Interview  
KOICA - Korea International Cooperation Agency  
LAC – Legal Aid Commission  
LLM - Legum Magister, a.k.a a postgraduate law degree pursued by individuals who have completed a law degree  
M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation  
MTE – Mid-Term Evaluation  
NAPVCW – National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses  
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization  
NPC – National Police Commission  
PDVA – Prevention of Domestic Violence Act  
ROM – Result-Oriented Monitoring  
SDG – Sustainable Development Goals  
SGBV – Sexual and Gender-Based Violence  
SLWLA – Sri Lanka Women Lawyers' Association  
TAF – The Asia Foundation  
ToC – Theory of Change  
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme  
UNEG – United Nations Evaluation Group  
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund  
UNSDCF – United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation  
WIN – Women In Need

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

The JURE Project, funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by UNDP and UNICEF, was designed to enhance Sri Lanka's justice system's independence, accountability, and efficiency. The intervention aimed to address systemic challenges in access to justice, judicial transparency, and institutional responsiveness, particularly benefiting women, children, and marginalized communities.

The project focused on three key areas:

1. Enhancing Access to Justice – Expanding legal aid services, ensuring language accessibility, and increasing legal awareness among vulnerable groups.
2. Strengthening Accountability and Transparency – Improving data-driven governance, reinforcing judicial ethics, and empowering independent oversight bodies.
3. Improving Efficiency and Quality of Justice – Supporting legal reforms, digital transformation, and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) to reduce case backlogs and improve judicial service delivery.

The intervention was strategically aligned with Sri Lanka's national reform agenda, SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and international human rights standards. The project sought to establish a modern, inclusive, and sustainable justice system by leveraging institutional capacity-building, policy reforms, and digital innovations. Through partnerships with government institutions, civil society, academia, and private sector actors, the JURE Project ensured that justice reforms were effective, transparent, and accessible to all citizens.

The key stakeholders and partners of the **EU-Sri Lanka Justice Reform (JURE) Programme** included government and justice sector institutions, independent commissions, development partners, civil society organizations, research institutions, and the media. These stakeholders were actively involved in strengthening justice sector policies, implementing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, enhancing child protection measures, and advocating for legal and institutional reforms. **UNDP** led judicial and legal reforms, supported policy development, and mobilized resources, while **UNICEF** focused on child justice reforms, including specialized courts and restorative justice approaches. Civil society organizations played a critical role in raising awareness and advocating for reforms, while research institutions contributed to legal education and professional development. The media promoted the programme's visibility and influenced public perception, ensuring broad coverage and stakeholder engagement. This multi-sectoral approach allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the programme's reach and effectiveness in addressing justice sector challenges in Sri Lanka.

### OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE, AND SCOPE OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) provided an independent and comprehensive assessment of the JURE project's progress and performance. It critically examined the quality of outputs, measured progress against intended and unintended results, and identified opportunities to enhance effectiveness and impact. The evaluation also assessed the project's contribution to broader justice sector reforms, ensuring alignment with international best practices, including gender mainstreaming and a rights-based approach.

The MTE evaluated the extent to which the project had improved access to justice, accountability, and efficiency within Sri Lanka's justice system. It provided actionable insights to align the project more closely with national justice reform priorities and global standards.

Covering the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 May 2024, the evaluation examined project activities across 10 selected districts in Sri Lanka. It was guided by the OECD DAC evaluation criteria—relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact—along with the EU-specific added-value criterion. The assessment also reviewed the integration of gender equality, human rights-based approaches, and inclusivity into the project's design and implementation.

## EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS:

The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the JURE project provided an independent and comprehensive assessment of the project's progress and performance toward its stated objectives. The evaluation critically examined the quality of the project's outputs, measured progress against both intended and unintended results, and identified opportunities to enhance its effectiveness and impact. Additionally, it assessed the project's contribution to broader justice sector reforms and its alignment with international best practices, including gender mainstreaming and a rights-based approach. The MTE evaluated the extent to which the JURE project had achieved its objectives, particularly in improving access to justice, accountability, and efficiency within Sri Lanka's justice system. The evaluation methodology **explicitly addressed gender considerations** by integrating **sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis**. The inclusion of gender-sensitive analysis ensured that the evaluation not only assessed the overall effectiveness of the project but also highlighted gender disparities and recommended targeted interventions to enhance gender equality within the justice sector. The pre-fieldwork sensitization, engagement with gender specialists, and direct interactions with affected populations strengthened the validity and depth of gender-related findings, ensuring that the evaluation fully captured the realities faced by women and marginalized groups in the justice system. Informants **included beneficiaries of activities supporting GBV and DV survivors**, ensuring a gender-responsive approach. Findings and recommendations **were drafted to support the economic and legal empowerment of project beneficiaries**, particularly single **mothers supported by JURE**, demonstrating a structured focus on gender impact. The evaluation **accounted for stakeholder diversity**, incorporating perspectives from **marginalized and vulnerable groups**, including **women-headed households, survivors of violence, language minorities and economically disadvantaged beneficiaries**. The **sampling frame** was designed to ensure **inclusivity**, reflecting the diverse experiences of those affected by the intervention.

Based on the findings and analysis, the **evaluation team provided actionable insights** on how the project could be better aligned with national justice reform priorities and global standards. The recommendations aimed to ensure that the project remained responsive to the evolving socio-political context while enhancing its strategic direction for the remainder of the implementation period.

**Data sources:** The evaluation team collected and analysed data from various sources, integrating primary and secondary information from relevant stakeholders through a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Data collection methods included Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and a comprehensive Literature Review, utilizing the approved Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools to ensure a robust and inclusive evaluation process.

The data collection phase commenced on 28 October and continued until 8 November 2024 before temporarily pausing due to the elections. It resumed afterwards and concluded at the end of November 2024. The process covered a broad geographic scope across Sri Lanka, including key locations such as Colombo, Galle, Matara, Jaffna, Batticaloa, Anuradhapura, Ratnapura, Kurunegala, Hatton, and Nuwara Eliya. This extensive coverage ensured a diverse and representative dataset, capturing insights from both urban and regional stakeholders. The data collection included 36 FGD activities and key informant interviews at national and regional levels. 102 people were involved in the data collection, included 75 females and 27 males, have participated in the midterm evaluation.

## KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

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**Finding 1: Relevance to National and Global Priorities.** JURE's comprehensive focus on legal empowerment, capacity building, and institutional reforms ensures its alignment with national and global development priorities. Its integration of SDG 16.3 and the New European Consensus on Development (2017) reflects a strong commitment to equitable, transparent, and effective justice systems.

**Finding 2: Design Limitations and Systemic Challenges.** While JURE has contributed significantly to the justice sector, its design exhibited certain limitations. The project did not fully address systemic inefficiencies, regional disparities, or the digital divide, which has constrained equitable access to justice. The rapid expansion from six to eleven outputs further introduced operational complexities, diluting the overall impact.

**Finding 3: Omission of Environmental Justice Initiatives.** The LLM in Environmental Law remains a cornerstone of sustainability for JURE, fostering long-term legal expertise in environmental governance and the project successfully established South Asia's first master's program in Environmental and Climate Change Law. The exclusion of environmental justice initiatives from the 2024 Work Plan represents a missed opportunity, the discontinuation of certain

complementary activities, such as policy research and institutional capacity-building, risks undermining this progress, particularly given the demonstrated impact of prior interventions.

***Finding 4: Internal Coherence and Synergies.*** JURE has demonstrated a degree of internal coherence, particularly within UNDP’s SDG 16 portfolio. However, significant potential remains to enhance this coherence by adopting a more integrated approach, leveraging synergies across thematic areas such as economic resilience, governance, and environmental justice.

***Finding 5: Fragmentation in External Coordination.*** The project operates in a crowded development landscape, where multiple donors—including USAID, KOICA, JICA, and UNODC—support overlapping justice sector initiatives. While this environment offers collaboration opportunities, the absence of a structured donor coordination framework presents risks of duplication and inefficiencies. Despite these efforts, some overlaps persist and while the project has taken steps to align with other actors, there is room for improved strategic planning, joint programming and donor coordination to further reduce duplication and enhance synergies.

***Finding 6: Financial Management and Efficiency.*** Despite notable progress, JURE has faced challenges in financial management, particularly in fund disbursement delays and disparities in expenditure rates. As of June 2024, the actual expenditure amounts to **5,833,772.01**, and with a total received amount of **7,148,771**, the disbursement rate is **82%**.

***Finding 7: Adaptive Management and Response to ROM Recommendations.*** JURE has shown strong adaptive management by incorporating key recommendations from the Result-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) mission into its implementation strategy. This reflects a commitment to continual learning and course correction.

***Finding 8: Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation.*** The JURE progress monitoring system provides a strong foundation but requires enhancements, including a more comprehensive data collection mechanism, complete Logframe baselines, risk management and calibrated indicators for results-oriented monitoring.

***Finding 9: Impact on Juvenile Justice and Child Protection.*** JURE has played a pivotal role in advancing child-related reforms by strengthening legal protections, improving justice system coordination, and enhancing rehabilitation pathways. A key achievement is the legal reform, which raised the minimum age of imprisonment, ensuring minors are no longer placed in adult prisons but instead housed in institutions under the Department of Probation and Childcare Services. Improved data systems facilitated the development of standardized case management tools and strengthened decision-making processes in child justice. Beyond legal reforms, JURE has focused on preventing institutionalization and promoting family reunification for child victims of violence, children in conflict with the law, and those in need of care and protection.

***Finding 10: Contribution to Systemic Justice Reforms.*** From January to July 2024, JURE played a crucial role in fostering systemic reforms, modernizing justice institutions, and strengthening institutional capacity to implement these changes effectively. CIABOC reports this period as particularly fruitful, highlighting that legislative reforms have expanded the scope of accountability by addressing corruption within the private sector alongside public institutions, growing public trust in CIABOC’s anti-corruption mechanisms, improved complaint-handling processes and targeted awareness campaigns, encouraging greater citizen engagement in combating corruption.

***Finding 11: Gender Mainstreaming and Structural Barriers.*** The JURE Gender Action Plan reflects strong progress in gender-sensitive justice reforms, transitioning from initial assessments in 2023 to partial implementation in 2024. However, more efforts are required to address institutional biases, cultural norms, and systemic barriers.

***Finding 12: Limitations in the 2024 Work Plan.*** The 2024 Work Plan places heavy emphasis on capacity-building without sufficiently addressing structural challenges or ensuring robust accountability mechanisms within justice institutions.

***Finding 13: Gender-Responsive and People-Centred Indicators.*** JURE lacks comprehensive gender-responsive indicators, limiting its ability to measure transformative justice outcomes such as restored property rights and access to justice for marginalized communities. Despite JURE’s efforts to advance disability rights, systematic data collection on persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups remains inadequate. The absence of structured tracking mechanisms hinders the ability to measure the impact of interventions in this regard.

***Finding 14: EU’s Strategic Investment and Impact.*** The EU’s support for JURE has been instrumental in advancing justice sector reforms. Large-scale investments have contributed to institutional strengthening, policy reforms, and capacity-building for legal professionals. While JURE has contributed to legal education through its two LLM programmes, expanding academic partnerships with European institutions would further strengthen the credibility and

sustainability of legal training initiatives. Greater integration of **proven European best practices in judicial efficiency, case management, and monitoring** could have strengthened the project's impact. Closer alignment with **EU standards** would not only enhance **donor visibility** but also promote **institutional sustainability** by fostering long-term cooperation between **Sri Lankan institutions and EU Member States**.

***Finding 15: Gaps in Justice Reform Sustainability Measures.*** JURE has successfully laid the groundwork for justice reforms, but a more structured exit strategy, including government buy-in and financial commitments, is required to ensure sustainability beyond the project's duration.

## SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

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1. **Relevance** – The JURE Project remains highly relevant to national and global development priorities, addressing critical justice sector gaps such as inadequate access to legal aid, weak institutional capacity, and the need for judicial modernization. The project aligns with SDG 16.3 and the New European Consensus on Development (2017). However, the expansion from six to eleven outputs created operational challenges, limiting the depth of some interventions. Additionally, the exclusion of environmental justice from the 2024 Work Plan represents a significant gap, considering its prior contributions to climate change law and governance.
2. **Coherence** – JURE has demonstrated strong internal coherence within UNDP's SDG 16 portfolio, aligning with governance and access to justice reforms. However, synergies with the activities within the Green Development (Outcome 2) and Inclusive Governance, Justice, Peace, and Social Cohesion (Outcome 1) under Sri Lanka's UNDP CPD (2023–2027) could be strengthened for better economic resilience, comprehensive digital transformation, and the coherent integration of JURE's environmental justice initiatives. Externally, donor coordination remains fragmented, with overlapping initiatives by USAID, KOICA, JICA, and UNODC. The lack of a structured coordination mechanism increases the risk of duplication and missed opportunities for joint programming and resource optimization.
3. **Efficiency** – While JURE has effectively allocated resources in key areas such as legal aid services, judicial training, and anti-corruption measures, financial management inefficiencies remain a concern. Delays in fund disbursement to JURE and subsequent distribution across implementation sites have hindered progress, leaving a significant portion of the budget unutilized. The financial execution rate of 82% as of June 2024 reflects this challenge. Additionally, disparities in expenditure rates across components highlight the need for improved budget oversight and adaptive financial planning.
4. **Effectiveness** – JURE has contributed to significant justice sector improvements, including providing legal aid to over 5,795 individuals, strengthening juvenile justice mechanisms, and facilitating institutional reforms such as the adoption of the Anti-Corruption Act 2023. However, sustainability remains an issue, as many reforms have yet to be fully institutionalized. Digital transformation efforts have also faced setbacks due to inadequate assessments of digital divides and accessibility barriers, limiting their reach among marginalized communities.
5. **Impact** – JURE's systemic contributions include judicial capacity-building, legislative reforms, and improved access to justice for vulnerable populations. The project has played a critical role in the modernization of existing court room to provide facilities for children to give evidence without facing the alleged perpetrator courtrooms for juvenile justice and virtual rooms for GBV victims and witnesses. However, long-term impact is contingent on continued investment, particularly in reinforcing mediation and diversion-like measures instead for juvenile offenders, institutionalizing rehabilitative justice approaches, and strengthening cross-sectoral legal frameworks to ensure consistency in application.
6. **Sustainability** –Following the recommendations of the EU-commissioned Results-Oriented Monitoring in April 2024 and in line with EU, MOJ directives and IMF recommendations, support that could not be sustained by the national partners was phased out. To this end, some of the project funds were reallocated, leading to the cessation of financing for staff procurement in governmental institutions and internes/volunteers. This reallocation was necessary to redirect funds toward addressing the needs of rights holders and aligning with the project's goals. However, the sudden cancellation of critical activities such as policy research, training programs, and capacity-building initiatives has created sustainability risks. The lack of an explicit exit strategy increases the likelihood that some gains may be reversed once project funding ends. To ensure sustainability, it is essential to embed project achievements within national frameworks, secure financial commitments from the government, and establish institutional mechanisms to maintain reforms beyond JURE's duration.

7. **Human Rights, Gender Equality, and Inclusion** – JURE has advanced gender-responsive justice through its Gender Action Plan, infrastructure improvements, and legal reforms addressing gender-based violence. However, cultural norms, institutional biases, and limited economic empowerment initiatives continue to hinder women’s access to justice. Furthermore, gaps in disaggregated data collection have impeded efforts to track and measure justice outcomes for women, children, minorities and persons with disabilities, necessitating stronger accountability measures and inclusive monitoring frameworks.
8. **EU-Added Value** – The European Union's involvement in the transformation of Sri Lanka's justice sector is demonstrated through its consistent contributions to legislative development, institutional capacity-building, and specialized legal education. Notably, this includes the establishment of South Asia's first LLM program in Environmental and Climate Change Law. However, JURE has not fully integrated EU best practices in areas such as judicial efficiency, case flow management, and court performance monitoring. Enhancing collaboration with European institutions and incorporating European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) methodologies could further strengthen JURE’s sustainability and impact.

## RECOMMENDATIONS (ABRIDGED VERSION)

#	Recommendation	Responsible Entities	Priority	Timeframe
1	Strengthen the Results Framework (Finding 7, 15, 16)	JURE Project Implementing Team	High	Immediate to Mid-term
2	Stocktaking and Prioritization for the Next Work Plan (Finding 1, 2)	JURE Project Team	High	Next 6 Months
3	Mitigate the Impact of Cancelled Activities on National Partners (Finding 3, 11)	JURE Project Team, Government Stakeholders	High	Immediate to Mid-term
4	Adopt an Integrated Approach to Programme Implementation (Finding 10)	JURE Project Team	High	Within 1 Year
5	Improve Coordination, Accountability, and Institutional Commitment (Finding 11, 12)	MoJ, JURE Team, EU, USAID, KOICA, and JICA.	High	Long-term
6	Coherence: Adopt an Integrated Approach to Programme Implementation (Finding 10)	<i>JURE Team</i>	High	Immediate to Long-term
7	Develop a Structured Exit and Transition Plan (Finding 10, 11, 12, 18)	MoJ, JURE Implementing Team	High	Long-term
8	Enhance Gender and Human Rights Commitments (Finding 16)	JURE Team, MoJ	Medium to High	Immediate to Long-term
9	Enhance the EU’s Added Value in Future Justice Sector Interventions (Finding 17)	EU, Ministry of Justice	Medium to High	Immediate to Long-term

# I. INTRODUCTION

The **Mid-Term Evaluation Report** of the **EU-Sri Lanka Justice Reform Programme (JURE)** provides a detailed assessment of the project's progress and impact from **January 2022 to May 2024**. The report is structured into several key chapters, beginning with an **Executive Summary**, which offers a concise overview of the evaluation's purpose, methodology, key findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The **Introduction** establishes the context of the evaluation, outlining the background of the JURE project, its objectives, intervention logic, and its alignment with Sri Lanka's justice sector priorities. It also defines the evaluation's scope, purpose, and methodology, guided by the **OECD DAC evaluation criteria** and **EU-specific criteria on added value**.

The core of the report is the **Evaluation Findings** chapter, which presents an in-depth analysis of the project's performance based on the **20 evaluation questions** developed to assess its relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, and contribution to gender equality and human rights. Each evaluation question is addressed in a structured manner, with supporting evidence from primary and secondary data sources. The report evaluates the project's relevance to national justice reforms, coherence with other donor-funded initiatives, efficiency in resource allocation, and effectiveness in achieving its intended outputs and outcomes. It also examines the early signs of impact, and the sustainability of the reforms introduced. Additionally, it assesses the project's integration of **human rights, gender equality, and inclusivity**, as well as the **EU's added value** in strengthening justice sector governance in Sri Lanka.

The **Conclusions** chapter synthesizes key insights derived from the findings, reflecting on the project's successes, challenges, and areas requiring further intervention. The **Recommendations** section provides **nine strategic recommendations**, offering actionable steps to enhance the project's implementation, ensure its sustainability, and improve coordination among stakeholders.

The report concludes with a section on **Lessons Learned and Good Practices**, highlighting innovative approaches, best practices, and lessons that can inform future justice sector programming in Sri Lanka. In total, the evaluation presents **19 key findings**, each linked to specific evaluation criteria and supported by qualitative and quantitative data. The **seven main conclusions** summarize the critical reflections emerging from the assessment. The **nine recommendations** focus on refining implementation strategies, strengthening institutional capacity, and ensuring long-term sustainability. The report also includes annexes that provide supplementary information, including a **comprehensive list of consulted sources, methodological details, and data collection instruments**, ensuring transparency and rigour in the evaluation process.

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the JURE project aims to provide an independent and comprehensive assessment of the project's progress and performance in achieving its stated objectives. The evaluation critically examines the quality of outputs, measures progress against intended and unintended results and identifies opportunities for enhancing effectiveness and impact. Additionally, it assesses how well the project contributes to broader justice sector reforms, ensuring alignment with international best practices, particularly in gender mainstreaming and a rights-based approach. This evaluation is conducted at the **midpoint of the project's implementation (January 2022 – May 2024)** to ensure that corrective measures can be taken where necessary and that the project remains relevant, effective, and aligned with **Sri Lanka's justice reform priorities and evolving socio-political dynamics**. The evaluation also provides strategic direction for the remainder of the project, ensuring it remains **impact-driven and sustainable**. The MTE assessed the project's implementation from 1 January 2022 to 31 May 2024, focusing on the project's activities across 10 selected districts in Sri Lanka.

## PRIMARY USERS AND INTENDED USE OF THE EVALUATION:

- JURE project management, who require insights into the project's effectiveness and alignment with broader justice sector reforms to inform future decision-making.
- Government institutions and justice sector actors seek evidence-based recommendations to enhance policy implementation, service delivery, and institutional capacity in Sri Lanka's justice system.
- European Union Delegation to Sri Lanka (donor) and other development partners, who will use the findings to assess the value and sustainability of their investments in justice sector reforms.
- Civil society organizations, legal professionals and young lawyers can leverage the findings to advocate for more inclusive and effective justice interventions, particularly for marginalized groups.

The evaluation findings will be used to refine the project's strategy, implementation approach, and resource allocation, ensuring that the project effectively addresses gaps and maximizes impact.

# DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

The **Sri Lanka Support to Justice Sector (JURE) Project**, funded by the European Union, is a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing the independence, accountability, and efficiency of Sri Lanka's justice system. It seeks to address long-standing challenges within the sector, with a focus on improving access to justice for vulnerable groups, ensuring greater transparency, and increasing the system's overall responsiveness. The programme is closely aligned with the country's national reform agendas and international commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16, which promotes peace, justice, and strong institutions.

## **Overall Objective:**

The overarching objective of the JURE programme is to contribute to a more independent, accountable, and responsive justice system in Sri Lanka. The intervention is designed to create a justice system that is more inclusive, effective, and accessible, particularly for women, marginalized populations, and other vulnerable groups. This objective supports Sri Lanka's broader development agenda and is aligned with international best practices.

## **Key Outcomes and Outputs:**

### **Outcome 1: Enhanced Access to Justice for All**

- **Output 1.1:** Strengthening legal aid services, particularly for vulnerable communities such as women, persons with disabilities, and children.
- **Output 1.2:** Promoting equal access to justice through language mainstreaming across the sector, ensuring that all citizens can engage with the legal system in their preferred language.
- **Output 1.3:** Raising public awareness of legal rights, especially for marginalized groups, by improving legal literacy and outreach efforts.

The focus here is on making justice more accessible by expanding legal aid and ensuring that language barriers do not hinder access. Additionally, legal education and public awareness campaigns will empower vulnerable populations to seek justice and hold institutions accountable.

### **Outcome 2: Strengthened Accountability, Transparency, and Credibility of the Justice System**

- **Output 2.1:** Improving data collection, analysis, and dissemination capacities across government institutions and civil society organizations to ensure evidence-based decision-making.
- **Output 2.2:** Enhancing the capacity of justice sector actors to develop and implement codes of ethics and professional conduct, thereby promoting a culture of integrity within the judiciary.
- **Output 2.3:** Strengthening the independence and capabilities of oversight bodies, such as the Human Rights Commission and National Police Commission, to ensure they can effectively fulfil their mandates.

This outcome aims to build a more accountable and transparent justice system by enhancing data-driven processes, professionalizing the judiciary, and empowering independent institutions to monitor and regulate the sector effectively.

### **Outcome 3: Increased Efficiency and Quality of Justice**

- **Output 3.1:** Expanding child justice services to ensure age-appropriate, rights-based legal processes for children in contact with the law.
- **Output 3.2:** Supporting legal reforms that are in line with international norms and best practices, ensuring that Sri Lanka's legal framework is modernized and robust.
- **Output 3.3:** Enhancing the technical, administrative, and digital capacities of justice institutions to streamline processes, reduce case backlogs, and improve service delivery.
- **Output 3.4:** Strengthening alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms to expedite commercial and civil cases, making the justice system more efficient and investor-friendly.

By focusing on efficiency and quality, this outcome addresses the need for faster, more responsive justice system processes. It also addresses aspects of improving the quality of the justice process, including considerations of child sensitivity and age appropriateness of the justice response. Digitalization and ADR mechanisms are seen as key strategies for reducing delays and improving the overall functioning of the system.

## **INTERVENTION LOGIC OF THE PROJECT**

**Theory of Change:** The intervention logic of the JURE programme reflects a comprehensive, well-coordinated approach to justice sector reform in Sri Lanka. The programme is structured around three core outcomes. The first focuses on improving access to justice, particularly for vulnerable groups, through expanded legal aid, better translation services, and legal awareness campaigns. The second aims to enhance judicial accountability and transparency by strengthening

data collection, enforcing ethical standards for justice sector personnel, and increasing oversight of independent commissions. The third seeks to modernize the judiciary by introducing digital court systems, expanding alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and strengthening child-friendly justice policies. Each outcome is supported by targeted activities such as training legal professionals, upgrading court infrastructure, revising outdated legislation, and expanding public legal education initiatives.

Through targeted actions that address access, accountability, and efficiency, the programme aims to create a justice system that is fairer, more transparent, and better equipped to serve all citizens, particularly the most vulnerable. By fostering collaboration between national and international actors and by embedding reforms within existing structures, the programme is designed to create lasting, transformative change in Sri Lanka's justice sector. The JURE programme is built on the premise that reforming Sri Lanka's justice system requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses both structural issues and the specific needs of vulnerable populations. The logic behind the intervention is that by improving access, accountability, and efficiency, the programme will not only enhance the public's trust in the justice system but also contribute to broader socio-economic development. However, the ToC lacks a clear articulation of causal pathways and does not fully consider external risks such as political interference and socio-economic barriers.

By prioritizing gender sensitivity, child protection, and inclusivity, the programme aims to foster a more equitable justice system. Furthermore, through the use of data-driven reforms, digital innovations, and capacity building, the programme seeks to create long-term, sustainable changes that will outlast the project's implementation period.

**Strategic Alignment and Synergies:** The JURE programme is closely aligned with Sri Lanka's national policies, including the former President's "Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour" manifesto, the Ministry of Justice's Legal Reform Agenda, and several national action plans addressing human rights, legal aid, gender-based violence, and child protection. The programme also builds on nearly two decades of collaboration between the European Union, UNDP, and UNICEF in Sri Lanka's justice sector. Additionally, the programme's design incorporates lessons learned from previous justice sector reforms, particularly in legal aid, victim protection, and community mediation. For example, UNDP's support for justice and rule of law reforms in Sri Lanka has strengthened legal frameworks, enhanced access to justice, and improved protections for victims and witnesses. Key contributions include the formulation of the National Policy on Legal Aid, consolidation of core legislation with official Tamil translations, and reforms in sentencing and penal policies. Efforts to combat SGBV were reinforced through the National Plan of Action, expanded legal aid, and improved referral systems. Additionally, institutional strengthening, including support for the police and Women and Child Police Bureau, aimed to reduce re-victimization and enhance justice system efficiency. UNICEF's interventions build on established successes by leveraging its long-standing expertise in child rights protection and its collaboration with national institutions. With over 45 years of experience in Sri Lanka, UNICEF has strengthened justice sector capacities through legislative reforms, institutional support, and capacity-building for law enforcement and judicial personnel. By working with government agencies and civil society, UNICEF has promoted specialized courts, child-friendly legal procedures, and alternatives to detention, reinforcing previous efforts to enhance justice for children. The combined experience of these two UN agencies ensured that the interventions build on established successes and leverage existing capacities.

**Sustainability and Long-Term Impact:** The sustainability of the JURE programme is built into its design, with a focus on institutional capacity building and the establishment of long-term mechanisms such as digital solutions and enhanced data systems. By strengthening national institutions, embedding international standards into legal reforms, and promoting local ownership of the reforms, the programme aims to ensure that its benefits continue beyond the project's lifespan.

Digital transformation is seen as a key driver of sustainability. The project's collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) will ensure that digital solutions are embedded within the justice system, helping to reduce delays and improve service delivery.

The involvement of civil society, academia, and the private sector is also critical for sustainability, as these groups play a key role in holding the justice system accountable and ensuring that reforms are responsive to the needs of all citizens.

The JURE is feasible due to strong institutional support, technical expertise from international partners, and Sri Lanka's readiness for digital transformation. However, potential political resistance, limited institutional capacity, financial constraints, and social barriers pose significant risks. Mitigating these challenges requires sustained stakeholder engagement, capacity-building, and risk-responsive implementation. While the Theory of Change provides a solid framework, refining its causal linkages and addressing external risks will enhance the programme's effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

The reconstructed ToC postulate is formulated as follows:

*If the JURE programme strengthens the capacity of justice institutions to deliver accessible, efficient, and transparent legal services, and it ensures that marginalized and vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, have improved access to legal representation and rights-based protection, then the overall accountability, efficiency, and inclusivity of Sri Lanka's justice system will be significantly enhanced, because addressing institutional capacity gaps, improving access to justice, and promoting legal reforms aligned with international standards will lead to a more equitable and responsive justice system that meets the needs of all citizens.*

The key stakeholders and partners of the **EU-Sri Lanka Justice Reform (JURE) programme** include:

- ❖ **Government and Justice Sector Institutions:** This includes a wide range of institutions such as the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Attorney General's Department (AGD), Sri Lanka Police Department, Prisons Department, Ministry of Rehabilitation and Prison Reforms, Department of Probation and Childcare Services, National Child Protection Authority, Legal Aid Commission (LAC), and the National Authority for Victims of Crimes and Witnesses and more.
- ❖ **Independent Commissions and Institutions:** These include the Human Rights Commission (HRC), National Police Commission (NPC), Judicial Service Commission (JSC), Sri Lanka Judges' Institute.
- ❖ **Development Partners:** The European Union (EU) is the main funder, while **UNDP** and **UNICEF** are the primary implementing agencies *and* the project was designed as a **joint intervention** between UNDP and UNICEF, ensuring a **comprehensive justice sector reform strategy**. The design also included **partnerships with the Asia Foundation (TAF)** and other national and international stakeholders.

#### **UNDP's Role:**

- Lead on **judicial and legal reforms** by working with national institutions, particularly in strengthening justice sector policies.
- Develop **multilateral partnerships** to mobilize resources for justice sector strengthening.
- Implement **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) interventions** through collaboration with **TAF** to improve access to justice through mediation.
- Design and implement **strategies to prevent sexual and gender-based violence** in collaboration with key stakeholders.

#### **UNICEF's Role:**

- Lead on **child justice reforms**, ensuring that legal frameworks, policies, and institutional practices align with child protection principles.
  - Establish and strengthen **child-friendly justice mechanisms**, such as specialized courts, child-sensitive investigative procedures, and rehabilitation services.
  - Build the capacity of **judicial and law enforcement personnel** to improve child protection within the justice system.
  - Promote **restorative justice approaches** and **alternatives to detention** to enhance child rights protections.
- ❖ **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** These organizations, working on justice-related and rule of law issues, play a critical role in raising awareness and advocating for institutional reforms from a bottom-up approach. Women in Need (WIN) was one such organization that partnered with the Project.
  - ❖ **Non-Government and Research Institutions:** Academic and research institutions, such as universities and law colleges, along with professional associations like the Bar Association of Sri Lanka, are involved in supporting legal education, professional development, and policy advocacy.
  - ❖ **Media:** media were involved in promoting the project's visibility, disseminating information, and influencing public opinion regarding the project's impact.

### **RISKS IDENTIFIED AT THE DESIGN PHASE (2021 SESP) AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE PROJECT'S OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION.**

The Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) document for the JURE Project was completed in 2021. The SESP identified several moderate risks at the design phase, primarily related to institutional capacity, inclusivity, infrastructure safety, and working conditions. Mitigation strategies were integrated into the project design to minimize these risks and ensure compliance with UNDP's SESP.

One of the key risks identified was the **weak capacity of duty bearers and rights-holders** to engage effectively **with the justice system**. This was considered a moderate risk, as limited awareness and institutional inefficiencies could hinder access to justice. The **mitigation strategy** involved **continuous capacity-building initiatives** for justice sector institutions, including training programs and awareness campaigns. Implementation progress shows some improvement

in institutional responsiveness, though challenges remain in streamlining judicial procedures and ensuring sustained engagement with marginalized groups.

Another identified risk was the **limited participation of affected groups in decision-making**, exacerbated by the **political context and COVID-19 restrictions**. The lack of representation of ethnic minorities, women, and vulnerable populations in judicial reforms posed a moderate risk. To address this, the project established grievance redress mechanisms, engaged civil society organizations (CSOs) to mobilize underrepresented voices, and ensured regular stakeholder consultations. Implementation progress indicates **partial success**, with CSOs playing a key role in advocacy, but **gaps persist in direct community participation**, requiring **further engagement strategies**.

**Infrastructure-related risks** were also identified, particularly concerning the construction of shelters for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The main concerns were **potential failures in construction quality and occupational hazards for workers**. To mitigate this, UNDP's procurement process **prioritized reputable contractors, and government-approved safety screenings were mandated before operationalizing infrastructure**. Monitoring reports confirm that these measures were effectively implemented, **minimizing safety risks**. The **safe disposal of waste and hazardous materials** in judicial and detention facilities was also identified as a **moderate risk**. **Poor management of confiscated goods**, legal evidence, and case-related materials could result in health and environmental hazards. The **mitigation** strategy included training judicial officers and law enforcement personnel **on proper waste disposal and strengthening compliance with environmental waste regulations**. While awareness initiatives were conducted, enforcement remains weak, with **gaps in institutional accountability for waste handling**.

The SESP also considered potential risks to community health and safety, particularly in court expansions and the construction of shelters. There was concern about dust, noise pollution, and safety hazards for nearby residents. The **mitigation measures** included monitoring compliance with construction safety regulations and ensuring proper environmental impact assessments (EIAs) before starting any physical infrastructure projects. Implementation reports indicate that **compliance varied across locations, with some delays in EIAs leading to postponed construction activities**.

# EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

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### OBJECTIVE:

The mid-term evaluation (MTE) aims to provide an independent, comprehensive assessment of the JURE project's progress and performance toward its stated objectives. The evaluation examined the quality of the project's outputs, measured progress against intended and unintended results, and identified opportunities for enhancing its effectiveness and impact. It evaluated how project contributed to broader justice sector reforms and aligned with international best practices, including gender mainstreaming and a rights-based approach.

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of the MTE was to evaluate the extent to which the JURE project is achieving its objectives, particularly in improving access to justice, accountability, and efficiency in Sri Lanka's justice system. The evaluation provided actionable insights on how the project can be better aligned with national justice reform priorities and global standards. It also provides the strategic direction for the remainder of the project's implementation, ensuring it remains responsive to the evolving socio-political context.

### SCOPE:

The MTE assessed the project's implementation from 1 January 2022 to 31 May 2024, focusing on the project's activities across 10 selected districts in Sri Lanka. The evaluation was guided by six standard OECD DAC evaluation criteria—relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact—along with the EU-specific criterion of Added Value. It examined the incorporation of gender equality, human rights-based approaches, and inclusivity into the project design and execution. The evaluation involved close consultation with relevant stakeholders, including government bodies, UN agencies, and civil society organizations.

The **Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE)** of the JURE project is designed to:

1. **Assess Progress and Performance:** Evaluate the project's advancement toward its intended outcomes and outputs, focusing on its impact in improving access to justice, particularly for women, children, and vulnerable communities.
2. **Analyse Relevance and Coherence:** Determine the alignment of the JURE project with Sri Lanka's national justice reform priorities, global development goals (such as SDGs 16, 5, and 10), and existing donor-funded initiatives. Assess the coherence of the project's design and strategies with broader justice sector reforms.
3. **Evaluate Efficiency and Effectiveness:** Assess the efficiency of resource use, financial management, and the cost-effectiveness of project activities. Examine how effectively the project is achieving its stated goals, particularly in enhancing accountability, transparency, and service delivery within the justice system.
4. **Examine Sustainability and Impact:** Analyse the long-term viability of the project's outcomes, particularly the capacity of justice sector institutions to sustain the reforms initiated by the project. Assess early signs of impact, especially in terms of improving justice access for marginalized and vulnerable groups.
5. **Assess Gender and Inclusivity Integration:** Evaluate the extent to which the project has effectively integrated gender equality and inclusivity, focusing on women's empowerment, child protection, and the inclusion of marginalized groups. Review the implementation of the project's Gender Action Plan and other cross-cutting inclusion strategies.
6. **Provide Strategic Recommendations:** Offer evidence-based recommendations for refining the project's strategy, results framework, and implementation approach for the remainder of the project period. These recommendations will focus on enhancing the effectiveness, sustainability, and long-term impact of the project.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS.

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Based on the **ToR**, the evaluation was guided by several key criteria and 20 evaluation questions to assess the project's performance. These criteria were based on the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) standards, combined with specific EU, UNDP and UNICEF evaluation guidelines.

### RELEVANCE

1. To what extent is the JURE Project aligned with national development priorities, UNDP and UNICEF country programmes, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
2. Has the project been responsive and adaptable to changing legal, political, social, and economic contexts in Sri Lanka?
3. How effectively has the project addressed the needs of target beneficiaries, especially vulnerable populations, in enhancing access to justice and strengthening the rule of law?

#### COHERENCE

4. How well does the JURE Project integrate with UNDP's SDG 16 portfolio and other justice sector interventions in Sri Lanka?
5. To what extent does the project harmonize with efforts by other actors, including the government and donors, without duplicating resources?

#### EFFECTIVENESS

6. How effective has the project been in achieving its planned outputs and outcomes, particularly those related to equal access to justice, accountability, and transparency?
7. How far has JURE contributed to the transformation of justice sector institutions in understanding and implementing essential reforms?
8. How effective are the governance and management structures of the project and coordination mechanism between the UNDP and UNICEF in delivering the expected results?

#### EFFICIENCY

9. How efficiently has the project utilized its resources, including financial management and value for money?
10. Are the project's mechanisms for tracking change, monitoring, and reporting well-designed to measure progress accurately?
11. How gender-responsive are the project's indicators, and do they capture relevant data and changes?

#### PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT

12. Are there early signs that the project is achieving its intended impact, particularly in terms of improving access to justice for vulnerable populations?
13. How do the output-level achievements contribute to the overall outcomes and goals of the project?

#### SUSTAINABILITY AND NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

14. To what extent have the capacities of individual and institutional stakeholders been strengthened to ensure that project outcomes are sustained?
15. What are the immediate and long-term risks that may undermine the sustainability of the project's results?
16. What strategies or partnerships need to be developed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the reforms introduced by the project?

#### GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH (HRBA)

17. To what extent has the project integrated gender equality and human rights considerations into its design, implementation, and outcomes? How the project has addressed the identified challenges/risks related to gender equality and human rights
18. How effectively has the Gender Action Plan been implemented, and what progress has been made toward achieving gender-related results?
19. What challenges or risks have emerged in implementing the project's gender equality and human rights strategies?

#### EU ADDED VALUE

20. What specific outcomes or results has the JURE Project achieved due to EU support that would not have been possible through other donors?

Based on the agreed evaluation questions, the evaluation team developed a detailed **evaluation matrix**, which served as a structured framework for the assessment. The matrix included **sub-questions, judgment criteria, indicators, sources of verification, and data collection methods**, ensuring a systematic and transparent evaluation process. The evaluation matrix was designed to break down each evaluation question into sub-questions, allowing for a more in-depth analysis of the JURE project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. **Judgment criteria** were established to define the benchmarks against which project performance was assessed, while **indicators** were selected to measure progress and achievements objectively. To ensure the reliability and credibility of the findings, the evaluation matrix also identified **sources of verification**, specifying the documents, reports, stakeholder interviews, and quantitative data sources used for triangulation. A combination of qualitative and quantitative **data collection methods**, including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, and document reviews, was outlined to gather comprehensive evidence. On 26 October, the evaluation matrix was formally **endorsed as part of the Inception Report**, ensuring alignment with the agreed scope, methodology, and evaluation criteria. This endorsement confirmed that all stakeholders, including implementing partners and donors, agreed with the approach, enhancing the credibility and utility of the evaluation findings. The document is Annexed to the present report.

# EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS.

The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the JURE project employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis to ensure a robust and evidence-based assessment of the project's performance against its intended outcomes. The methodology was framed within the OECD DAC evaluation criteria—relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability—while also incorporating a strong focus on gender equality, human rights-based approaches, and EU-added value.

Evaluation Framework - The evaluation was guided by the following key frameworks and principles:

- OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria: The assessment was based on relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.
- UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation: The evaluation adhered to UNEG's ethical standards, ensuring cultural sensitivity, confidentiality, and respect for the rights of all participants.
- Cross-Cutting Themes: Gender mainstreaming, human rights-based approaches, inclusion of vulnerable groups, and disability considerations were integrated across all stages of the evaluation.

## EVALUABILITY ANALYSIS

The evaluability assessment confirmed that the JURE project had the necessary foundations for conducting a comprehensive mid-term evaluation. The presence of clearly defined output indicators, combined with a well-articulated Theory of Change and results framework, ensured that the evaluation could proceed with confidence. However, certain challenges—such as gaps in baseline data and targeting the complexity of institutional reforms—necessitated a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively assess the project's achievements and challenges.

In terms of formal evaluability, the project's Logframe outlined specific outputs and indicators that were somehow aligned with its objectives, including improving access to legal aid, training judiciary members, and enhancing transparency. While most indicators were quantifiable and provided a means of measuring progress, the assessment identified a need for greater emphasis on outcome-level indicators to track long-term effects. The availability of baseline data for most key indicators facilitated performance tracking; however, some indicators—particularly those related to institutional reforms and public perceptions—lacked comprehensive baseline data, that affected the robustness of the evaluation. While a structured monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system was in place to collect data regularly, opportunities for improvement were noted, especially in ensuring consistency and real-time availability of information across different project regions.

Regarding substantive evaluability, the project's problem identification was well-contextualized, addressing systemic challenges in Sri Lanka's justice sector, including barriers to access for vulnerable populations, delays in legal processes, and a lack of institutional transparency and accountability. However, a critical limitation was the absence of explicitly stated assumptions underpinning the Theory of Change, as detailed in the project document. As a result, the evaluation team was unable to assess these assumptions for their continuing validity. Furthermore, the project's Results Framework contained several gaps that were revised during the evaluation process, which posed additional challenges for the evaluation.

As part of the evaluability assessment, the evaluation team conducted an in-depth analysis of the project's revised indicator framework, examining all outcome and output statements along with their respective quality ratings. This review was conducted through a gender lens as part of the evaluation's Gender Review process. The **findings indicated** that the majority of the **outcome and output statements were weak, lacked a singular focus, had unclear timelines, and did not incorporate change language**. Similar weaknesses were found in the output statements.

To address these challenges, the evaluation team adopted a two-pronged approach. First, they sought to collect as much relevant data as possible throughout the evaluation process to inform the Results Framework. Second, they engaged in discussions with all relevant stakeholders to better understand the data challenges and explore potential solutions. These efforts aimed to enhance the credibility and utility of the evaluation findings while providing recommendations to strengthen the project's M&E systems.

The evaluation of the project followed a linear, sequential methodology, structured around three main phases. Each phase was completed before progressing to the next, ensuring a systematic and structured approach to data collection, analysis, and reporting.

## Phase 1 – Inception Phase and Desk Analysis: Desk research, document review and Inception Report of 100+ documents

**Data collection procedures and instruments:** The evaluation was conducted in line with international best practices and standards, including the OECD DAC ethical considerations for development evaluations and the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct. At the outset, the evaluation team signed the UNEG Pledge of Ethical Conduct (Annex VII). Stakeholder information was treated with strict confidentiality and in full compliance with UNDP’s Rules on Personal Data Protection. The evaluation adhered to ethical and legal principles, ensuring the well-being of all individuals involved. Measures were taken to minimize risks to participants in accordance with professional standards and the ‘do no harm’ principle. A structured informed consent protocol was followed, requiring explicit participant consent before any data collection meetings or interviews (Annex VI). To uphold ethical and methodological rigour, all data collectors received a pre-data collection briefing from UNICEF.

**Performance standards:** The evaluation used national and regional indicators, rating scales, and OECD DAC evaluation criteria to assess performance relative to the evaluation questions. Key benchmarks included Sri Lanka’s justice sector indicators, progress against UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (particularly SDG 16, SDG 5, and SDG 10), and alignment with international best practices in legal and judicial reforms.

Quantitative performance was measured through statistical data, survey results, and documented outputs, while qualitative assessment relied on stakeholder feedback, case studies, and thematic analysis generated by JURE and available online. The evaluation also incorporated comparative analysis, examining the JURE project’s achievements against past similar projects in Sri Lanka. This included an assessment of prior justice sector reform initiatives, legal aid programs, and capacity-building efforts to determine how the JURE project built on or diverged from previous interventions. By comparing efficiency, effectiveness, and impact, the evaluation identified best practices, gaps, and opportunities for improvement.

**Data sources:** The evaluation team collected and analysed data from a wide range of sources, integrating both primary and secondary information from relevant stakeholders through a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Data collection methods included Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and a comprehensive Literature Review, utilizing the approved Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools to ensure a robust and inclusive evaluation process.

The data collection phase commenced on 28 October and continued until 8 November 2024 before temporarily pausing due to the elections. It resumed afterwards and concluded at the end of November 2024. The process covered a broad geographic scope across Sri Lanka, including key locations such as Colombo, Galle, Matara, Jaffna, Batticaloa, Anuradhapura, Ratnapura, Kurunegala, Hatton, and Nuwara Eliya. This extensive coverage ensured a diverse and representative dataset, capturing insights from both urban and regional stakeholders.

### Data Collected

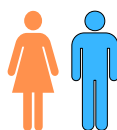
<b>+100</b> documents analysed	<b>102</b> Individuals consulted	<b>73.35%</b> Women participation	<b>26.47%</b> Men participation	<b>18</b> KIIs & Group discussions
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Total 102 partners and stakeholders consulted

Disaggregation of Stakeholders consulted by Sex

- Government representatives
- State institutions
- Academia
- Independent experts
- CSOs/NGOs
- Beneficiaries
- Donors
- UN partner agencies and programmes
- UN Resident Coordinator/Offices
- UNDP, UNICEF, EU Senior Management

75 Women (73.35%)  
27 Men (26.47%)



73.35% 26.47%

## Phase 2 –Field Phase: Interview, Data Collection

The evaluation team employed a variety of data collection methods and tools to gather extensive primary and secondary data, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This ensured data reliability, strengthened the validity of findings, and facilitated continuous feedback for future planning. The methods included:

**Sample and sampling frame:** The evaluation team employed a combination of sampling techniques. **Following sampling approaches were used:**

**Random sampling:** To gather quantitative data, random sampling was applied where possible, particularly, among legal professionals, government officials, academia and service providers. This approach helped minimize bias and provided insights into the project's effectiveness.

This method was applied not only to select participants for focus group discussions but also to select projects for the internal coherence evaluation. For example, two SDG16 Portfolio projects of UNDP were randomly selected to assess internal coherence.

**Stratified Sampling:** Given the complexity of the justice system and the involvement of multiple actors, stratified sampling was used to ensure representation from key stakeholder groups. To this end, the sample was divided into relevant strata, such as judicial actors (judges, prosecutors, law enforcement), forensic institution, child protection service providers, legal aid organizations, and children who had interacted with the system, academia.

**Purposive Sampling:** Purposive sampling was used to select stakeholders and beneficiaries from the four duty-bearing and two rights-holding institutions where project activities were implemented, ensuring their meaningful participation in the evaluation and data collection processes. It also aimed to promote gender balance, with a minimum target of 50% female interviewees, and to ensure that key informant interview (KII) participants could actively engage and provide relevant insights.

**Cluster Sampling:** Since the project operated across multiple locations in Sri Lanka, cluster sampling was used to ensure regional representation. The ToR have provided ten geographic locations where the data could be collected across implementation areas. Clusters were selected based on factors such as urban/rural locations, provinces with high caseloads of cases, and areas where justice system reforms had been actively implemented (See Figure 2. Map of data collection).

**Snowball Sampling:** Given the sensitive nature of children's experiences in the justice system, snowball sampling was used to identify representatives of child beneficiaries willing to participate in interviews or focus group discussions. Such discussions were organised in Gale with the mothers. This ensured ethical considerations were maintained while accessing valuable perspectives from children impacted by the system.

**Sample Size Considerations:** The sample size was determined based on the availability of stakeholders, logistical constraints, and the need for a balanced representation of perspectives. The evaluation methodology **explicitly addressed gender considerations** by integrating **sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis**. Informants **included beneficiaries of activities supporting GBV and DV survivors**, ensuring a gender-responsive approach. Findings and recommendations **were drafted to support the economic and legal empowerment of project beneficiaries**, particularly single **mothers supported by JURE**, demonstrating a structured focus on gender impact. The evaluation **accounted for stakeholder diversity**, incorporating perspectives from **marginalized and vulnerable groups**, including **women-headed households, survivors of violence, language minorities and economically disadvantaged beneficiaries**. The **sampling frame** was designed to ensure **inclusivity**, reflecting the diverse experiences of those affected by the intervention.

**Stakeholder participation:** The evaluation engaged a diverse range of stakeholders, including government officials, justice sector actors, civil society representatives, and international partners. Their participation took various forms, such as key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and survey responses. Final beneficiaries also played a crucial role in the evaluation process. Women supported by the JURE project—including those who received legal aid and financial assistance to support their children—provided firsthand accounts of the project's impact. Survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) shared their experiences, highlighting the effectiveness of access to justice mechanisms. Law students and continuing legal education participants contributed insights into the project's influence on legal education and professional development. Law enforcement agents, judges, and other justice sector actors reflected on how the project improved their capacities in legal and judicial processes. The active participation of both men and women across these groups ensured a balanced perspective, strengthening the credibility and inclusivity of the evaluation. Their diverse inputs

enriched the findings, providing a comprehensive assessment of the JURE project's impact on justice sector reforms and access to justice in Sri Lanka.

**Ethical considerations:** The evaluation was conducted in line with international best practices and standards, including the OECD DAC ethical considerations for development evaluations and the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct. At the outset, the evaluation team signed the UNEG Pledge of Ethical Conduct (Annex X). Stakeholder information was treated with strict confidentiality and in full compliance with UNDP's Rules on Personal Data Protection. The evaluation adhered to ethical and legal principles, ensuring the well-being of all individuals involved. Measures were taken to minimize risks to participants in accordance with professional standards and the 'do no harm' principle. A structured informed consent protocol was followed, requiring explicit participant consent before any data collection meetings or interviews (Annex VI). To uphold ethical and methodological rigour, all data collectors received a pre-data collection briefing from UNICEF midway through the data collection process.

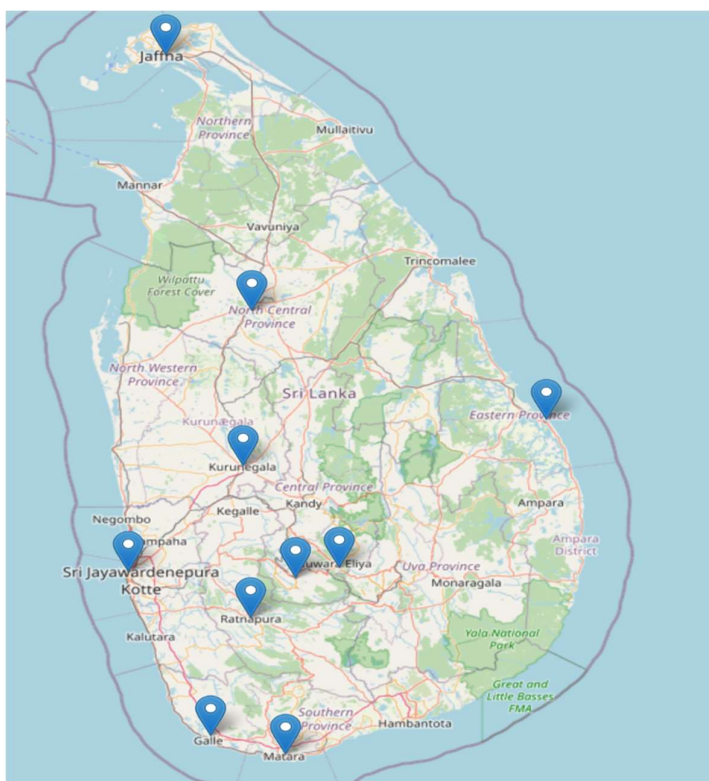


Figure 1. Map of data collection

enforcement, GMO & Legal Aid Commission, Women in Need and other related organizations, Victim and Witness protection authority, HRC, Prison and Probation Department, Project Implementing teams (UNICEF and UNDP) and Direct & Indirect beneficiaries. The data collection included 36 FGD activities and key informant interviews at national and regional levels. 102 people were involved in the data collection, included 75 females and 27 males, have participated in the midterm evaluation. After completing the data collection phase, the evaluation team conducted two presentations on emerging and preliminary findings in December 2024.

**Gender-sensitive Data collection and Analysis.** The evaluation incorporated gender considerations at both the data collection and analysis stages to ensure that gender-specific issues, perspectives, and disparities within the justice sector were adequately captured and assessed. **At the data collection level**, gender sensitivity was embedded in the sampling strategy to ensure a balanced representation of women, men, and marginalized groups, including survivors of domestic violence (DV) and gender-based violence (GBV), children and their representatives, persons with disabilities (PwDs), and individuals from linguistic and religious minorities. To further strengthen this approach, a focus group discussion (FGD) was organized with the UNDP and UNICEF Gender Specialists and Gender Focal Points, who provided insights into gender-sensitive aspects of justice reform and access to legal services. Prior to field visits and interactions with survivors, children, and other vulnerable groups, the evaluation team was sensitized by UNICEF staff. This briefing ensured that the evaluators were adequately prepared to handle sensitive discussions with care and ethical considerations while minimizing harm and distress for participants. During interviews and FGDs, safe and confidential

## Data Collection Methods

The evaluation team collected all possible information from all related resources, analysed and used the primary and secondary information from relevant stakeholders by using mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative methodologies by using the approved PRA tools- Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussion & Literature Review. **Data collection for the evaluation commenced on 28 October and continued until 8 November, then resumed after the election and concluded at the end of November 2024.**

The process of data collection covered a broad range of locations in Sri Lanka, including key sites such as *Colombo, Galle, Matara, Jaffna, Batticaloa, Anuradhapura, Ratnapura, Kurunegala, Hatton, and Nuwara Eliya*. The extensive geographic scope below ensured a diverse and inclusive dataset, capturing insights from both urban and regional stakeholders.

The data collection of the evaluation included the following organizations and departments: Justice system, CSOs & Academia, Law

settings were prioritized to encourage open dialogue, particularly for those affected by gender-based violence and legal discrimination.

**At the analysis stage**, a gender lens was applied to examine disparities in access to justice, legal aid, and judicial processes. Disaggregated data by gender was analyzed to assess how project interventions impacted women, men, and gender-diverse individuals differently. The evaluation also considered structural and institutional gender biases within the justice system, including the representation of women in legal professions, the responsiveness of judicial institutions to gender-specific legal needs, and the effectiveness of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in addressing GBV cases. Furthermore, gender-responsive indicators were used to measure progress in key areas such as women's legal empowerment, protection against gender-based violence, and the integration of gender-sensitive policies in justice sector reforms. Findings were interpreted with a focus on identifying systemic barriers to gender equality in the justice system and assessing whether project interventions contributed to bridging these gaps.

**Analysis of risk management and the quality of adaption/mitigation measures in the evaluation report including Social and Environmental Safeguards.** The evaluation assessed risk identification, mitigation, and monitoring through a document review, stakeholder consultations, and secondary data analysis. Key sources included the 2021 SESP, 2024 Risk Log, financial reports, and progress documentation. Interviews were conducted with government counterparts, JURE staff, judicial officers, and CSO representatives to understand how risks were addressed in implementation. A comparative analysis of the 2021 SESP and the 2024 Risk Log was undertaken to examine whether identified risks were actively monitored. The evaluation also assessed the effectiveness of mitigation strategies by reviewing their impact on institutional strengthening, policy reforms, financial sustainability, and access to justice. While most risks were systematically tracked in the 2024 Risk Log, the evaluation identified gaps in environmental risk monitoring and the assessment of long-term financial sustainability. These limitations are acknowledged as areas for improvement in future risk management strategies.

### Phase 3. Analysis, Validation and Report Writing

#### Data Analysis

The data were analysed using a triangulation approach to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. The evaluation integrated both qualitative and quantitative data, ensuring that conclusions were based on multiple sources. The consultation processes are discussed in detail with explanation of each data source, the rationale for their selection, and the sampling strategy used to identify participants in the Annex 8. The description outlines the tools employed in each location and provides a breakdown of the number of people consulted through each method.

- **Qualitative Analysis:** Thematic analysis was applied to interpret qualitative data from interviews and FGDs. This helped identify patterns, recurring themes, and critical areas where the project had achieved or fallen short of its intended objectives.
- **Quantitative Analysis:** Descriptive statistics were used to analyse survey data and available secondary quantitative data. Indicators from the project's Results Framework were reviewed to assess progress toward planned outputs and outcomes.

#### Cross-Cutting Analysis

The evaluation paid special attention to the following cross-cutting issues:

- **Gender Equality:** The extent to which gender perspectives were integrated into the project's design and implementation was assessed, particularly through the JURE's Gender Action Plan progress.
- **Human Rights-Based Approach:** The evaluation examined how well the project adhered to human rights principles and promoted inclusivity, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- **Disability Inclusion:** The assessment also considered how the project addressed the needs of persons with disabilities within the justice system.

#### Triangulation of Findings

All collected data were triangulated to validate findings and ensure that recommendations were based on strong evidence. Any discrepancies or inconsistencies in data were closely examined to ensure accurate interpretation. The evaluation team applied multiple triangulation methods:

1. **Data Source Triangulation:** Data from different stakeholder groups (direct beneficiaries, partner institutions, CSOs) were compared to identify consistent patterns or discrepancies.
2. **Methodological Triangulation:** Findings from different data collection methods (interviews, FGDs, document review) were cross-checked to validate the results. For example, KIIs on access to justice were compared with qualitative feedback from FGDs.

3. **Theory Triangulation:** Multiple theoretical perspectives (e.g., governance, human rights, gender equality) were applied to interpret findings, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of the project's impact. This methodological approach ensured that the evaluation was rigorous, inclusive, and evidence-based, providing a comprehensive assessment of the JURE project's achievements and areas for improvement.

### ANALYSES OF THE REVISED JURE'S RESULT FRAMEWORK.

The **JURE Results Framework (2022-2026)** includes **36 indicators** across **impact, outcome, and output levels** to measure **judicial independence, access to justice, and system efficiency**. The JURE's Result Framework was revised several times and in December 2024, the Logframe was revised for the last time. However, a detailed assessment reveals that none of these indicators fully meet the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) criteria. This indicates a need for refinement to ensure that they effectively track progress and outcomes. Our analyses are provided hereunder. At the **impact level**, four indicators track **rule of law improvements, legislative reforms, child justice interventions, and case clearance rates**. The **Rule of Law Score** has improved only slightly (from 53.37 to 50), falling short of the 2024 target (55). Legal reforms exceeded expectations with three enacted amendments, while judicial efficiency remains constrained by backlogs. The **outcome level** assesses access, accountability, and efficiency in justice delivery. Legal aid outreach has underperformed, reaching **16,111 beneficiaries** against the **45,000 target**, mainly due to **funding and accessibility issues**. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms have exceeded expectations, achieving a **73% resolution rate**, far surpassing the **5% target increase**. Institutional reforms and citizen trust remain difficult to measure, with some data pending.

Category	Identified Weaknesses	Areas for Improvement
<b>Logical Coherence</b>	Inconsistent linkages between activities, outputs, and outcomes. Some indicators measure activities rather than results. Example: 'Number of training sessions conducted' (output) does not track whether training led to improved legal practice (outcome).	Strengthen causal logic. Ensure each output directly leads to an outcome and links activities to a broader impact. Example: Instead of counting training sessions, measure 'Percentage of trained judges applying new legal knowledge in rulings.'
<b>Change Language</b>	Outcome statements lack specificity and do not clearly define expected transformations. Example: 'Improved efficiency of the justice system' is vague without defining what 'efficiency' entails.	Use explicit change-oriented language. Example: 'Judges apply new legal knowledge in court rulings' instead of 'Judges trained.'
<b>Assumptions</b>	The project document does not list explicit assumptions, making it difficult to assess risks or external dependencies. Example: No assumption is stated about political stability or institutional cooperation.	List key assumptions related to policy stability, institutional support, and political will to manage external risks. Example: 'Government maintains commitment to legal aid reforms.'
<b>Timeframe Realism</b>	Some legislative and institutional reforms are expected in 2-3 years, which may not align with standard policy cycles. Example: Legal reforms often require at least 5 years, but some targets aim for completion in 2 years.	Align timeframes with standard legal and institutional reform processes. Example: Consider 5-year cycles for major policy adoption.
<b>Indicator Clarity</b>	Some indicators mix outputs and outcomes; and lack clarity in measuring systemic improvements. Example: 'Number of institutions adopting minimum standards' (output) should be separate from 'Percentage of institutions effectively implementing standards' (outcome).	Ensure a clear distinction between output and outcome indicators.
<b>Baseline Data Availability</b>	Several key indicators lack baseline data, making progress assessment difficult. Example: Public trust in the judiciary indicator has no initial measurement.	Establish and validate baseline data before tracking progress. Example: Conduct a baseline survey on public trust before setting improvement targets.
<b>Gender &amp; Vulnerability Disaggregation</b>	Indicators do not consistently track differences by gender, age, disability, or economic status. Example: Legal aid provision is measured in total numbers but not by the proportion of women or marginalized groups benefiting.	Make gender and vulnerability data disaggregation mandatory. Example: 'Percentage of legal aid beneficiaries who are women or from marginalized communities.'
<b>Perception Surveys</b>	No clear methodology for surveys, including sample size, frequency, or methodology.	Define survey methodologies clearly. Example: Specify sample size, data

	Example: Trust in justice system surveys lack clarity on how they will be conducted.	collection method, and timing for each perception survey.
<b>Real-Time Data Tracking</b>	Heavy reliance on government reports without independent verification mechanisms. Example: Ministry of Justice data is used without cross-verifying through case records or independent audits.	Introduce third-party validation mechanisms. Example: Cross-verify Ministry of Justice data with independent case tracking or audits.
<b>Digital Transformation Indicators</b>	No indicators tracking the adoption or efficiency of digital justice tools. Example: Digital platforms are being developed, but no metrics track their usage or impact.	Create indicators measuring digital tool adoption. Example: 'Percentage of cases filed electronically' as a measure of digital system effectiveness.
<b>Legal Aid Provision Indicators are static</b>	Focuses on service numbers but does not track quality or effectiveness. Example: Measuring only the 'Number of people receiving legal aid' does not indicate if cases were resolved successfully. There are <b>no indicators measuring</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Satisfaction levels</b> of beneficiaries.</li> <li>• <b>Effectiveness of legal aid in securing justice outcomes.</b></li> <li>• <b>Follow-up on whether legal aid recipients successfully resolved their cases.</b></li> </ul>	Include qualitative indicators on legal aid effectiveness. Example: 'Percentage of beneficiaries reporting positive case outcomes.'
<b>Target Setting</b>	Some targets appear arbitrary and not justified based on past trends or demand. Example: A 3% annual increase in legal aid cases without reference to actual demand. <b>Ambitious yet vague targets:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Some targets are set arbitrarily (e.g., "3% annual increase in legal aid provision") <b>without justification based on demand, available resources, or past trends.</b></li> <li>○ The <b>Rule of Law score target (Impact Indicator 2.0)</b> is based on the <b>World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)</b>, which are composite measures influenced by multiple external factors <b>beyond project control</b>. There is no explanation for why a 5-point increase is expected.</li> </ul>	Base targets on historical trends or needs assessments. Example: Adjust legal aid targets based on past case demand rather than fixed percentage increases.
<b>Lack of interim milestones for institutional reforms:</b>	Institutional reforms (e.g., accountability and transparency standards, case backlog clearance) are given <b>long-term final targets (2026)</b> , with no <b>short-term benchmarks</b> to measure incremental progress. This makes it difficult to assess <b>mid-term success</b> and identify bottlenecks early.	
<b>Institutional Reform Milestones</b>	No incremental benchmarks for long-term institutional reforms. Example: 'Improved transparency in courts' is a long-term goal with no interim milestones.	Introduce interim progress markers for long-term changes. Example: 'By 2024, at least 50% of justice institutions will adopt new accountability standards.'
<b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation Strategy</b>	No independent mechanism for verifying project progress. Example: Reliance on internal reporting without external evaluation.	Develop an independent evaluation plan. Example: Annual external reviews of justice reform progress by a third-party organization.
<b>Perception Survey Methodology</b>	No clear plan for conducting surveys beyond the start and end of the project. Example: No plan for mid-term perception checks.	Ensure perception surveys follow rigorous methodologies. Example: Conduct surveys at multiple project stages and validate results through focus groups.

The first draft report was submitted to the Evaluation Reference Group on January 20, 2025. After incorporating comments and recommendations for corrections and clarifications from UNDP and UNICEF, the evaluation team submitted the revised draft on February 6, 2025.

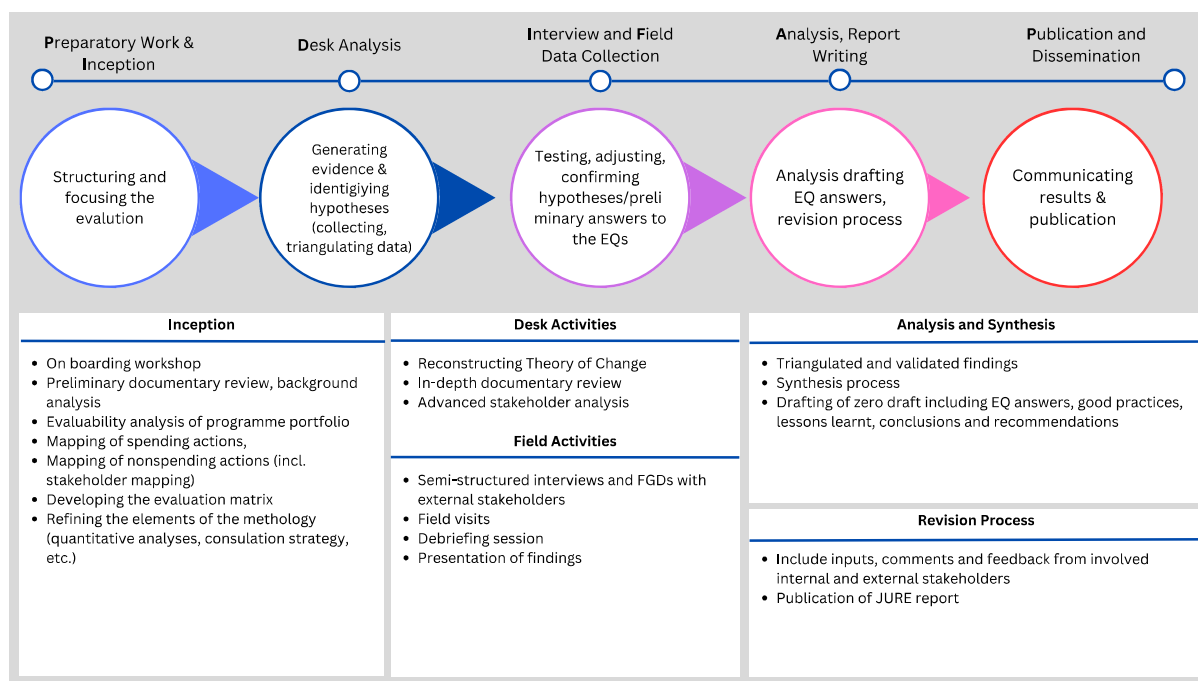
**Background information on evaluators:** The evaluation team was led by Bunafsha Gulakova, a public interest lawyer and evaluator from Austria who brings expertise in legal analysis, governance, and evaluation methodologies. The Marga Institute from Sri Lanka was represented by a diverse team, including one Evaluation Manager (male), one Evaluator (male), and four female Data Collectors. The composition of the team ensured a well-balanced mix of technical skills, covering evaluation methodologies, justice sector reforms, and governance. The gender balance was maintained, with a female Team Leader and four female Data Collectors, national M&E expert (male) and other senior experts (male), ensuring diverse perspectives. Additionally, the combination of international and local expertise provided a comprehensive geographical and contextual perspective for the evaluation.

### Phase 4. Publication and Dissemination (pending)

Following the review and incorporation of comments from UNDP, UNICEF, and the Evaluation Reference Group, the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) report will undergo final revisions to ensure accuracy, clarity, and alignment with stakeholder expectations. Once finalized, the report will be formally approved and prepared for publication, ensuring accessibility to all relevant partners and decision-makers.

To maximize its impact, the MTE report will be disseminated through multiple channels, including official UNDP and UNICEF platforms, direct distribution to key stakeholders, and targeted outreach to government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners. Additionally, a dissemination event will be organized to present the key findings, lessons learned, and recommendations, fostering dialogue on the way forward for the project. The report's findings will also be integrated into strategic planning discussions to inform future programmatic decisions and policy directions.

Figure 2. Evaluation Phases.



## LIMITATIONS TO THE EVALUATION

Limitations to the evaluation	Mitigation measures
<b>Scheduling Difficulties and Last-Minute Venue Changes</b> <b>Challenge:</b> Coordinating interviews was challenging due to frequent delays and last-minute changes in meeting venues, disrupting the planned data collection process.	The evaluation team-maintained <b>flexibility</b> in scheduling and utilized <b>virtual interviews</b> when necessary to accommodate shifting availability. Continuous communication with focal points helped anticipate changes and adjust plans accordingly.
<b>Institutional Memory Loss Due to High Staff Turnover</b> <b>Challenge:</b> Frequent turnover among key national partners resulted in institutional memory loss, affecting	To address this, the team <b>triangulated information</b> by consulting multiple sources, including past reports, documentation, and interviews with former officials

the availability of historical knowledge and insights essential for the evaluation.	when possible. This approach helped reconstruct critical institutional knowledge.
<b>Impact of Governmental and Legislative Changes</b> <b>Challenge:</b> Changes in governmental and legislative bodies led to postponements of key interviews, delaying the data collection process.	The team adopted a <b>phased interview approach</b> , prioritizing available stakeholders while continuously engaging with new appointees. Briefing materials were prepared to ensure that newly assigned officials could quickly grasp the context of the evaluation.
<b>Accessibility and Participatory Engagement in Remote Locations</b> <b>Challenge:</b> Reaching remote locations and ensuring participatory engagement posed logistical and practical difficulties.	The team leveraged <b>local data collectors</b> to facilitate on-the-ground interviews and focus group discussions, ensuring contextual sensitivity and broader participation. Additionally, <b>hybrid interview methods</b> (combining in-person and virtual interactions) were employed where travel was restricted.
<b>Impact of Sri Lankan Elections on Stakeholder Availability</b> <b>Challenge:</b> The 2024 elections in Sri Lanka significantly affected the availability of government officials, causing delays in securing interviews.	The evaluation team proactively engaged with alternative sources, such as <b>civil society representatives and technical experts</b> , to gather relevant insights in the interim. Follow-ups were scheduled post-election to ensure comprehensive data collection.

There were several limitations that were outside of the evaluators control to mitigate that affected the risk assessment process. The 2024 Risk Log did not fully track environmental risks, limiting the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of mitigation measures related to construction, digitalization, and waste management in justice institutions. Another limitation was inconsistent data collection, particularly regarding the impact of judicial digitalization initiatives and institutional adoption of new reforms. While anecdotal evidence suggests improvements in judicial efficiency, quantitative performance tracking remains incomplete. Finally, the effectiveness of risk mitigation strategies related to CSO engagement and community participation remains inconclusive, as no standardized metrics were established to measure their impact. Future evaluations should incorporate more robust indicators to assess civil society involvement in justice sector governance.

Overall, the mitigation strategies were largely effective in ensuring the evaluation proceeded despite external challenges. However, some limitations—such as delays in governmental stakeholder engagement and partial reliance on secondary sources—may have introduced minor gaps in data completeness and real-time political insights. The impact on findings was mitigated by triangulating data sources, but in certain areas, the depth and immediacy of insights may have been somewhat affected by the external constraints.

## II. EVALUATION FINDINGS

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the evaluation grouped around each criterion and based on the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected. Each key evaluation question is answered within the narrative, and the analysis and findings are also informed by the guiding questions provided in the ToR, which are included at the start of each sub-section.

### RELEVANCE

#### EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

1. *To what extent is the JURE Project aligned with national development priorities, UNDP and UNICEF country programmes, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*
2. *Has the project been responsive and adaptable to changing legal, political, social, and economic contexts in Sri Lanka?*
3. *How effectively has the project addressed the needs of target beneficiaries, especially vulnerable populations, in enhancing access to justice and strengthening the rule of law?*

**Rationale:** Relevance assesses whether the project design, objectives, and interventions are appropriately aligned with the country's justice needs, legal priorities, and broader developmental goals. It examines the project's ability to remain pertinent amidst evolving contexts, ensuring that its initiatives directly contribute to real-world challenges.

1. **Finding 1. JURE's comprehensive focus on legal empowerment, capacity building, and institutional reforms in Sri Lanka ensures its relevance to national and global development priorities. The project's integration of SDG 16.3 and the New European Consensus on Development (2017) into its design demonstrates its commitment to promoting equitable, transparent, and effective justice systems.**
2. Alignment with National Development Priorities. The project directly supports Sri Lanka's priority of strengthening the justice sector to enhance governance, accountability, and transparency. By addressing critical gaps in justice delivery, including the **protection of victims and witnesses**, legal aid for **vulnerable groups**, and capacity building for judicial and anti-corruption institutions, JURE aligns with the country's governance and development objectives. For instance, Amendments to the Assistance to and **Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act, No. 10 and the Children and Young Persons Ordinance (CYPO) 1939** strengthen legal frameworks for vulnerable populations. The child-friendly hearing room at the National Authority ensures safe and supportive environments for **victims and witnesses, addressing the national commitment to child protection and justice reform**<sup>2</sup>.
3. Alignment with UNDP and UNICEF Country Programs. The project contributes significantly to the goals of both UNDP and UNICEF country programs: i) UNDP's focus on governance and anti-corruption is evident in the training of 506 integrity officers and the integration of anti-corruption and integrity modules into public officer training programs in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Administration. These initiatives demonstrate a long-term strategy for systemic reform in governance and accountability; ii) UNICEF's mandate for child protection is fulfilled through the design of child-friendly judicial processes, including the hearing room equipped with audio-visual facilities for remote testimony; iii) Capacity-building interventions for key justice institutions, such as the Legal Aid Commission (LAC), Judges' Institute, and Ministry of Justice, align with both agencies' emphasis on institutional strengthening and inclusive justice delivery.
4. Alignment with the SDGs. The JURE Project directly contributes to the following SDGs: i) **SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions):** The project's focus on enhancing justice sector efficiency, transparency, and inclusiveness aligns with the goal of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. Activities such as anti-corruption training, judicial reforms, and support for inter-agency cooperation foster a more effective and accountable justice system; ii) **SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** Through initiatives like the participatory gender capacity assessment, the development of a Gender Action Plan, and support for the Women Lawyers' Association, the project promotes gender-responsive justice services. The **formulation of the Multi-sectoral National Action Plan on SGBV (2024-2028)** further demonstrates a commitment to addressing systemic gender disparities in the justice system; iii) **SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities):** Legal aid, women's shelter assistance, and **targeted support for SGBV survivors** enhance access to justice for marginalized groups, addressing structural inequalities and promoting inclusivity<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> ROAR document

<sup>3</sup> ROAR document.

Figure 3 Examples of JURE's relevant interventions to address the needs and gaps of the justice system in Sri Lanka.

JURE has demonstrated its relevance through targeted interventions aimed at the Legal Empowerment of People and Access to Justice. By simplifying and translating 30 key laws into Sinhala and Tamil, the project has made legal information accessible to marginalized communities, including women and persons with disabilities, empowering them to understand their rights. Notably, the project facilitated legal aid for **5,753 individuals, of whom 3,397 were women**, enabling them to engage with justice mechanisms effectively<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, over 153 legal awareness initiatives were conducted, significantly surpassing the 2023 target and equipping individuals with knowledge to exercise their rights<sup>5</sup>. These initiatives aim to contribute to strengthening the rule of law and fostering an inclusive justice system that addresses the needs of vulnerable groups, a key aspect of UNDP's governance programming.

- ❖ Under Capacity Building of Justice Actors, Transparency, and Accountability, JURE has strengthened professional integrity and accountability through training programs for justice actors, including the development of a Code of Ethics for Prisons and the Justice for Children Data System<sup>6</sup>. These initiatives enhance institutional capacity and transparency. The publication of critical justice-related reports, such as the Department of Probation's Annual Statistical Report, further bolsters institutional accountability, fostering trust in the justice system. For UNICEF, these reforms address **child and victim-sensitive justice systems**, which are a cornerstone of UNICEF's global good practice approaches to strengthening child protection systems and is in line with UNICEF's Country Programme Document (CPD) in Sri Lanka.
- ❖ JURE's contributions have been instrumental in advancing reforms and the legal institutional framework. The drafting of the Victims Protection Act aligns domestic legal frameworks with international standards, enhancing the **protection of vulnerable populations**<sup>7</sup>. Infrastructure improvements, including the establishment of **child-friendly justice spaces and disability-accessible witness boxes**, create supportive environments for **vulnerable groups**. Additionally, the development of commercial mediation mechanisms promotes alternative dispute resolution, addressing case backlogs and enhancing judicial efficiency.
- ❖ The design of the JURE project is highly relevant to **UNDP CPD Outcome 3**, as it contributes to building trust and confidence in governance and justice systems by promoting inclusivity, efficiency, and responsiveness<sup>8</sup>.
- ❖ The JURE project aligns with the UNICEF Sri Lanka CPD 2023–2027 through key indicative outputs focused on child protection, legal reform, and access to justice. By integrating with these CPD outputs, JURE contributes to strengthening child protection systems and ensuring fair, effective, and accessible justice for children in Sri Lanka<sup>9</sup>.
- ❖ The design of the JURE project also aligns with key aspects of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2027**, particularly Outcome 4. Governance, Justice and Rule of Law by addressing inclusivity, institutional accountability, and access to **justice for vulnerable populations**<sup>10</sup>. For example, JURE's focus on strengthening legal aid, addressing language barriers, and raising public awareness aligned with the UNSDCF's goal of ensuring equitable access to justice and **empowering marginalized groups of language minorities, including women, children, and persons with disabilities**. The project also contributed to enhancing institutional accountability and transparency through the development of data systems, the empowerment of oversight bodies such as the Human Rights Commission, and the promotion of ethical practices among justice sector actors. Additionally, JURE's emphasis on modernizing justice processes through digitalization, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and legal reforms reflected the UNSDCF's priority of improving governance efficiency and aligning national frameworks with international standards. Moreover, **Output 5** under **UNSDCF Outcome 1** focuses on strengthening child protection systems to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect by

<sup>4</sup> Source: JURE

<sup>5</sup> Source: JURE

<sup>6</sup> Source: JURE and discussions with the national partners.

<sup>7</sup> Source: KII with the national stakeholders.

<sup>8</sup> Country programme document for Sri Lanka 2023-2027. UNDP

<sup>9</sup> The indicative outputs include: Strengthened Child Protection Systems: Supports policies and mechanisms to prevent and respond to child abuse, neglect, and exploitation; Enhanced Legal and Policy Frameworks: Advocates for child-friendly legal reforms and alternative measures to detention; Capacity Building for Justice Sector Professionals: Trains judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement on child-sensitive procedures; Improved Data Collection and Monitoring: Establishes systems for tracking and evaluating justice sector interventions for children. Source: **UNICEF, Sri Lanka Country Programmed Document 2023–2027** (UNICEF Executive Board, 2022) [https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/12511/file/2022-PL37-Sri\\_Lanka\\_CPD-EN-ODS.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/12511/file/2022-PL37-Sri_Lanka_CPD-EN-ODS.pdf) accessed [4.02.2025].

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework) for 2023-2027

developing policies, establishing child-friendly justice mechanisms, and building the capacity of justice sector professionals. The **JURE project** aligns with this objective by modernizing legal frameworks to meet international child rights standards, training judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers on child-sensitive procedures, and establishing mechanisms to ensure timely and appropriate responses to child protection concerns within the justice system. Through these contributions, JURE supports the UNSDCF's broader goal of enhancing child protection and ensuring equitable access to quality services for children in Sri Lanka.

5. **Finding 2. While JURE made contributions to key aspects of the UNSDCF, a more systemic and flexible design could have enhanced its alignment and overall impact. The project's design exhibited certain limitations. It did not include implementation modalities to fully address systemic challenges, such as judicial inefficiencies, regional disparities, and the digital divide, which constrained equitable access to justice.**
6. The relevance of JURE was adjusted multiple times, with some amendments improving alignment with national priorities, such as digital transformation. However, certain changes, including their implementation approaches, were less coherent and raised questions about strategic consistency and stakeholder engagement.
7. From the very start until the present, the JURE project underwent numerous changes to align with Sri Lanka's evolving legal, political, social, and economic contexts. Towards the end of 2020, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) sent a letter to the EU Delegation (EUDEL) outlining the needs of the justice system. The letter presented these needs in the form of diverse themes, initiatives, and activities aimed at modernizing and enhancing the efficiency of the justice sector. Key initiatives included court automation, video conferencing systems between courts and prisons, and updating legal resources such as Sri Lanka Law Reports and the Lawnet website. Emphasis was placed on strengthening institutions, such as the Legal Draftsman's and Government Analyst's departments, and establishing SMART courts, investor courts, and specialized pre-trial and small claims courts. The mentioned list of 28 proposed interventions also included support for law reforms, digitization, and capacity-building for judges and legal professionals, alongside revamping the Ministry of Justice's website into an interactive portal. As a result, the first addendum in 2020 incorporated digitalization activities. Other priorities included implementing sentencing policies, reforming courthouse administration, developing community-based corrections systems, and improving contract enforcement to enhance Sri Lanka's ranking in the World Bank's Doing Business Index. Collectively, these initiatives aimed to foster a more efficient, transparent, and responsive justice system aligned with international standards<sup>11</sup>.
8. This may have resulted in the situation when, in July 2021, the Financial Agreement addendum expanded JURE's outputs from six designed in the original Action Document to eleven, reflecting a broader approach to justice sector reform, as requested by the national partners. While the original outputs focused on legal aid, equal access to justice, public awareness, data collection, ethics, and institutional capacity, the additional outputs introduced age-appropriate child justice services, strengthened policy and legal reforms, enhanced digital and administrative capacities, commercial law improvements, and mechanisms for better coordination among justice actors.<sup>12</sup> The agreement with UNDP was not signed until the end of December 2021.
9. The revision of the project document shows that UNDP closely followed requests from Sri Lankan authorities and made adjustments that included a strong emphasis on digital transformation, integrating IT-based solutions like court automation systems, video conferencing, and digital case management, which addressed urgent needs for efficiency and remote functionality in the justice sector<sup>13</sup>.
10. Additionally, the inclusion of outputs, such as strengthening commercial laws and alternate dispute resolution mechanisms, expanded the project's scope to encompass critical areas of governance and economic development. To this end, the **IMF Governance Diagnostic Assessment (GDA)** underscored the systemic inefficiencies in Sri Lanka's judiciary, particularly regarding the overwhelming case backlog and its cascading impact on justice delivery and economic confidence. The report highlighted that the judicial system suffers from **poor resources, limited capacity of legal personnel, and antiquated processes**. Judges are burdened with administrative duties, leaving insufficient time for adjudication, which exacerbates delays. Moreover, the lack of technological adoption for case management and the absence of publicly accessible data or registries creates vulnerabilities to **corruption** and amplify inefficiencies, especially in resolving land and contract disputes.
11. One critical issue identified is the backlog's **impact on contract enforcement**, a fundamental concern for businesses and investors. For example, the report provides that in the **District Court of Colombo**, which handles a significant volume of financial disputes, there are currently **45,000 pending cases**, with an average of **10,000 new cases registered annually**. With only **10 judges**, each handling approximately **2,000 cases at any given time**, the system is overwhelmed. This backlog discourages reliance on the court system for credit enforcement and diminishes international investors' confidence in Sri Lanka as a viable business environment. The IMF further noted that the

<sup>11</sup> Planning Letter. Support to Justice in Sri Lanka. 26.11.2020. Department of National Planning. MoF.

<sup>12</sup> See: Addendum No. 1 To Financing Agreement No. ACA/2019/041-735 Support to Justice Sector in Sri Lanka.

<sup>13</sup> Standard Explanatory Note - Non-Substantial Rider To Commission Decision" Document Is From 2021.

inefficiencies in the judiciary contribute to Sri Lanka's broader economic challenges by making the country less attractive for business and investment.

12. To address these issues, the report implicitly advocates for **comprehensive reforms**, including increased resources, capacity building for legal personnel, integration of technology for case management, and modernization of land registration systems. Without these measures, the backlog will continue to grow, further eroding the judicial system's functionality and trustworthiness while hindering economic recovery and development.
13. The **2024 Work Plan** included several targeted initiatives aimed at tackling the systemic inefficiencies highlighted by the IMF Governance Diagnostic Assessment (GDA). These modifications will ensure that JURE remains relevant not only in addressing systemic inefficiencies, such as case backlogs, but also in responding to emerging needs for transparency, accessibility, and resilience in the justice system. By adapting to these changes, JURE demonstrates its capacity to support Sri Lanka's justice sector in achieving more efficient, inclusive, and sustainable outcomes, reaffirming its alignment with national policy frameworks and international best practices.
14. From a programmatic perspective, the integration of activities addressing commercial dispute resolution into the existing project framework appears overly ambitious and misaligned with the available time, resources, and institutional readiness. **A more strategic approach would have been to design a standalone intervention(programme) dedicated to this complex and specialized area.** Such an intervention could focus on systematically addressing the underlying challenges, including capacity building, legal and procedural reforms, and the establishment of robust arbitration mechanisms.
15. For example, the activities proposed in the 2024 Work Plan, while valuable in addressing immediate inefficiencies in commercial dispute resolution, fail to include interventions that confront the systemic problems undermining the effectiveness of Sri Lanka's commercial justice system. The plan focuses on initiatives such as procedural reforms for the Commercial High Court, the creation of a Commercial Law Bench Book, operationalizing the Companies Dispute Board, developing a digital case tracker for debt cases, and training sessions for Debt Conciliation Board members. These activities target operational improvements, yet they do not address the root causes identified by the IMF Governance Diagnostic Assessment (GDA).
16. However, the systemic issues include **poor resources**, an **overwhelming backlog of cases**, and the **limited capacity of legal personnel**. Judges remain **overburdened with administrative tasks, leaving insufficient time for adjudication**, while antiquated processes and the lack of technological integration continue to hinder case management. Additionally, the complexity of the land registration system and the absence of publicly accessible registries created vulnerabilities to **corruption** and exacerbated delays in resolving disputes. **These foundational problems, particularly in areas like contract enforcement and land disputes, render the justice system unreliable for safeguarding economic rights.**
17. In other words, the Work Plan's focus on treating symptoms, such as backlogs and case tracking, overlooks the need for systemic reforms, such as human resources management, increasing judicial capacity, addressing administrative inefficiencies, holistic approach to modernizing outdated processes, and establishing transparent, accessible data systems. Without tackling these deeper issues, the proposed activities risk falling short of creating a sustainable and transformative impact on the commercial justice system<sup>14</sup>.
18. Embedding these activities within the current project, particularly given the delayed approval of the work plan and constrained stakeholder engagement, risks diluting focus and effectiveness across other priorities. Additionally, the limited timeframe, even with a potential two-year extension, is insufficient to achieve the systemic changes required to implement the IMF's recommendations comprehensively.
19. **Finding 3. The omission of initiatives supporting the development of environmental justice in the 2024 Work Plan represents a critical gap, particularly given its proven success and innovative impact under the JURE program. Environmental justice interventions have played a crucial role in ensuring access to justice for vulnerable communities affected by environmental degradation, land disputes, and climate-related displacement. The lack of continuity in these initiatives may disproportionately impact marginalized populations who have previously benefited from legal support mechanisms designed to uphold their rights in environmental matters. Addressing this gap would strengthen the program's inclusivity and its commitment to ensuring that all vulnerable populations, particularly those affected by environmental injustices, can access justice and benefit from legal protections.**
20. Environmental justice was one of the most progressive and forward-looking components of JURE, exemplified by its collaboration with the University of Colombo (UOC). This partnership led to notable and sustainable achievements, including the establishment of South Asia's first Master's program in Environmental and Climate Change Law<sup>15</sup>. This program addressed critical gaps in Sri Lanka's legal framework, equipping legal professionals to address the rights of individuals affected by environmental violations and climate-related challenges<sup>16</sup>.
21. The lack of planned initiatives in 2024 to build on these achievements is particularly surprising given the program's alignment with both Sri Lanka's national priorities and international commitments to environmental protection and climate action. The Master's program not only addressed the immediate need for legal expertise in environmental

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<sup>14</sup> Source: discussion with the national stakeholders in Colombo, October 2024.

<sup>15</sup> JURE Annual Report 2023.

<sup>16</sup> From the FGD with the national stakeholders and partners.

- justice but also provided a long-term solution to capacity-building in this field. Moreover, the omission ignores the demonstrated **demand for trained legal professionals who can enforce environmental laws and protect vulnerable communities affected by environmental harm**, a pressing issue for a country heavily impacted by climate change.
22. This gap in the Work Plan **jeopardizes the sustainability of previous investments** and the continued impact of the JURE program in advancing environmental justice. Without continued support, there is a risk of losing the institutional knowledge and capacity that were painstakingly developed through JURE's efforts. Given the importance of environmental justice in addressing both local and global challenges, the omission of related initiatives in the 2024 Work Plan represents a missed opportunity to capitalize on previous successes and respond to pressing environmental and legal needs in Sri Lanka.
  23. **Stakeholders' engagement, Relevance of the design, and Implementation approaches.** The project strategically aligned its activities with key stakeholders to address systemic challenges within Sri Lanka's legal aid system. Historically, the legal aid infrastructure has struggled to meet the growing demand for access to justice, a situation exacerbated by the collapse of the national economy. Recognizing the government's constrained fiscal capacity to expand legal aid services, the project engaged stakeholders such as the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL), and academic institutions to diversify and strengthen legal aid provisions. Some examples of engagement efforts included:
    - **Collaboration with the Ministry of Justice:** The project worked closely with the MOJ to develop a holistic and strategic approach to legal aid. This approach sought to overcome the ad hoc and fragmented nature of previous efforts by introducing a more coordinated use of resources, leveraging the expertise of diverse stakeholders.
    - **Partnership with BASL:** To enhance accessibility, the project established legal aid desks in collaboration with BASL. These desks served as entry points for marginalized populations seeking legal assistance, fostering trust and expanding outreach.
    - **Engagement with Academic Institutions:** The introduction of legal aid clinics in collaboration with law students created opportunities for experiential learning while addressing legal aid gaps in underserved areas.
    - **Exploration of a Paralegal System:** The project-initiated discussions and pilot activities to introduce a paralegal system, expanding the network of legal aid providers and bridging critical service gaps.
  24. **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC):** While some forms of support to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) were discontinued, such as financial assistance to its regional offices, the NHRC expressed a preference for a more strategic and impactful form of support moving forward. Specifically, the institution indicated that it would rather receive high-level technical expertise to strengthen its capacity to address emerging challenges and fulfil its mandate. The requested forms of support included:
    - **Digital Transformation:** Assistance in digitizing administrative processes to enhance efficiency, transparency, and operational accessibility.
    - **Capacity Building:** Targeted training for NHRC staff to equip them with skills and knowledge in emerging areas, such as defending human rights in the context of digital crimes.
    - **Environmental Justice:** Support for building the NHRC's capacity to tackle environmental justice issues, reflecting its growing importance in the human rights domain.
    - However, as of the evaluation period, these forms of technical assistance had not yet materialized. This delay highlights a gap between the NHRC's expressed needs and the project's ability to respond effectively within the reporting timeframe. Addressing this gap in future phases of the project will be essential to ensuring alignment with stakeholder priorities and achieving long-term sustainability in the NHRC's operations.
  25. **Modalities of Implementation.** In response to the challenges posed by economic instability and a government-imposed hiring freeze, the project adapted its implementation modalities to maintain momentum and meet emerging needs.
    - **Addressing Staff Shortages:** The ban on recruitment within the justice sector created significant operational challenges for state institutions. To mitigate this, the project temporarily supported the recruitment of critical expertise requested by state partners. This approach enabled institutions to fill immediate gaps and sustain service delivery. **However, the scope and temporal limitations of these recruitments were not clearly defined between the partners, raising concerns about their long-term viability and potential dependencies.** Following the Result-Oriented Monitoring mission commissioned by the EU Delegation, these modalities were discontinued.

- **Resource Optimization:** The project prioritized efficient use of limited resources by coordinating activities and avoiding duplication. For example, legal aid desks and clinics were integrated into existing institutional structures, minimizing additional costs while maximizing impact.
- **Phased Implementation:** Sub-activities under the strategic legal aid expansion were only partially completed during the reporting period due to operational and financial constraints. These activities are expected to continue in 2024, with a focus on ensuring alignment with stakeholder needs and institutional priorities.

## COHERENCE:

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### EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

4. *How well does the JURE Project integrate with UNDP's SDG 16 portfolio and other justice sector interventions in Sri Lanka?*
5. *To what extent does the project harmonize with efforts by other actors, including the government and donors, without duplicating resources?*

**Rationale:** Coherence focuses on the compatibility and synergy between JURE's interventions and other similar initiatives. It assesses how well the project's design and strategies fit within the broader justice reform ecosystem and its alignment with other national and international justice sector projects.

26. The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of UNDP's Portfolio on SDG 16 highlighted its overall relevance in addressing Sri Lanka's governance and justice challenges, with notable achievements in parliamentary reforms, digital transformation, and promoting gender-sensitive services. However, the evaluation **underscored limitations** in engaging civil society organizations, which restricted outreach to vulnerable groups and hindered the development of robust partnerships. Implementation gaps, particularly in digitalization and capacity-building, were also noted<sup>17</sup>. To enhance impact and sustainability, the MTE recommended strengthening CSO partnerships, improving feedback mechanisms for greater accountability, and fostering national ownership to reduce donor dependency. These **recommendations were partially addressed** during the implementation of the **JURE Programme, which is a central component of the Portfolio on SDG 16**. However, launched in February 2022, when the general country context was conducive to reforms, **the absence of a sectoral approach to justice sector reform by the government posed significant challenges** to the design and planning of interventions during the initiation of the JURE phase. This gap in strategic coordination limited the effectiveness of early reform efforts. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has since introduced an umbrella framework for justice sector reforms, encompassing a comprehensive range of initiatives with short-, medium-, and long-term goals. This framework reflects a more cohesive and structured approach to addressing systemic challenges within the justice sector<sup>18</sup>.
27. The Project elaborated well within the eco-system of the SDG 16 portfolio, but the level of coherence could be leveraged to see how each of these projects contributed jointly to CPD outcomes and SDG 16<sup>19</sup>. On the level of implementation, the project team reported that there is a collaboration between JURE and the Canada-Funded SGBV Project. For example, where JURE's gender gap analysis informs the capacity-building efforts of Portfolio 16, ensuring judicial training aligns with SGBV's victim-centric approach, creating a supportive environment for survivors<sup>20</sup>. Moving to justice delivery efficiency, JURE enhanced case management, while the SGBV Project established fast-track courts to expedite justice processes. Together, these two projects promote a more effective legal framework for handling SGBV cases.

17 Source: KII with the CSOs and review of the implementation documents.

18 P.76. Mid-term Evaluation cum Strategic Direction Setting of the UNDPs Portfolio on SDG 16+ Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. 31 Aug, 2021

19 Desk review of the ROAR.

20 Desk review of the SFG 16 Portfolio document.

SDG 16 Portfolio at a glance



Figure 4 Content of the UNDP Sri Lanka SDG 16 Portfolio (source: Mid-Term Evaluation of UNDP's Portfolio on SDG 16- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. October -November 2020)

28. Other offered example by the JURE project team was Infrastructure assessments conducted within JURE in SGBV's service mapping, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively in the districts. With shelter services, JURE evaluates the quality of shelters, and SGBV is committed to improving economic stability and psychosocial support for survivors' post-shelter. On victim protection, JURE develops guidelines, and SGBV implements

Standard Operating Procedures to strengthen support systems and promote legal reforms crucial for survivor empowerment. Lastly, knowledge sharing through regional exchanges ensures JURE integrates international best practices, enhancing overall project efficacy. Now, let's explore in-depth how these synergies function and their impact.

29. **Finding 4. The project demonstrated a degree of internal coherence with the UNDP's SDG 16 portfolio in its implementation; however, there is significant potential to strengthen this coherence by adopting UNDP's integrated approach, which emphasizes leveraging synergies across thematic areas to achieve sustainable development outcomes.**
30. For instance, JURE's Outcome 3 initiatives supporting mothers in establishing small cooking businesses aimed at providing for their children and preventing reliance on state care could be more effectively linked to the UNDP Outcome on Economic Empowerment. This alignment would enhance their entrepreneurial capacities and support sustained small-business development, contributing to broader economic resilience and social well-being.
31. Moreover, the JURE's Outcome 1 results achieved in raising awareness of environmental justice and developing a master's programme with the University of Colombo's Law Faculty could be better integrated with the UNDP Outcome on Environment. By embedding these efforts within a cohesive strategy that connects legal education, community awareness, and environmental sustainability, the project could contribute to a more comprehensive and impactful environmental agenda. Strengthening these linkages would not only maximize the project's contributions to UNDP's strategic priorities but also reinforce the value of its integrated approach in addressing complex, interrelated development challenges.
32. **Finding 5. The JURE Project operates in a highly crowded development environment where multiple donors and international organisations, such as USAID, EU, KOICA, JICA, and UNODC, support overlapping themes, including virtual trials, forensic analysis capacity building, anti-corruption measures, commercial dispute resolution, and the modernization and strengthening of justice sector mechanisms.** However, despite these efforts, some overlaps persist and while the project has taken steps to align with other actors, there is room for **improved strategic planning and joint programming** to further reduce duplication and enhance synergies.
33. The level of external coherence was challenging to assess during this mid-term evaluation due to the limited time the evaluation team spent in the country. JURE, to date, is the largest and flagship EU-funded project in the country. Due to its complex and multi-faceted design and cascaded interventions across several areas of justice services, it is hard to see how these projects avoid duplication outside of the UN family.
34. A desk review of relevant documents and interviews with national stakeholders indicated that justice sector needs are well within the scope of donor priorities, with numerous projects currently being implemented in the country. Outside the UNDP and UN country team, JURE operates in a diverse portfolio of internationally funded projects in Sri Lanka, focusing on justice sector reforms, social cohesion, technical capacity building, and infrastructure development. Prominent donors, include USAID, other EU-funded projects, KOICA, JICA, and international organisations like UNODC.

35. The EU significant investments in justice sector support (JURE) are followed by the USD 19 million from USAID for the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Project (2018–2023)<sup>21</sup>. Between 2017 and 2021, USAID supported the project Coherent, Open, Responsive, and Effective Justice Program<sup>22</sup>.
36. These projects vary in duration, from short-term initiatives like UNODC’s USD 520,000 project on virtual trials (2021–2022) to longer-term efforts, such as USAID’s Efficient and Effective Justice Project (2022–2026), strengthening the Efficiency of the Justice Sector with a Focus on Commercial Law Investment and contract enforcement Specialized initiatives funded by the ADB, including KOICA’s USD 4.5 million investment in forensic drug analysis capacity and JICA’s JPY 60 million for equitable access to justice, focus on modernizing and strengthening specific justice sector components<sup>23</sup>.

## EFFICIENCY

6. *How efficiently has the project utilized its resources, including financial management and value for money?*
7. *Are the project’s mechanisms for tracking change, monitoring, and reporting well-designed to measure progress accurately?*

**Rationale:** Efficiency focuses on how well the project uses resources, including time, finances, and human capacity, to achieve its results. It examines whether the project is cost-effective and whether its monitoring systems adequately capture gender-related data and performance indicators.

37. **Finding 4. The efficiency of the JURE project in utilizing its resources reveals a mixed picture, with notable strengths in operational investments but also significant challenges in financial management and assessment of value for money under the current circumstances.**
38. There are significant disparities in expenditure rates between project outcomes and implementing agencies, raising concerns about the balanced and efficient use of resources. The total budget for JURE is USD 19,422,120, with contributions from the EU (USD 17,072,075), UNDP (USD 591,200), and UNICEF (USD 526,916). The JURE Project has received a total of **USD 7,148,771** in funds, distributed between UNDP (**USD 4,274,505**) and UNICEF (**USD 2,874,266**). The first tranche of **USD 2,461,000** was allocated for both agencies; however, due to the failure to report 70% utilization of this tranche, the EU reduced the subsequent tranche allocation by the unreported amount. The second tranche of **USD 4,687,771** was released, with **USD 2,660,945** for UNDP and **USD 2,026,826** for UNICEF. The third tranche of **USD 4,643,200.51** was approved but not yet disbursed by mid-2024. UNICEF **rapidly utilized most of the first tranche**, likely to meet initial implementation demands. However, when the **second tranche was significantly delayed**, UNICEF was left without funds for an extended period, affecting implementation momentum. Consequently, when the **second tranche was eventually received**, a **more cautious spending approach** was adopted to avoid the risk of running out of funds again before the next disbursement. Expenditure as of December 31, 2023, was USD 4,289,883, with an additional USD 1,543,889 spent by June 30, 2024, indicating an implementation rate of 81.6% - rather slow financial progress relative to the project’s scope and timeframe. As of June 30, 2024, USD 12,273,349 remains unspent, representing a considerable proportion of the total budget<sup>24</sup>.

Figure 5. Project Financial overview

Category	Amount (USD)
Total Budget	19,422,120.00
EU Contribution	17,072,075.00
UNDP Contribution	591,200.00
UNICEF Contribution	526,916.00
Total Funds Received	7,148,771.00
UNDP Funds Received	4,274,505.00

<sup>21</sup> Project goals: Introduce improved case-management practices and court-management systems and other tools, Implement better mechanisms for public information sharing and community engagement, Improve the quality of legal education curricula, instruction, and learning, Strengthen opportunities for professional and skills development for non-judicial personnel and continuing education for judicial and legal professionals Available at <https://chemonics.com/projects/improving-sri-lankas-justice-system/>, last visited <<1.12.2024>>

<sup>22</sup> Project goals were: Strengthen the effectiveness of core justice institutions, processes, and actors so they can effectively exercise their powers and fulfill their respective competencies; Improve the justice system’s transparency and citizen engagement by increasing public awareness of their work, enhancing trust in their processes and decisions, and garnering public support for their institutional needs; Enhance the governance, qualifications, and diversity of the Sri Lankan legal profession. Available at, <https://chemonics.com/projects/modernizing-sri-lankan-judicial-system/> last visited <<1.12.2024>>

<sup>23</sup> P.10. Annual Performance Report - 2023, Ministry of Justice, Prison Affairs, and Constitutional Reforms.

<sup>24</sup> Source: information provided by the JURE team in December 2024.

UNICEF Funds Received	2,874,266.00
First Tranche	2,461,000.00
Second Tranche	4,687,771.00
Third Tranche (Approved but not disbursed)	4,643,200.51
Expenditure as of Dec 31, 2023	4,289,883.00
Expenditure as of June 30, 2024	1,543,889.00
Implementation Rate (%)	81.60
Unspent Funds as of June 30, 2024 (USD)	12,273,349.00

39. The JURE project has been implemented with delays that may require an additional extension to ensure the completion of all planned activities and the optimal utilization of substantial financial resources. These delays have been primarily attributed to challenges within local governance institutions, including human resource limitations and internal policy constraints. Specifically, inadequate staffing in district offices, particularly in valuation departments, and the absence of an in-house cadre of IT specialists within Local Authorities have significantly contributed to the setbacks.
40. **Formulation:** The JURE programme, conceptualized in May 2019, underwent significant restructuring in 2021 due to political changes and new priorities identified by the Ministry of Justice. The Project was officially launched on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022<sup>25</sup>. The programme's inception coincided with Sri Lanka's worst economic crisis, leading to public unrest, protests, and a political crisis. The unrest resulted in arrests, allegations of excessive force, and a surge in pro-bono legal services to defend detainees' rights. Institutions like the Human Rights Commission (HRC) played an active role in advocating for human rights. The ongoing constitutional reform process aimed to strengthen independent institutions but retained certain presidential powers, drawing criticism. The crisis also led to a rise in crime and delays in the justice system, exacerbated by fuel shortages that affected the public sector. Child protection issues worsened, with limited social and justice services, leading to increased domestic violence and child abuse cases. Against this backdrop, the JURE programme faces the challenge of navigating a volatile socio-economic and political environment while maintaining its priorities.
41. **Coordination:** The Justice Sector Development Partner Meeting on 4 December 2023 focused on enhancing coordination among partners to streamline efforts in the justice sector. Discussions covered key initiatives like UNDP and UNICEF's JURE work on legal aid, dispute resolution, and law reform, with a particular focus on addressing court delays and improving data collection. The EU emphasized the need to align JURE's work with IMF anti-corruption recommendations, while UNDP highlighted capacity issues within the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC). Other partners, including USAID, JICA, and UNODC, shared updates on their respective projects, such as model courts, pre-trial conferences, and virtual courts for prisons. The meeting concluded with an agreement to meet quarterly, prioritize IMF governance diagnostics, and focus on key areas such as data sharing, case backlog reduction, alternative dispute resolution, and anti-corruption efforts.
42. **Result Monitoring.** In 2024, the EU commissioned Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM), which concluded that the JURE intervention had demonstrated significant relevance in addressing critical gaps in access to justice, particularly for marginalized groups and women. However, progress has been hindered by challenges in delivering timely and impactful results, largely due to the absence of strategic leadership and cohesive coordination. While initial efforts succeeded in assessing legal sector capacities and engaging experienced implementing partners, the lack of centralized management has resulted in a more fragmented, demand-driven approach. Despite benefiting from synergies with other programs, the intervention has faced obstacles in achieving transformative outcomes, partly due to delays, underutilization of the budget, and a focus on capacity-building over substantive reforms.
43. The report also raises concerns about the sustainability of results achieved with target groups, as they remain heavily dependent on JURE funding, while gender mainstreaming efforts have yet to be fully integrated.<sup>26</sup> Key recommendations included appointing a dedicated coordinator, adopting a more results-oriented approach, revising the Logframe to strengthen indicators, and fully implementing the Gender Action Plan. Moreover, enhanced collaboration with civil society, improved alignment with justice institutions, and a stronger focus on transformative outcomes, data transparency, and EU visibility are also encouraged to ensure the intervention's long-term impact<sup>27</sup>.
44. The ROM report made ten recommendations that were accepted by the UNDP<sup>28</sup>. The recommendations called for the urgent appointment of a Project Coordinator to provide strategic leadership, a shift to a results-oriented approach to ensure tangible outcomes, and accelerated implementation of transformative activities. Mainstreaming gender and revising the Logframe indicators are highlighted to improve inclusiveness and tracking progress. Greater engagement with civil society and justice institutions is encouraged, along with promoting an open data model for

<sup>25</sup> Source: Inception report JURE (No date available)

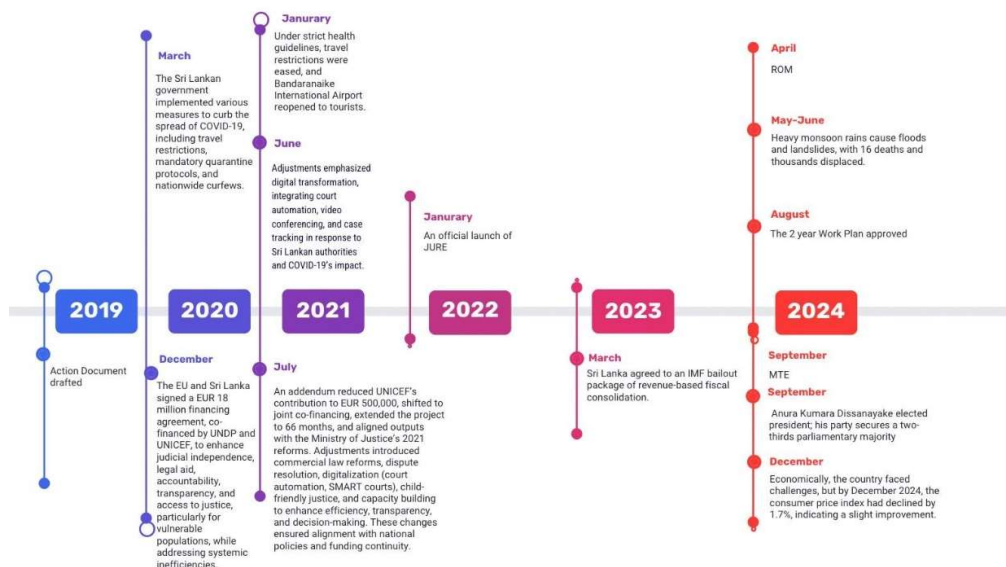
<sup>26</sup> ROM Report.

<sup>27</sup> Executive Summary. ROM Report. ROM-917, D-41735 / INTV-16576

transparency. Coordination with the EU communication strategy is also recommended to enhance visibility and alignment.

45. Addressing these issues will be critical to ensuring timely and effective project delivery. The project staff explained that one of the reasons for the low utilization of resources was the late approval of the Work Plan for 2024, which subsequently delayed fund disbursements.

Figure 6 Chronology of events and milestones.



46. **Finding 6. While the JURE project has made progress despite significant delays, notable disparities in expenditure rates between outcomes and implementing agencies underscore the need for immediate adjustments to ensure balanced and efficient resource utilization. Efficient utilization of the third tranche and resolution of implementation delays will be critical to achieving project objectives within the allocated timeframe and budget.**

47. The JURE Project's allocated budget, totalling USD 10,573,858, reflect a well-distributed budget across key cost categories to support its implementation<sup>29</sup>. Significant investments were made in **staff and personnel costs**, which accounted for USD 3,179,751, highlighting the reliance on human resources for project management and activity execution. **Supplies, commodities, and materials** were allocated USD 3,656,927, underscoring the emphasis on procuring essential materials for program delivery. Additionally, USD 619,604 was spent on **equipment, vehicles, and furniture**, indicating the importance of infrastructure in enabling project activities. Travel expenses amounted to USD 546,942, supporting mobility for field operations, while **general operating and direct costs** totalled USD 1,338,705, covering necessary administrative and operational support. Indirect costs of USD 1,231,929 were allocated for organizational overheads, ensuring the sustainability of project operations<sup>30</sup>. These expenditures underscore the reliance on human and material resources for implementation. Despite these allocations, delays and low utilization indicate inefficiencies in translating investments into results.

Figure 7. Expenditure as of 30 June 2024

Implementation period	Total	UNDP	UNICEF
Utilization as of 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023	4,289,883.00	3,128,845.00	1,161,038.00
Expenditure from 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	1,543,889.01	824,754.06	719,134.95

<sup>29</sup> In JURE's budget, these allocations are divided per Outcomes as follows:

For Outcome 1: USD 3,581,447 (18%). This Outcome's allocation is subdivided into Output 1.1, USD 1,281,989 (7%); Output 1.2, USD 1,083,872 (6%); Output 1.3, USD 1,215,586 (6%)

For Outcome 2: USD 5,750,769 (30%). This Outcome's allocation is subdivided into Output 2.1, USD 3,051,846 (16%); Output 2.2, USD 1,218,465 (6%); Output 2.3, USD 1,480,458 (8%)

For Outcome 3: USD 8,857,976 (46%). This Outcome's allocation is subdivided into Output 3.1, USD 3,702,677 (19%); Output 3.2, USD 488,160 (3%); Output 3.3, USD 2,661,304 (14%); Output 3.4, USD 978,556 (5%); Output 3.5, USD 1,027,279 (5%)

<sup>30</sup> Source: information provided by the JURE project staff to evaluators on 29 November. 2024

Total expenditure	3,953,599.06	1,880,172.95
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- 48. Finding 7. The JURE project has demonstrated adaptive management through its systematic and responsive approach to the recommendations provided during the Result-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) mission. The project team has effectively integrated several recommendations into its planning and implementation processes, signalling a commitment to achieving transformative and sustainable outcomes.**
49. Out of the 10 recommendations provided, 40% have been successfully completed, 50% are actively being implemented, and 10% are partially completed, demonstrating progress and a strong commitment to addressing the ROM recommendations<sup>31</sup>.
50. **Strategic Leadership and Workplan Redesign.** Following the ROM recommendation to appoint a dedicated Intervention Coordinator, the recruitment of a Senior Technical Specialist (STS) in 2023 and their onboarding in March 2024 marked a pivotal step. The STS has played a critical role in re-designing the 2024 workplan, prioritizing areas for support and aligning with a results-based approach. While formal staff reorganization has not occurred, selective upgrades to existing roles reflect a flexible response to resource constraints<sup>32</sup>.
51. **Shift Towards a Results-Based Approach.** The adoption of a results-oriented framework in the 2024 workplan is evident in its clear targets, timelines, and collaborative focus. This strategic shift addresses the ROM recommendation to complement the demand-driven approach and emphasizes people-centred justice. The inclusion of child-friendly justice services and feasibility studies for transformative models such as foster care and diversion programs represents a significant alignment with this directive<sup>33</sup>.
52. **Gender Mainstreaming.** The project has demonstrated adaptability by embedding gender-sensitive initiatives in the 2024 workplan. Notable efforts include a gender capacity assessment for justice institutions and the development of a roadmap to enhance access to justice for vulnerable groups, including LGBTIQ+ individuals<sup>34</sup>. These steps align with the ROM recommendation to fully implement the Gender Action Plan and ensure transformative gender actions.
53. **Strengthened Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.** In response to the recommendation to revise Logframe indicators, UNDP and UNICEF have collaborated with an RBM expert and the UNDP regional office to enhance the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework<sup>35</sup>. However, the revision was undertaken prior to the current Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE), contrary to the recommendation of the ROM expert. To this end, the Logical Framework (LF) was revised once again during the current Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) to address areas that required further adjustment.
54. **Enhanced Civil Society Engagement.** The project has incorporated increased civil society participation into the 2024 workplan and multi-year plans, aligning with the recommendation to follow the Open Justice model.
55. **Focused Policy Engagement and Advocacy.** The project has shown prudence in its policy-related interventions, particularly by ensuring explicit commitment from stakeholders before advancing efforts such as ADR policy development. This cautious yet strategic approach is consistent with the ROM guidance to secure incumbent buy-in.
56. **Promotion of Transparency and Open Data.** Adaptive steps have been taken to introduce an open data model, including the development of publicly accessible justice sector dashboards.
57. **Improved Communication Coordination.** The appointment of a communications analyst in October 2024 has strengthened coordination with the EU Delegation’s communication team. This addresses the ROM recommendation to enhance communication strategies and alignment with EU priorities.
58. **Areas for Further Improvement.** Despite these adaptive efforts, certain challenges persist. While key recommendations have been addressed, delays in executing transformative activities and disbursing the third tranche remain areas of concern. The lack of a formal staff restructuring process limits the project's ability to fully optimize human resources. While feasibility studies are underway, translating these into concrete implementation requires accelerated action to ensure measurable impact.
59. Stakeholders expressed mixed views regarding the calibre and level of subject-matter expertise provided by JURE. While the technical assistance was generally appreciated, national partners emphasized the need for higher-level expertise to address the complexity of the issues at hand effectively. Many stakeholders specifically requested that **future technical support be delivered through more senior-level experts with advanced knowledge and experience in the relevant fields.** This, they argued, would ensure a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the justice sector<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> From the desk review and discussions with the JURE team.

<sup>32</sup> Source: JURE team

<sup>33</sup> Source: JURE team and the revised Work Plan 2024

<sup>34</sup> Source: FGD discussion with the UNDP Gender Specialist and gender focal points.

<sup>35</sup> UNDP has commenced the revision of the Results Framework (Logframe) for the EU-supported Justice Reforms Project in Sri Lanka. To carry out the revision exercise, UNDP Sri Lanka has engaged an International Consultant (IC) on Results-Based Management through its Global Policy Network (GPN) roster. The international consultant began work on revising the results framework on 29 October 2024.

<sup>36</sup> KII and FGD with the national partners.

60. Furthermore, stakeholders highlighted the need to **enhance the quality and utility of analytical papers and studies produced** in collaboration with national partners. They emphasized the importance of **establishing a robust peer review process for these deliverables**.
61. In response, the project management team acknowledged the **challenges in procuring high-calibre experts locally**. They highlighted that the project's **salary scales are not always competitive with the local market**, which limits the ability to attract and retain experts with the desired level of expertise. This structural challenge constrains the program's capacity to meet stakeholder expectations for more senior-level technical support and to fully align with national partners' needs for advanced capacity-building and high-quality deliverables<sup>37</sup>.
62. **Finding 8. The JURE progress monitoring system played a strong foundation but required an enhanced data collection mechanism across all project areas, complete Logframe baselines, calibrated indicators for result-oriented monitoring and effective evaluation.**
63. The JURE project utilized a comprehensive progress monitoring system guided by the principles of Results-Based Management (RBM). At the beginning of the project, a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) expert supported the implementation of the system, conducting introductory sessions on RBM for all partners to ensure a shared understanding of its methodology. The monitoring framework incorporated a range of tools and templates, such as the Quarterly Reporting Template (J/ME/01) and the Completion Report Outline (J/ME/02), to track progress effectively. A sample of participants feedback report on infrastructure assessment training demonstrates that data was collected through the survey and questionnaires developed for the beneficiaries.
64. While these tools were developed, distributed, and supported by training sessions for partners, the monitoring system required further strengthening to achieve its full potential. The collection of relevant data against SMART indicators (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound) emerged as a key area for improvement. Despite the tools in place, gaps in data collection limited the system's ability to comprehensively measure progress. Furthermore, the project's Logframe lacked baseline data and clearly defined targets in some areas, which made it challenging to evaluate progress against initial expectations.
65. Throughout the project, the system provided a structured approach for tracking progress across outputs, outcomes, and impacts. It included clear contractual obligations for partners, requiring quarterly progress and financial reports, as well as a final cumulative report summarizing achievements and resources utilized. However, the absence of critical baseline data and specific targets in certain areas of implementation undermined the ability to track results fully and align them with the intended outcomes.
66. The initial support provided by the MEL expert was instrumental in setting up the system and building partner capacity, but ongoing efforts were needed to strengthen data collection processes and ensure alignment with the defined (Addressing these gaps would have enhanced the system's capacity to measure progress, support decision-making, and ensure that JURE's outcomes were accurately captured and sustained).
67. **Analysis of Risk Management and the Quality of Adaptation/Mitigation Measures.** The evaluation of the JURE Project's risk management framework reveals a structured approach to identifying, monitoring, and mitigating risks, with varying degrees of success across different risk categories. The 2024 Updated Risk Log and other project documents demonstrate proactive risk identification and mitigation efforts, particularly in areas related to political and institutional stability, financial oversight, digital justice expansion, and social and environmental safeguards (SES). For example, social risks, particularly those related to access to justice for marginalized communities, gender inclusion, and protection for victims of gender-based violence (GBV), were addressed through the Gender Action Plan and targeted policy interventions. The project successfully expanded legal aid and victim support services, though challenges remain in ensuring long-term government ownership of these initiatives. However, challenges persist in ensuring full adoption of mitigation measures, addressing emerging risks, and embedding sustainability into institutional processes. However, digitalization delays and resistance to CSO engagement remained unresolved, requiring stronger institutional adoption and advocacy.

*Figure 8. Stakeholders' Perspectives on JURE Implementation Challenges (field data collection).*

- ⇒ **Resource Constraints:** Insufficient funding, delays and staffing impacting project implementation.
- ⇒ **Systemic Issues:** Structural challenges within the justice sector hindering progress.
- ⇒ **Inadequate Monitoring and Evidence Gaps:** Limited results monitoring and insufficient evidence to support key outcomes.
- ⇒ **Weak Financial Management Documentation:** Lack of robust evidence for financial management practices.
- ⇒ **Limited Stakeholder Engagement:** Partners and communities need more participation during the planning stage.
- ⇒ **Gender Action Plan Implementation:** Lack of evidence demonstrating progress or results aligned with the Gender Action Plans.

<sup>37</sup> KII with the JURE team.

- ⇒ **Monitoring Inconsistencies:** Gaps in monitoring efforts, particularly aligning with outcome objectives.
- ⇒ **Coordination Challenges:** Limited interagency coordination and collaboration, reducing program synergies.
- ⇒ **Lack of Senior-Level Expertise:** The absence of subject matter experts in the project team affects the quality and direction of implementation.
- ⇒ **Abrupt Activity Termination:** Unexplained discontinuation of some project activities, leading to gaps in continuity.

## EFFECTIVENESS

### EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

8. *How effective has the project been in achieving its planned outputs and outcomes, particularly those related to equal access to justice, accountability, and transparency?*
9. *How far has JURE contributed to the transformation of justice sector institutions in understanding and implementing essential reforms?*
10. *How effective are the governance and management structures of the project and coordination mechanism between the UNDP and UNICEF in delivering in delivering the expected results?*

**Rationale:** Effectiveness examines how well the project is progressing towards planned results. It also considers the strategic leadership provided by JURE in guiding justice institutions toward transformative reforms, evaluating the project's success in achieving measurable results and addressing justice-related challenges.

68. **The assessment of output-level targets reveals mixed progress in achieving project goals<sup>38</sup>.** Some areas, such as alternative dispute resolution (ADR), have exceeded expectations, while others, particularly judicial efficiency and legal aid accessibility, have fallen short. The training of legal aid providers had a target of 500 trained professionals, but only 212 were trained, primarily due to resource constraints and logistical challenges. This shortfall impacts the overall effectiveness of legal aid services, particularly in rural and underserved communities. The national policy on justice for children, intended to be fully adopted and operational by 2024, is still in the draft stage, awaiting government approval. Although progress has been made in policy formulation, implementation delays have hindered the realization of expected benefits. The digitalization of justice processes, which aimed for full integration of digital court case management, has progressed only partially, with some courts adopting case tracking systems while others continue to rely on manual procedures. The lack of a comprehensive, standardized rollout has limited overall efficiency gains. The establishment of technical committees for legal reforms was set at a target of three committees, but only two have been formed. While this represents progress, their effectiveness remains unclear, as their mandates and institutional support require strengthening to ensure meaningful impact. The ADR resolution rate had a target of a 5% increase, yet it significantly exceeded expectations, reaching 73%, demonstrating strong institutional support and a growing preference for mediation and arbitration mechanisms over formal court proceedings. This success highlights improved access to justice and reduced court congestion. The case clearance rate in courts, targeted for a 10% increase, has remained stagnant at 53%, indicating that judicial inefficiencies persist. High case backlogs, slow legal procedures, and limited digitalization continue to hinder progress, requiring structural reforms to improve case processing times.
69. Evaluation finds that, through a combination of capacity building, legislative support, data-driven approaches, and stakeholder collaboration, JURE has advanced the justice sector's readiness to implement critical reforms. However, sustained investment and strategic planning remain necessary to ensure the longevity and scalability of these achievements. The JURE's contributions in 2024 are summarized hereunder:
70. In terms of **equal access to justice**, the project has provided legal aid and support to over **5,795 individuals** (61% women) across nine provinces, including marginalized groups such as the Vedda community. Through collaboration with Women in Need, **2,473 clients** women received legal aid and counselling services were provided to 2,091 women across the country<sup>39</sup>. Additionally, **278 women community leaders** were trained as master trainers on SGBV laws and rights, further empowering communities to advocate for justice. Notably, JURE's collaboration with the Legal Aid Commission facilitated the release of 13 children from adult prisons and the development of guidelines to institutionalize legal aid for children, addressing systemic barriers to justice for vulnerable groups, including vulnerable children under the Alternative Care policy. Additionally, the introduction of **commercial mediation mechanisms** under the Companies Act has streamlined dispute resolution processes, reducing the burden on courts.
71. The project has also advanced **accountability and transparency** by increasing public awareness and engagement with anti-corruption mechanisms. Through its **Training of Trainers (ToT) initiative**, over 532 trainers conducted

<sup>38</sup> Source: Updated JURE LF, December 2024.

<sup>39</sup> Source: JURE

729 sessions, directly engaging 35,200 public servants across the country. According to CIABOC, these trainers have become key advocates for anti-corruption practices, fostering widespread behavioural change within the public sector and promoting a culture of accountability. The same source provides that JURE-supported awareness sessions led to a **117% rise in complaints** to CIABOC in Q1 2024 compared to the previous year. District audit teams were established across **nine districts in four provinces**, facilitating accessibility audits and regular dialogues between government entities and persons with disabilities. The current ratings indicate a decline in progress toward anti-corruption goals. Notably, Sri Lanka's CPI score decreased from 34 in 2023 to 32 in 2024, with its ranking falling from 115th to 121st out of 180 countries. The final evaluation will be best suited to validate these numbers. If the data provided is accurate, as a result of these activities, Sri Lanka's rating should show improvement by 2026.

72. The establishment of the **Rapid Response and Child Rights Units at the Human Rights Commission (HRC)** has strengthened the institution's ability to respond promptly to human rights violations, enhancing public trust in the justice system.
73. Efforts to improve **efficiency in justice delivery** have also been impactful. Backlogs of cases in relation to child abuse were addressed, with **650 indictments served, 95 advice files processed, and 230 cases discharged** by the Attorney General's Department. Child-friendly judicial processes, such as establishing interviewing rooms in the Kandy High Court, were initiated to ensure more humane legal proceedings for children. Additionally, **digital tools**, including websites for the Colombo Commercial High Court and Sri Lanka Law College, have increased public access to legal information, enhancing transparency.
74. JURE has played a pivotal role in transforming justice sector institutions by fostering understanding and implementing critical reforms. The project significantly strengthened **institutional capacity** by training key stakeholders, including **54 prison officers, 103 judges, and 323 senior police officers**, on international standards, child protection, and human rights practices. These efforts have improved the justice sector's ability to address systemic challenges effectively.
75. The **Legal Aid Commission (LAC)** was also supported through capacity assessments and reforms to the Assigned Counsel system, ensuring better legal aid delivery, particularly for children.
76. Strategic **multi-stakeholder collaboration** was also strengthened. JURE's facilitation of forums with the MOJ and development partners improved resource alignment and fostered a unified approach to justice sector development. The project's contributions to the **Rapid Digital Strategy**, including dashboards and evidence submission portals, further underscore its role in modernizing the sector.
77. **Finding 9. Under the JURE project, technical support and coordination with other stakeholders facilitated a coordinated approach to addressing child-related cases, with templates and tools developed for routine data collection and decision-making improvements.**
  1. In terms of **legislative and policy reforms**, JURE facilitated the amendment of the **Children and Young Persons Ordinance (CYPO)**, raising the protection age to 18 years, and supported revisions to the **Victim and Witness Protection Act**, empowering magistrates to award exemplary compensation to victims. Collaborative efforts with the Department of Probation and the LAC expedited the release and reintegration of **10 children** from detention centers, demonstrating tangible outcomes in justice delivery. The project introduced **innovative practices**, including tools and templates to close routine data collection gaps, enabling data-driven decision-making. The establishment of the Child Rights Unit at HRC is a key contribution of JURE, demonstrating the government's commitment to specializing in children's rights. It equips the institution with a dedicated and continuous child rights monitoring function—an oversight mechanism that previously did not exist within the HR. This is expected to enhance the systematic collection of administrative data, ensuring proper disaggregation by age, gender, disability status, and other key variables. Such improvements are critical for comprehensive data analysis and evidence-based policy-making. The establishment of the **Children's Desk at the HRC** has improved responses to violations of children's rights, with 325 complaints, including cases of corporal punishment and torture, currently under investigation.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT

11. *Are there early signs that the project is achieving its intended impact, particularly in terms of improving access to justice for vulnerable populations?*
12. *How do the output-level achievements contribute to the overall outcomes and goals of the project?*

**Rationale:** This criterion assesses whether the project's outputs are translating into meaningful outcomes and long-term impacts, particularly in improving justice access and institutional accountability. Early indications of positive impact are critical for determining the project's trajectory.

78. **Finding 10: JURE's progress from January to May 2024 demonstrates its impactful role in fostering systemic reforms, modernizing justice institutions, and enhancing their capacity to implement critical changes. The results emphasize the need for sustained support to scale and consolidate these achievements.**

79. As reported by representatives of CIABOC for the period of 2023–2024, the JURE program has been instrumental in strengthening anti-corruption measures in Sri Lanka, driving systemic change, and enhancing public trust and institutional efficiency. They acknowledged the importance of the allocated budget, especially during the economic crisis, but noted that the implementation of the NAP 2020–2023 was hindered by political changes and COVID-19. While they successfully conducted training for CPOs, Integrity Officers, and government officials, they were unable to deliver the ART competition. The reduction in duration impacted the project, as no alternative funding was available at the time. However, the first and second pillars of the NAP were implemented, and with UNDP’s support, an international expert provided by JURE a corruption assessment was initiated. Public engagement has also seen a notable increase, with **complaints projected to exceed 4,000 in 2024**<sup>40</sup>. The introduction of the **Anti-Corruption Act 2023** has led to a **notable increase in reported cases of private sector bribery, signalling a significant shift from previous anti-corruption measures**. This legislative reform has expanded the scope of accountability, emphasizing the importance of tackling corruption within the private sector alongside public institutions.
80. This growth reflects the **public’s increasing trust in CIABOC’s anti-corruption mechanisms**. Enhanced complaint-handling processes and targeted awareness campaigns have improved the quality and consistency of public reports, empowering citizens to take a more active role in combating corruption.
81. **Operational and judicial efficiency** has markedly improved, as demonstrated by a **30.9% rise in raids, a 58.1% increase in arrests, and an improved conviction rate of 33.3% over the reporting period**<sup>41</sup>. These outcomes underscore the enhanced capacity of investigative and judicial institutions to **address corruption effectively**. Together, these advancements reflect JURE’s vital contribution to strengthening Sri Lanka’s anti-corruption framework, fostering transparency, and reinforcing public confidence in governance.
82. **Conviction rates increased from 20.83% in 2022 to 33.93% in 2024**, reflecting a marked **improvement in prosecutorial capabilities** attributed to the intensive training provided under the JURE program<sup>42</sup>.
83. The JURE program has driven transformative changes in Sri Lanka’s juvenile justice system, resulting in legislative advancements, systemic reforms, and tangible benefits for children and their families. These efforts have improved child protection and advanced restorative justice practices, with **measurable outcomes demonstrating progress**.
84. In November 2022, Sri Lanka enacted significant reforms to its juvenile justice system by amending the **Children and Young Persons Ordinance (CYPO)**. One of the most impactful reforms is the **increase in the age limit for imprisonment from 16 to 18 years, ensuring minors are protected from harmful environments in the prison system**<sup>43</sup>. Specifically, the increase in the age limit from 16 to 18 through CYPO legal reform represents a fundamental shift in how children in contact with the law are treated. This change ensures that children aged 16 to 18 now benefit from legal protections within the criminal justice system that were previously limited to those under 16. More importantly, the reform prevents individuals above 18 from being incarcerated in adult prisons, instead placing them in institutions under the Department of Probation and Childcare Services (Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs). This marks a significant step toward a more rehabilitative and child-centered approach to justice. This change aligns with international conventions, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and strengthens pathways for rehabilitation. The national stakeholders provided that **these contributions have impact on reduction in recidivism rates among children**, because separating minors from adults in detention facilities fosters safer and more rehabilitative environment<sup>44</sup>. However, no national data is available to corroborate this, as the CYPO amendment only came into effect in January 2024 and in general, a comprehensive and up-to-date data on juvenile recidivism rates in Sri Lanka is limited. More recent analyses emphasize the importance of rehabilitation-focused juvenile justice systems, noting that such approaches lead to significantly lower recidivism rates compared to punitive methods<sup>45</sup>.
85. A cornerstone of these reforms, pertaining to child victims of violence, children in conflict with the law and those in need of care and protection, is preventing institutionalization and facilitating family reunification. This was achieved by a combination of various strategic and technical measures: strengthening the capacity of the department of probation and child care services and the judiciary through various modalities - technical assistance and capacity strengthening of personnel, development of case management tools, providing effective resources for managing cases and supporting vulnerable families, supporting the linkages between national and provincial levels in implementing alternative care policy overall. The program has achieved the following impactful results:
- ❖ **Children prevented from institutionalization:** 1,371 (652 boys; 719 girls), ensuring vulnerable children avoid formal detention and receive community-based care.
  - ❖ **Children reunified with families from institutions:** 286 (131 boys; 155 girls), promoting reintegration into family units and fostering long-term stability.

<sup>40</sup> Source: CIABOC

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Source: CIABOC

<sup>43</sup> Raising the age from 16 to 18 for sending children to prison has led to improvements in child protection, aligning with international standards and reducing the exposure of minors to harmful environments.

<sup>44</sup> Source: JURE project’s stakeholders’ interview.

<sup>45</sup> Groundviews, *A Milestone for Child Rights* (Groundviews, 4 April 2024), paragraph 3 <https://groundviews.org/2024/04/04/a-milestone-for-child-rights/> accessed 3 February 2025.

- ❖ *Reunification or early release of children from certified schools: 21 boys, supporting their return to family environments.*
  - ❖ *Families receiving assistance: 512 families, empowering caregivers to better support and reintegrate children.*
86. The program's efforts have also contributed to a **shift in societal perceptions** toward children in conflict with the law. Advocacy and awareness campaigns have fostered greater acceptance of rehabilitative and restorative justice approaches, moving away from punitive measures and reducing stigma. For example, the project engaged with judges responsible for sentencing children, organizing visits to detention facilities to evaluate their living conditions, the atmosphere, and the extent to which the environment supports rehabilitation. Witnessing these realities firsthand led several judges to reconsider their approach, resulting in adjustments to their sentencing practices<sup>46</sup>.
87. Additionally, mediation and diversion-like measures are being implemented to prevent criminalization and promote reintegration outside the formal justice system. This includes raising the monetary threshold for mediation of minor offences **from 5,000 to 100,000 Sri Lankan Rupees (equivalent to 350 USD)**, which has significantly reduced the number of children entering the court system for petty crimes.

## SUSTAINABILITY

### EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

13. *To what extent have the capacities of individual and institutional stakeholders been strengthened to ensure that project outcomes are sustained?*
14. *What are the immediate and long-term risks that may undermine the sustainability of the project's results?*
15. *What strategies or partnerships need to be developed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the reforms introduced by the project?*

**Rationale:** Sustainability examines the potential for the project's results to be maintained over time, especially after its conclusion. It also assesses the level of national ownership and capacity building to ensure the justice system can sustain and build on the project's achievements.

88. **Finding 11. JURE's progress from January to May 2024 demonstrates its impactful role in fostering systemic reforms, modernizing justice institutions, and enhancing their capacity to implement critical changes.**
89. The JURE project has made progress in strengthening the capacities of both individual and institutional stakeholders, laying a foundation for the sustainability of its outcomes. Key achievements include the proposed expansion of Sri Lanka's legal aid system through a decentralized and community-driven model involving paralegal networks, legal aid desks, and law student-run clinics. The proposed strategy is a cost-effective and innovative approach to addressing the growing demand for access to justice amid economic constraints. This initiative leverages existing resources and partnerships with the Ministry of Justice, BASL, and academic institutions to create a decentralized, community-driven model. It offers potential for sustainability through reduced reliance on fully trained lawyers, capacity building for future legal professionals, and fostering community ownership. However, **its long-term viability depends on securing consistent funding, maintaining service quality through proper training and supervision, and ensuring strong institutional support and leadership.** While scalable, careful planning and robust monitoring systems are required to ensure it meet the growing and diverse needs of underserved populations.
90. The joint efforts of UNDP and UNICEF under the EU-funded Justice Sector Reform Programme since 2022 provide a strong example of sustainability in action. By supporting amendments to the **Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act, No. 10**, and the **Children and Young Persons Ordinance (CYPO) 1939**, the program has laid a durable foundation for protecting vulnerable groups within the justice system. The introduction of a child-friendly hearing room in Kandy High Court, equipped with advanced audio-visual facilities, further ensures the long-term impact of these reforms. This facility not only minimizes trauma for victims and witnesses but also modernizes evidence-gathering processes, creating an enduring mechanism for safeguarding human rights and fostering a more accessible justice system. These interventions highlight how technical advisory support, coupled with infrastructure innovation, can achieve sustainable improvements in justice delivery<sup>47</sup>.
91. Achieving complete digitalization of justice services necessitates a substantial financial investment. While recognizing the significant cost involved, it would be beneficial to explore cost-effective digital solutions or adopt phased digitalization approaches. Further, an equal emphasis on capacity development for national service providers to complement the services of sub-national institutions is required. This balanced focus would ensure a harmonized and integrated digitalization effort across all levels of government.

<sup>46</sup> Source: JURE project.

<sup>47</sup> Results Oriented Analysis Report. UNDP

92. **Finding 12. The cancellation of several key activities under the JURE project may pose risks to the sustainability of its outcomes.**
93. A number of key activities planned under the JURE project were discontinued following the recommendations of the EU-commissioned Results-Oriented Monitoring in April 2024 and in line with EU, MOJ directives and IMF recommendations. To this end, some of the project funds were reallocated, leading to the cessation of financing for staff procurement in governmental institutions and internes/volunteers. There are staff supported at the Human Rights Commission's Program Officer Support for Sub-Offices (Hatton & Ratnapura) to support regional human rights efforts. The positions were operational for less than a year before they were discontinued. **Although resource utilization did not align with the implementation modalities outlined in the Action**, the abrupt withdrawal of support resulted in significant operational challenges for the Human Rights Commission.
94. This reallocation was necessary to redirect funds toward addressing the needs of rights holders and aligning with the project's goals. However, the sudden cancellation of critical activities such as policy research, training programs, and capacity-building initiatives has created sustainability risks.<sup>48</sup> For example, activities such as the development of a higher diploma on human rights-based approaches to prison administration, the creation of a code of ethics for the Department of Prisons, and the establishment of a database of fundamental rights judgments were pivotal in building institutional capacities and embedding human rights practices within the justice sector.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, discontinuing research support for law and policy reforms, along with the cancellation of workshops targeting parliamentarians and media engagement on human rights issues, limits the program's ability to drive systemic change and advocate for policy improvements. Without these critical components, the project risks losing momentum in advancing human rights, gender equality, and access to justice reforms, leaving the justice ecosystem vulnerable to stagnation or regression. Reinstating or finding alternative pathways to implement these activities is essential to sustaining the transformative potential of JURE.
95. The discontinuation of these critical initiatives creates significant disruption for national partners unprepared for the abrupt phase-out. While some partners, such as the Human Rights Commission and the Government Analyst's Department, have managed to mitigate the resource cutoff through alternative measures, others are now challenged to secure the financial, human, and technical resources needed to finalise and sustain the work initiated under the JURE project. The examples of discontinued activities are included in the box hereunder:

*Figure 9 Sample of initiated and discontinued activities*

<b>Environmental Protection and Governance Initiatives</b>
<p><b>1. Workshops on Garbage Dumping and Pollution Control</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aimed to educate officials on enforcement and train youth for leadership in environmental protection.</li> <li>- Four workshops were completed, but the remaining five were not conducted.</li> <li>- Despite the discontinuation, efforts continued through student-led initiatives to promote environmental awareness.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Publication of Environmental Law and Governance: Multidisciplinary Perspectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A two-part book project on environmental law and governance from a multidisciplinary perspective.</li> <li>- Part One was completed but was not printed or launched.</li> <li>- Part Two was in progress but was halted before completion.</li> <li>- An abstract book related to the project was successfully launched in June.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Judges' Training Workshop</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A two-day residential program designed to train High Court judges on environmental protection.</li> <li>- The first-year workshop successfully trained 61 High Court judges.</li> <li>- The second-year training was planned but was canceled two months before implementation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Provincial Training for Public Officers and Youth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Five of the nine planned provincial training sessions for public officers and youth were completed.</li> <li>- Legal clinics were held alongside the training, providing free legal services on environmental issues to underserved communities in four provinces.</li> <li>- The remaining four training sessions were not conducted.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Regional Research Projects on Climate Change and Crimes Against Future Generations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conducted in collaboration with Nepal, India, and Bangladesh (climate change) and Pakistan, Maldives, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka (crimes against future generations).</li> <li>- Research was fully completed.</li> <li>- Planned publications remained uncertain, and further production, including two completed documentaries, did not progress.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Human Rights Commission Initiatives</b></p> <p><b>1. Funding for the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- JURE supported national efforts to prevent human rights violations.</li> </ul>

<sup>48</sup> See: Quarterly Progress Report (QPR). The document covers the period August 1, 2024, to September 30, 2024.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

- The mechanism continued to operate with national resources.
- Adjustments were made to compensate for the lack of external support.

96. This abrupt withdrawal has also impacted the professional atmosphere between the JURE team and national partners. The sudden discontinuation of activities without a structured exit strategy or sufficient communication has led to frustration, potentially undermining the trust and collaboration built throughout the project. Such situations highlight the importance of transparent planning, phased transitions, and capacity-building measures to ensure that national partners are adequately equipped to carry forward project outcomes sustainably and without disruptions.
97. **Finding 13. The LLM program in Environmental Law ensures JURE's sustainability by building long-term legal expertise and strengthening institutional capacity. However, reconnecting with cancelled activities would further reinforce the ecosystem of Access to Justice in this field, ensuring more robust and sustainable results.**
98. The establishment of the **LLM in International Environment and Climate Change Law**, with 24 students currently enrolled, is a pivotal achievement that ensures the sustainability of JURE's outcomes. This program addresses a critical gap in Sri Lanka, where only one qualified lawyer currently specializes in environmental law and practice. By training a new generation of legal professionals with expertise in this field, the initiative lays a strong foundation for advancing environmental justice and governance in the long term. Investing in younger generations of lawyers is a particularly sustainable approach. It creates a steady pipeline of expertise, ensuring that legal professionals equipped to handle complex environmental challenges are available well into the future. This expanded capacity not only strengthens institutions by enabling them to address environmental cases and draft policies effectively but also ensures that efforts to protect natural resources and combat climate change are resilient and enduring.
99. Moreover, younger lawyers bring fresh perspectives and are more likely to adopt innovative approaches, such as leveraging technology and engaging with communities to promote advocacy. This adaptability is essential for addressing emerging and evolving environmental issues. Importantly, this investment ensures continuity, reducing the risks of over-reliance on a limited pool of specialists and embedding environmental expertise more broadly across the legal system.
100. As Sri Lanka faces growing environmental challenges, having a cadre of trained lawyers directly supports national priorities while aligning with international commitments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals. The LLM program not only amplifies JURE's immediate impact but also ensures that its legacy is sustained through the long-term development of environmental law expertise in the country. The course's success is already evident, with the **first batch of students completing their studies in November 2024** and applications for the **second batch doubling**, demonstrating a growing recognition of the field's importance. This demand reflects Sri Lanka's increasing need for **qualified environmental law professionals** who can contribute to **legal reforms, policy development, and climate litigation** in response to the country's environmental vulnerabilities. By ensuring that legal education aligns with **Sri Lanka's emerging environmental priorities**, JURE has created a **sustainable and impactful mechanism** for addressing the nation's legal capacity gaps in climate and environmental governance. This initiative is not only **timely but essential** in equipping future generations of Sri Lankan legal professionals to navigate the complexities of global warming, ensuring that Sri Lanka is better positioned to meet both its **domestic environmental challenges and international climate commitments**.

## HUMAN RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY INCLUSION AND LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

### EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

16. *To what extent has the project integrated gender equality and human rights considerations into its design, implementation, and outcomes?*
17. *How gender-responsive are the project's indicators, and do they capture relevant data and changes?*
18. *How effectively has the Gender Action Plan been implemented, and what progress has been made toward achieving gender-related results?*
19. *What challenges or risks have emerged in implementing the project's gender equality and human rights strategies?*

**Rationale:** This criterion evaluates the degree to which the project mainstreams gender equality and a human rights-based approach throughout its interventions. The project's ability to effectively address the justice needs of women, children, and other vulnerable groups is a core element of this assessment.

101. UNDP Sri Lanka achieved the Gold Gender Equality Seal<sup>50</sup>, reflecting the Country Office's leadership and excellence in advancing gender equality, making it a role model within the organization and for external stakeholders. It is a recognition of their dedication to creating meaningful change in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5: Gender Equality).
- 102. Finding 14. Finding JURE's Gender Action Plan demonstrates a strong commitment to gender mainstreaming, and the project has moved from foundational assessments in 2023 to partial implementation in 2024, with notable advancements in infrastructure, legal reforms, and community awareness. However, further efforts are needed to accelerate progress and address systemic barriers comprehensively.**
103. The JURE project is supported by a robust Gender Action Plan (GAP), ensuring gender mainstreaming across all activities during its implementation period from January 2022 to May 2026. Aligned with the EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III), the JURE GAP incorporates specific indicators such as the percentage of referred cases of gender-based and sexual violence against women and children that are investigated and resolved, and the extent of state resource allocation to prevent and eliminate GBV. The plan outlines 20 key activities, including training 120 family counsellors on implementing the Domestic Violence Act and developing gender-sensitive facilities in courts. A total of €1 million has been allocated for data collection and capacity building, including €400,000 for training justice sector professionals and €100,000 for infrastructure upgrades. Baselines established under the GAP, such as the 18.9% of women who have experienced physical violence, guide targeted interventions aimed at reducing systemic disparities. Gender-equitable progress outputs include a projected 15% increase in SGBV cases registered at legal aid centers and the establishment of gender-responsive legal reforms, ensuring a measurable impact on justice system inclusivity<sup>51</sup>.
104. Progress against the implementation of the Gender Action Plan for the JURE Project demonstrates notable advancements across several key activities. Between 2023 and 2024, the JURE Project's Gender Action Plan demonstrated steady progress in implementing gender-sensitive justice reforms. Legal aid services expanded slightly, with the Legal Aid Commission (LAC) handling 12,982 cases in 2023 and sustaining similar levels in 2024. Workshops benefitted 2,893 women in 2023 and 1,995 in 2024, highlighting ongoing outreach to vulnerable groups. Capacity-building efforts transitioned from planning to implementation, with judicial officials (35 magistrates and 75 High Court judges) trained on child protection in 2023 and consultants hired in 2024 to deliver gender capacity-building programs.
105. Legal reforms advanced, including amendments to the Penal Code in 2023 addressing statutory rape and inheritance rights, while drafting guidelines for victim and witness protection laws progressed in 2024. Infrastructure assessments conducted in 2023 for child-friendly and gender-sensitive facilities transitioned to implementation in 2024, with digital testimony systems installed in the Kandy High Court.
106. Community engagement deepened, with 278 women leaders trained on SGBV laws in 2023 and further outreach through media campaigns and legal aid camps in 2024. Efforts to address data collection gaps led to updated gender-disaggregated data formats being implemented in 2024, supporting evidence-based programming.
107. Overall, the project has moved from foundational assessments in 2023 to partial implementation in 2024, with notable advancements in infrastructure, legal reforms, and community awareness, although further efforts are needed to accelerate progress and address systemic barriers comprehensively<sup>52</sup>. Some initiatives, like gender capacity building for judges and lawyers and the operationalization of victim and witness protection laws, remain in progress, emphasizing the need for sustained efforts to meet all objectives<sup>53</sup>.
- 108. Finding 15. The evaluation finds that the 2024 Work Plan places heavy emphasis on capacity building without sufficiently addressing structural issues or ensuring robust accountability mechanisms among justice sector actors. Thus, there are rooms for the improvement.**
109. For example, coordination among stakeholders is inadequately detailed in the document, and some areas, such as economic empowerment and victim-sensitive infrastructure, appear underfunded. Additionally, delayed implementation of certain activities risks slowing progress on critical gender equity objectives. Strengthening systemic reforms, improving coordination, and ensuring adequate funding and accountability are essential for achieving the plan's intended impact.

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<sup>50</sup> Achieving the Gold Gender Equality Seal means that a UNDP Country Office has:

1. Integrated Gender into Programming: It has systematically mainstreamed gender equality into all aspects of its programs, ensuring that initiatives contribute meaningfully to reducing gender disparities and empowering women and girls.
2. Promoted Gender Equality in Operations: The office has established gender-sensitive policies and practices, such as fair recruitment, equal pay, and support for work-life balance, ensuring a gender-equitable workplace.
3. Implemented Innovative Approaches: It has developed innovative and impactful strategies for addressing gender-based inequalities, contributing to national and global progress on gender equality.
4. Demonstrated Leadership and Advocacy: The office has played a leading role in advocating for gender equality at the national and regional levels, influencing policy and promoting systemic change.
5. Achieved Measurable Results: It has shown tangible results in reducing gender inequalities through its programs and operations, supported by robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

<sup>51</sup> See: Gender Action Plan. URE Project.

<sup>52</sup> JURE Gender Action Plan Update 2023

<sup>53</sup> JURE Gender Action Plan Update 2024

110. The evaluators identified a notable initiative within the JURE Project that, while tangential to its primary goal of improving access to justice for children, has had a significant impact on family and community welfare. The initiative, which economically empowered single mothers by providing kitchen equipment to enable them to earn a livelihood, demonstrated transformative effects at the individual level. Beneficiaries reported that the support allowed them to maintain their children at home, ensure school attendance, and avoid placing them in traditional children's homes. While this action aligns with the broader objectives of reducing unnecessary family separation, institutionalization of child victims and those at risk and enhancing their overall well-being, it is not adequately documented or emphasized in the Gender Action Plan. This oversight highlights a gap in capturing and showcasing the project's holistic impacts, which extend beyond direct justice system interventions. Including such initiatives in the plan would provide a more comprehensive account of the project's contributions to gender equity and child welfare. Moreover, such impacts should be continuously and systematically documented in the context of GAP implementation.
111. A Gender Capacity Assessment of selected legal aid providers including nine branches of the LAC representing all provinces and the above-mentioned nine CSOs was conducted, helping to define and enhance gender mainstreaming at an organizational level. The findings of these studies will be incorporated into the National Policy and Strategic Action Plan on Legal Aid which is being reviewed by the MOJ.
112. Deeply ingrained cultural norms, institutional biases, and structural barriers continue to hinder women's participation, advancement, and equitable treatment within the law enforcement sector. These challenges are further exacerbated by limited awareness of gender-sensitive practices and the absence of robust institutional mechanisms to address gender disparities effectively.
113. For instance, a capacity-building initiative aimed at enhancing the rehabilitative approach to incarceration and promoting human rights standards reached 54 prison officers, yet only 8 of the participants were women. This example highlights the underrepresentation of women in such initiatives and underscores the need for targeted strategies to ensure more inclusive participation and to address systemic gender imbalances within the sector.
- 114. Finding 16. The evaluation finds that while numerous results are reported, many potential achievements remain unmeasured/underreported due to the lack of gender-responsive, people-centred indicators.**
115. The Gender Action Plan (GAP) includes a broad set of indicators; however, their reporting is inconsistent and not aligned with measurable outcomes. For example, while data is available on the number of GBV survivors accessing legal aid, the current monitoring framework does not adequately track critical outcomes, such as the restoration of women's rights to property and inheritance. A review of the quarterly reports highlights that disaggregation of indicators remains simplified, primarily categorized by the number of men and women. For instance, JURE reports the following achievements:
- ❖ *4,674 clients (2,294 women and 2,380 men) directly benefited from free legal advice during district-based consultations and legal aid camps supported by the JURE project under the CSHR by the end of the reporting period.*
  - ❖ *308 law students (211 women and 97 men) gained experience in clinical legal education by participating in these efforts, supported by 95 lawyers and 11 justice sector officials who contributed on a pro bono basis.*
116. However, these data could be further disaggregated to include the types of cases for which beneficiaries received legal aid. Additionally, collecting data on the amount of compensation awarded and the specific rights restored—such as property or inheritance rights—would provide deeper insights into the tangible outcomes of JURE's efforts and enhance the understanding of its overall impact.
117. Similarly, JURE's efforts to enhance women's participation in the justice system could achieve greater gender equality impact if guided by a comprehensive framework with clearly defined baselines, targets, and progress indicators. Partners such as BASL, LAC, and Women in Need could play a pivotal role in collecting such data, enabling JURE to generate gender-responsive results. This would not only enhance reporting but also support evidence-based policymaking on critical outcomes, ensuring alignment with the GAP's objectives and maximizing the program's transformative potential.
- 118. Finding 17. There are significant opportunities to improve the collection of data on persons with disabilities, yet these opportunities are not being systematically leveraged. This underscores the persistent need to strengthen JURE's monitoring system, as well as the data collection and reporting mechanisms of national partners.**
119. UNDP's support to the Human Rights Commission (HRC) in ensuring equal access to employment for persons with disabilities, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, reflects notable progress. The HRC's work on revising Public Administration Circular No. 27/28 of 1988, which establishes a 3% employment quota for persons with disabilities, and drafting updated guidelines to align with the Convention, are important steps forward. Additionally, the HRC's submission of observations to the Ministry of Justice on the Draft Bill on Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities demonstrates a commitment to meaningful reform.
120. There are several ways to collect data on Persons with Disabilities (PWD) while respecting privacy and avoiding harm, especially given the stigma in Sri Lanka. Instead of direct identification, data can be gathered through legal aid records, complaints resolved by the Human Rights Commission, and services provided by NGOs or social

protection programs. To ensure sensitivity, anonymous reporting, voluntary disclosure, and engagement with Disabled Persons' Organizations (DPOs) can be used. The evaluation team can also collect qualitative insights through discussions with community advocates and service providers, ensuring a safe and respectful approach. A similar approach to disaggregating data by vulnerabilities could be effectively applied to the BASL and LAC. However, **the lack of a systematic framework for collecting and analysing data on these efforts limits the ability to evaluate their impact effectively**. Addressing these gaps through a **more robust monitoring and data reporting system** will be essential to ensuring sustainable progress and achieving the **intended outcomes** of these initiatives. There is a strong likelihood that the project, through UNICEF's collaboration with justice and child protection stakeholders to enhance administrative data collection systems, will introduce indicators disaggregated by disability status. This represents a significant step toward systematic data analysis, which could serve as a crucial tool for more inclusive policy development and programming in justice for children.

## EU ADDED VALUE

*20. What specific outcomes or results has the JURE Project achieved due to EU support that would not have been possible through other donors?*

**Rationale:** This criterion evaluates the unique value that EU support brings to the project. It examines the additional benefits derived from EU funding, including the influence of EU policies, strategies, and visibility on the project's design and implementation.

- 121. Finding 18. The EU's strategic investment in JURE highlights its commitment to transformative justice reforms in Sri Lanka, demonstrating how large-scale, comprehensive, and systemic interventions can create sustainable and inclusive improvements in the justice sector.**
122. The EU's holistic approach to justice sector reform, coupled with its focus on gender equality and human rights, enabled the JURE Project to achieve results that align with international best practices and address systemic barriers in child protection comprehensively. Such outcomes, requiring sustained investment and alignment with global frameworks, would have been difficult to achieve through other donors with less targeted mandates.
123. The JURE project exemplifies the distinctive value of EU-funded initiatives in driving systemic and sustainable justice sector reforms in Sri Lanka. As the largest EU-funded project in the country, JURE has leveraged the EU's strategic focus, financial commitment, and comprehensive approach to address critical challenges in the justice system.
124. One of JURE's most significant strengths is its **emphasis on institutional reform**, focusing on modernizing justice systems, enhancing institutional frameworks, and digitalizing legal processes. These systemic changes aim to embed sustainable improvements that go beyond immediate outputs. For instance, the installation of digital testimony systems and the development of gender-sensitive and child-sensitive court facilities demonstrate the project's commitment to lasting reforms that enhance accessibility and efficiency in justice delivery. CIABOC reports that the **Anti-Corruption Act 2023** has led to a surge in private sector bribery reports, a trend attributed to JURE's awareness campaigns, which spearheaded these efforts<sup>54</sup>.
125. JURE's **comprehensive and holistic approach** integrates multiple components, including legal aid services, judicial training, infrastructure upgrades, and policy reform. This approach ensured that initiatives, such as the paralegal network and child-friendly justice reforms, are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, driving sustainable outcomes that benefit vulnerable groups, including women, children, and persons with disabilities.
126. The project also benefits from the EU's **rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms**, which ensure accountability and evidence-based decision-making. Indicators in JURE are aligned with global frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), enabling the project to measure progress and impact effectively. This robust monitoring system supports JURE's ability to adapt and respond to emerging challenges while ensuring alignment with international best practices.
127. Finally, as Sri Lanka's largest EU-funded justice project, JURE has benefitted from **substantial financial resources and long-term funding commitments**. These resources have enabled the implementation of complex reforms in anti-corruption, establishment of the LLM program in Environmental Law and gender-sensitive legal aid services, which require sustained investment to ensure long-term success. The project's financial backing also facilitates extensive capacity-building initiatives, such as training judicial officers, family counsellors, and women leaders, ensuring systemic and lasting impacts.
- 128. Finding 19. The LLM program in Environmental Law ensures JURE's sustainability by building long-term legal expertise and strengthening institutional capacity. However, reconnecting with cancelled activities**

<sup>54</sup> Source: CIABOC results reported on 11.07.2024

would further reinforce the ecosystem of Access to Justice in this field, ensuring more robust and sustainable results.

129. The establishment of the **LLM in International Environment and Climate Change Law**, with 24 students currently enrolled, is a pivotal achievement that ensures the sustainability of JURE's outcomes. This program addresses a critical gap in Sri Lanka, where only one qualified lawyer currently specializes in environmental law and practice. By training a new generation of legal professionals with expertise in this field, the initiative lays a strong foundation for advancing environmental justice and governance in the long term.
130. Investing in younger generations of lawyers is a particularly sustainable approach. It creates a steady pipeline of expertise, ensuring that legal professionals equipped to handle complex environmental challenges are available well into the future. This expanded capacity not only strengthens institutions by enabling them to address environmental cases and draft policies effectively but also ensures that efforts to protect natural resources and combat climate change are resilient and enduring.
131. Moreover, younger lawyers bring fresh perspectives and are more likely to adopt innovative approaches, such as leveraging technology and engaging with communities to promote advocacy. This adaptability is essential for addressing emerging and evolving environmental issues. Importantly, this investment ensures continuity, reducing the risks of over-reliance on a limited pool of specialists and embedding environmental expertise more broadly across the legal system.
132. As Sri Lanka faces growing environmental challenges, having a cadre of trained lawyers directly supports national priorities while aligning with international commitments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals. The LLM program not only amplifies JURE's immediate impact but also ensures that its legacy is sustained through the long-term development of environmental law expertise in the country.
133. The EU's strategic investment in JURE highlights its commitment to transformative justice reforms in Sri Lanka, demonstrating how large-scale, comprehensive, and systemic interventions can create sustainable and inclusive improvements in the justice sector.
- 134. Finding 20. Limited Integration of EU Best Practices in JURE Implementation. This oversight has curtailed the project's ability to fully leverage the EU's expertise, added value, and visibility in fostering systemic change.**
135. For instance, academic institutions' participations in the project, such as those involved in the LLM in Environmental Law, could have benefited from partnerships with leading European universities. Collaborations with institutions such as the Global Campus for Human Rights<sup>55</sup>, which is active in the region, would have not only enhanced the academic rigour of these programs but also opened opportunities for European accreditation and sustained collaboration between the academic institutions. Such partnerships would lend international credibility to the academic initiatives under JURE while exposing Sri Lankan students and academics to global best practices in human rights and environmental law education.
136. Moreover, best practices from the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) could have been highly beneficial in addressing systemic challenges in the Sri Lankan justice system. CEPEJ's tools, developed to optimize court administration and improve judicial performance, are designed to work across diverse legal systems, making them highly adaptable to Sri Lanka's unique justice sector needs. For example:
- 137. Court Administration and Performance Measurement:** CEPEJ's methodologies, such as the **Court Dashboard** and **Time Management Guidelines**, provide evidence-based approaches to measure court performance, identify bottlenecks, and propose tailored solutions. These tools could have supported JURE in conducting a determinant analysis of Sri Lanka's court administration and devising a targeted strategy to reduce the backlog of cases.
- 138. Case flow Management and Digital Solutions:** CEPEJ's experiences with case flow management systems and digital tools, such as e-justice platforms, could have informed the digitalization efforts under JURE. Incorporating these practices would enhance the transparency and accessibility of justice services while ensuring efficient handling of cases, particularly in overburdened courts.
- 139. Access to Justice and User-Centred Services:** CEPEJ promotes user-centred reforms, such as simplifying court procedures, improving legal aid systems, and developing performance indicators that measure the quality of judicial services. These approaches align with JURE's objectives and could have provided concrete solutions for streamlining case management systems in legal aid and ensuring equitable access to justice for underserved communities.
140. In addition, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), anti-corruption mechanisms, and legal aid case management systems under JURE could have drawn upon established EU best practices or best practices and the lessons learned of Global RoL Programmes of the UNDP<sup>56</sup>. European experiences in managing legal aid systems, enhancing transparency, and promoting accountability could have provided innovative solutions. These mechanisms are transferable across legal systems, demonstrating that the EU's blend of continental civil law expertise can complement Sri Lanka's common law framework effectively. UNDP as colleagues should also take into consideration of its in-house studies and lessons in this regard that recommends: "UNDP should deepen its support

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.gchumanrights.org/category/preparedness/environment/>, last visited <<10.01.2025>>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.undp.org/kyrgyzstan/press-releases/new-legal-aid-office-inaugurated-kadamjay-will-expand-access-justice-specifically>, one lesson learned states following: ""

to e-justice to enhance the efficiency and quality of justice processes, while paying due attention to risks related to widening existing digital gaps and data protection.”The same report provides an important lesson to consider in the ongoing implementation: “UNDP digital efforts (including on e-justice) appear disjointed, and concerns were raised that, without a proper understanding of needs, country offices might be tempted to adopt a technological solution rather than a problem-driven approach.” Collaboration between key offices working on digitalization of justice services, including the UNDP Chief Digital office (CDO) and the UNDP Accelerator Labs (A-Labs), has been generally insufficient, and the Digital Advocates Network has not yet built the necessary culture of digital innovation on e-justice at the regional and country levels<sup>57</sup>.”

141. By not integrating these best practices, JURE missed an opportunity to maximize its impact and elevate the EU’s visibility as a leader in justice sector reforms. Future initiatives should prioritize partnerships with European institutions, accreditation opportunities, and the application of EU-tested methodologies. These efforts would not only enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of reforms but also strengthen the EU’s reputation as a key partner in advancing access to justice globally.

142. Although the JURE Gender Action Plan incorporates corresponding EU GAP III indicators, not all of them are consistently reflected in the project’s Logframe. For example, the following indicators are explicitly mentioned in the project’s GAP but are not fully traceable within the Logframe:

- ❖ *Number of legislative actions taken in the partner country to ensure survivors of gender-based violence can access justice.*
- ❖ *Percentage of referred cases of gender-based and sexual violence against women and children that are investigated and sentenced (FPI RF).*
- ❖ *Extent to which state entities and justice structures allocate resources for the prevention and elimination of all forms of gender-based violence (SI 2.2 amended).*
- ❖ *Percentage of women, including those facing intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination, who report experiencing physical or sexual violence and seek help by sector, i.e., (a) government services and civil society services; or (b) social welfare, legal aid, housing/shelter, police protection (SI 4.1 amended).*

143. To ensure alignment with EU GAP III and achieve meaningful gender equality outcomes, it is essential to integrate these indicators into the Logframe and establish robust data collection and reporting mechanisms. The evaluator created a draft table to indicate how project results could be coherently reported against the EU result framework to demonstrate the added-value of the EU support.

Figure 10. Summary of the JURE’s contributions to the EU Global Europe Result Framework (GERF)<sup>58</sup>.

GERF Indicator	JURE Contribution	Relevance to EU Impact
GERF 2.25: Number of people directly benefiting from legal aid interventions supported by the EU	4,674 individuals (2,294 women, 2,380 men) received free legal advice during district consultations and legal aid camps.	Demonstrates enhanced access to justice for underserved communities through EU-funded legal aid interventions.
GERF 2.28: Number of grassroots civil society organizations benefiting from (or reached by) EU support	9 CSOs collaborated with JURE on capacity building, advocacy campaigns, and addressing justice-related issues like GBV and child protection.	Highlights the EU’s role in strengthening grassroots capacities, fostering community ownership, and embedding systemic reforms.
GERF 2.30: Number of victims of human rights violations directly benefiting from assistance funded by the EU	Over 12,982 cases involving human rights violations handled by LAC (bail matters); 278 women leaders trained on SGBV laws to support victims.	Reflects the EU’s commitment to protecting human rights and equipping local actors to advocate for and assist victims effectively.
GERF 2.37: Number of people benefiting from EU-funded interventions to counter sexual and gender-based violence	4,888 women participated in SGBV workshops (2,893 in 2023, 1,995 in 2024); 120 family counsellors trained to address domestic violence.	Demonstrates the EU’s strategic focus on combating GBV through training, awareness, and infrastructure upgrades to ensure long-term systemic change.
GERF 2.39: Number of people directly benefiting from EU-supported interventions that aim to reduce social and economic inequality	Economic empowerment initiative supported single mothers with livelihood tools, enabling financial stability and maintaining children’s education.	Reflects the EU’s focus on reducing inequalities by supporting vulnerable populations with targeted, practical interventions that address root causes of social and economic disparities.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid at p. 41.

<sup>58</sup> Source: JURE

### III. CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation of the JURE Project highlights its strengths, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing justice sector reforms in Sri Lanka. This chapter presents the key conclusions drawn from the findings, linking them to evaluation criteria such as relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, human rights and gender equality, and EU-added value.

- 144.Relevance.** JURE remains a highly relevant initiative, addressing fundamental justice sector gaps and aligning with national and global priorities, including SDG 16.3 and the New European Consensus on Development (2017). The JURE project's initiatives directly contribute to the shared goals of UNDP and UNICEF by strengthening the rule of law, building institutional capacity, and creating equitable access to justice for marginalized populations. These efforts not only align with UNDP's focus on governance and SDG 16 but also resonate with UNICEF's commitment to protecting children and ensuring inclusive, child-friendly justice systems. Collectively, these interventions advance the broader UN mandate of sustainable development, human rights, and social equity.
145. The design of the JURE project was broadly relevant to the UNSDCF (2023-2027), particularly in its focus on inclusivity, accountability, and efficiency within the justice sector. Its comprehensive approach to legal empowerment, capacity-building, and institutional reform has ensured that it remains a significant contributor to the justice sector. However, despite these strengths, several gaps persist. The project's limited responsiveness to systemic inefficiencies, regional disparities, and the digital divide restricts its overall effectiveness (Finding 1).
146. While JURE evolved to accommodate emerging national priorities, such as digital transformation and commercial law improvements, its rapid expansion from six to eleven outputs led to operational complexities and potential dilution of overall impact. Additionally, modifications made in response to government requests sometimes lacked coherence, raising concerns regarding strategic direction and stakeholder engagement (Finding 2).
147. A critical shortfall in JURE's relevance lies in its exclusion of environmental justice initiatives from the 2024 Work Plan, despite prior investments and demonstrated impact in this area. The project successfully established South Asia's first master's program in Environmental and Climate Change Law, demonstrating its innovative contributions to environmental governance. However, the absence of follow-up measures weakens the sustainability of these achievements and disregards national and global commitments to environmental protection (Finding 3). Addressing these gaps by ensuring a structured, strategic approach to implementation and maintaining consistency in its thematic focus areas will be crucial for sustaining JURE's relevance.
148. The project's design, and implementation modalities could have been further strengthened by adopting a more systemic approach, bringing a wealth of expertise and advice, enhancing adaptability, ensuring sustainability, and addressing geographical disparities.
- 149.Coherence.** The evaluation highlights the JURE Programme's coherence within the broader UNDP SDG 16 portfolio while identifying key areas for improvement. The Project is part of the ecosystem of good governance and rule of law initiatives implemented in this portfolio. JURE's anti-corruption achievements were further supported by the JIKA-funded project. While the project demonstrated a degree of internal coherence in its implementation, there remains significant potential to strengthen this coherence by adopting UNDP's integrated approach, which emphasizes leveraging synergies across thematic areas to achieve sustainable development outcomes (Finding 3). Despite evidence of collaboration, such as the alignment between JURE and the Canada-funded SGBV Project in judicial training, case management, and victim support services, the programme could enhance its impact by systematically linking its initiatives on economic empowerment with UNDP's broader economic resilience programmes and integrating its environmental justice work within UNDP's sustainability efforts.
150. External coherence remains a challenge due to the fragmented development landscape, where multiple donors—including USAID, the EU, KOICA, JICA, and organisation like UNODC—support overlapping justice sector initiatives, such as virtual trials, forensic analysis capacity building, and anti-corruption measures (Finding 4). While this competitive environment offers opportunities for collaboration, it also presents risks of duplication if coordination mechanisms are not effectively utilized. JURE remains the largest EU-funded justice sector programme, but the absence of a structured donor coordination framework limits the programme's ability to align strategically with other initiatives. Addressing these coherence gaps through enhanced inter-agency collaboration, cross-sectoral linkages, and strengthened donor coordination would maximize impact and ensure a more sustainable and cohesive approach to justice sector reforms. Donor coordination is a core function of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) as the government institution responsible for overseeing and guiding justice sector reforms. JURE should play a supporting role by enhancing the MoJ's capacity to coordinate donor efforts more effectively.
151. **Efficiency.** JURE's efficiency in resource allocation and operational investments presents a mixed picture. The project demonstrates value for money in areas such as strategic, operational investments and targeted outcomes. However, inefficiencies in financial management, delays in fund disbursement, and underutilization of resources have negatively impacted its overall efficiency. Strengthening financial reporting, improving coordination among agencies, and better integrating resources will be important steps toward maximizing value for money (Finding 6).

152. The project demonstrated adaptability by responding to recommendations from the ROM mission through strategic adjustments and innovative solutions. While significant progress has been made in aligning activities with results-based approaches, gender mainstreaming, and stakeholder engagement, persistent challenges remain in addressing implementation delays and ensuring the sustainability of transformative models. The integration of results-based methodologies in planning and execution has improved, but further refinements are necessary to fully optimize the project's impact (Finding 6).
153. Despite these adaptive management efforts, inefficiencies in fund disbursement have constrained the timely completion of planned activities. Delays, largely caused by late approval of the 2024 Work Plan, left a significant portion of the budget unutilized, raising concerns about financial execution and project sustainability (Finding 5). Additionally, disparities in expenditure rates between project components highlight the need for more effective financial oversight and streamlined budget execution mechanisms.
154. Human resource constraints further hindered JURE's efficiency, particularly within local governance institutions and IT support units (Finding 6). The project faced significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified personnel due to economic constraints and government-imposed hiring freezes. While JURE attempted to mitigate these issues by temporarily supporting critical technical expertise, the lack of a long-term sustainability strategy led to the discontinuation of this approach following an EU-commissioned monitoring mission. The discontinuation of temporary staffing solutions underscores the need for a more sustainable capacity-building model that prioritizes institutional ownership and national-level integration.
155. Moving forward, enhancing financial oversight, ensuring timely fund disbursement, and implementing a sustainable staffing approach will be critical to optimizing resource efficiency. A more structured financial risk management strategy, along with proactive planning and contingency measures, will help mitigate implementation delays and ensure that allocated resources are utilized effectively to achieve the project's objectives.
156. **Effectiveness.** JURE has been effective in achieving its planned outputs and contributing to justice sector reforms, particularly in enhancing access to justice, strengthening accountability mechanisms, and institutionalizing legal protections for vulnerable groups. The project facilitated legal aid and representation for over 5,795 individuals, including marginalized communities, and played a critical role in securing the release of children from adult prisons (Finding 8). Its collaboration with legal aid commissions and CSOs has bolstered support structures for vulnerable populations, while training programs for justice actors have improved institutional responsiveness to legal challenges.
157. However, gaps remain in embedding these reforms within national institutions to ensure long-term sustainability. Improved coordination between UNDP and other justice sector actors, including UNICEF, is necessary to align implementation strategies, create synergies and complementarities, and optimize resource utilization (Finding 9). Additionally, JURE's digital transformation initiatives have encountered challenges, particularly in ensuring equitable access to digital justice solutions. Inadequate assessments of the digital divide and the absence of inclusive algorithms hindered the full accessibility of these solutions for persons with disabilities, migrant workers, and other vulnerable groups (Finding 10). Addressing these issues through a more inclusive, data-driven approach will be essential for maximizing JURE's long-term effectiveness.
158. The JURE Project successfully integrated risk mitigation into project planning and implementation, but gaps remain in monitoring and adaptive risk management. Institutional engagement and financial oversight mechanisms were effective, but sustainability concerns persist regarding judicial digitalization and CSO participation.
159. **Impact.** JURE's interventions have contributed to systemic reforms and strengthened institutional accountability, creating a foundation for long-term legal and institutional improvements. Legislative advancements, such as the Anti-Corruption Act 2023, have reinforced institutional transparency and governance (Finding 9).
160. The project's focus on rehabilitative justice led to raising the minimum age of imprisonment and expanding mediation and diversion-like measures for juvenile offenders involved in minor offences, resulting in a decline in the number of children detained in the formal justice system (Finding 10). These emerging impacts highlight JURE's tangible contributions to juvenile justice reform by addressing key legislative and procedural gaps through systemic changes, such as increasing the age limit for imprisonment and expanding mediation thresholds. By fostering a shift toward rehabilitative and restorative justice approaches, mediation and diversion-like measures for juvenile offenders, particularly those involved in minor offences, are helping to align legal processes with international best practices. Advocacy efforts have reinforced this shift by encouraging a cultural transition between the judges toward more restorative responses, reducing harm to children in conflict with the law, and improving their long-term prospects for reintegration into society.
161. While not all the impact-level goals of JURE may be reached by the end of the project, there is significant potential for its ongoing implementation to serve as a catalyst for broader justice sector reforms. This is contingent upon the development of a coherent exit strategy that ensures continuity and sustainability. Increasing efficiency and quality remains essential, with initiatives aimed at **modernizing legal processes, digitalizing justice institutions, and promoting alternative dispute resolution (ADR)** to reduce delays and improve service delivery. However, measuring the **direct impact of these reforms on overall justice system efficiency and quality** will be challenging, as systemic changes take time and are influenced by multiple external factors. JURE has already laid the foundation for such continuity by supporting critical infrastructure, including safe houses for the National Authority for the

- Protection of Victims of Crimes and Witnesses and the establishment of courtrooms for juvenile justice and virtual rooms for GBV victims and witnesses. If these structures are effectively integrated into national frameworks and supported by adequate operating budgets and human resources, they will serve as sustainable pillars for the justice sector. This will ensure long-term improvements in legal protections, access to justice for vulnerable populations, and the continued effectiveness of institutional reforms initiated by JURE.
162. Sustained investment in these areas, coupled with robust monitoring and evaluation, is critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability and scalability of these reforms. The impact of reforms in the justice system is a long-term process, and as a matter of practice, projects like JURE often phase out while ambitious, intended impacts are still unfolding. This highlights the importance of ensuring that national partners have a strong understanding of how to measure impact effectively. To achieve this, incorporating SMART impact-level indicators, as well as establishing baselines, data collection mechanisms, and measurable targets, is essential. Conducting country studies to track progress will further enhance the ability to measure and sustain justice sector reforms over time.
  163. **Sustainability.** The abrupt cancellation of several key activities under the JURE project following the recommendations of the Results-Oriented Monitoring in April 2024, and in line with EU, MOJ directives and IMF recommendations, on some occasions has created risks to the sustainability of its outcomes, undermining its transformative potential in advancing human rights, gender equality, and access to justice. These discontinued initiatives, which included capacity-building programs, critical research, and policy advocacy efforts, were integral to embedding systemic changes within the justice sector. The disruption has not only left some national partners unprepared to sustain these efforts but also strained the professional relationship between the JURE team and key stakeholders. Without a structured exit strategy or adequate communication, the sudden withdrawal has weakened institutional momentum and trust, potentially leaving the justice ecosystem vulnerable to stagnation or regression (Finding 11).
  164. To ensure sustainability, a phase-out strategy should be developed at least one year before the end of the project, with the final six months dedicated to its realization. This approach would allow for the transfer of responsibility for ongoing activities to national counterparts and the completion of key outputs, such as the preparation of training curricula and the development of information materials for later dissemination. The sustainability of JURE's outcomes is contingent on the institutionalization of its reforms, long-term funding commitments, and the capacity of national stakeholders to independently sustain key initiatives.
  165. The project has made notable progress in strengthening institutional capacity, particularly through the proposed expansion of Sri Lanka's legal aid system, leveraging decentralized models such as paralegal networks and law student-run clinics. This model presents a cost-effective and scalable approach to improving access to justice, but its long-term viability depends on sustained funding, robust training mechanisms, and strong institutional oversight. Similarly, JURE's contributions to legislative reforms, including amendments to the Children and Young Persons Ordinance and the Victim and Witness Protection Act, establish a durable legal framework for protecting vulnerable groups. However, their effective implementation will require ongoing technical and financial support.
  166. Despite these achievements, the discontinuation of key activities poses serious risks to the sustainability of JURE's achievements. The termination of initiatives such as the higher diploma on human rights-based prison administration, the development of a code of ethics for prison staff, and the establishment of a fundamental rights judgments database has disrupted institutional capacity-building efforts. Additionally, the cancellation of research support for policy reforms and training workshops for parliamentarians and the media weakens the project's ability to drive systemic change and maintain momentum in human rights and access to justice reforms. Without alternative pathways to sustain these initiatives, national partners face significant challenges in securing the necessary resources to preserve the progress made under JURE (Finding 11).
  167. Despite these setbacks, certain interventions, such as the LLM in Environmental Law, demonstrate sustainable impact by fostering long-term legal expertise in a critical and underdeveloped field. By training a new generation of environmental lawyers, the program not only addresses an urgent national need but also ensures that the legal system is equipped to handle emerging environmental justice challenges. This initiative exemplifies how strategic investments in human capital can create lasting institutional capacity. However, to maximize the sustainability of JURE's broader justice sector reforms, a structured exit strategy, continued engagement with national stakeholders, and efforts to restore or transition discontinued activities will be essential in preventing regression and ensuring the long-term resilience of justice sector improvements (Finding 10).
  168. **Sustainability.** The JURE project has made notable progress in strengthening institutional capacity, fostering legal reforms, and enhancing access to justice. The expansion of Sri Lanka's legal aid system, leveraging decentralized models such as paralegal networks and law student-run clinics, represents a cost-effective and scalable approach to justice sector reform. Additionally, the project's contributions to legislative reforms, including amendments to the Children and Young Persons Ordinance and the Victim and Witness Protection Act, establish a durable legal framework for protecting vulnerable groups.
  169. Furthermore, certain interventions, such as the LLM in Environmental Law, demonstrate sustainable impact by fostering long-term legal expertise in a critical and underdeveloped field, ensuring that the legal system is equipped to handle emerging environmental justice challenges (Findings 10 & 11).

170. Despite these achievements, the discontinuation of critical activities poses serious risks. The termination of initiatives such as the higher diploma on human rights-based prison administration, the development of a code of ethics for prison staff, and the establishment of a fundamental rights judgments database has disrupted institutional capacity-building.
171. Additionally, the cancellation of research support for policy reforms and training workshops for parliamentarians and the media weakens efforts to drive systemic change in human rights and access to justice. Without alternative pathways, national partners face challenges in securing the resources necessary to preserve JURE's progress (Finding 11).
172. However, to maximize the sustainability of JURE's reforms, a structured exit strategy and continued engagement with national stakeholders are essential. At present, the exit strategy remains unclear. A tailored approach is required, incorporating lessons learned from past initiatives that faced sustainability challenges. For example, it is necessary to analyse why EU-funded support for legal aid and pro bono services in Sri Lanka was not sustained, why previous legal aid provider mapping was not effectively utilized, and why the electronic case management system developed for the justice sector was never fully integrated into a comprehensive information management system connecting law enforcement, the judiciary, the bar, and penitentiary institutions.
173. The cancellation of several key activities under the JURE project has created risks to the sustainability of its outcomes, potentially undermining its transformative impact on human rights, gender equality, and access to justice. These discontinued initiatives—including capacity-building programs, critical research, and policy advocacy efforts—were integral to embedding systemic changes within the justice sector. The disruption has left some national partners unprepared to sustain these efforts and strained relationships between the JURE team and key stakeholders (Findings 10 & 11).
174. To ensure sustainability, a phase-out strategy should be developed at least one year before the project's conclusion, with the final six months dedicated to its implementation. This would facilitate the transfer of responsibilities to national counterparts and the completion of key outputs, such as training curricula, and information materials. The sustainability of JURE's outcomes depends on the institutionalization of its reforms, long-term funding commitments, and the capacity of national stakeholders to sustain key initiatives independently (Finding 10).
- 175. Human Rights, Gender Equality, Disability Inclusion and Leaving No One Behind.** The JURE Project has demonstrated a strong commitment to integrating gender equality, human rights, disability inclusion, and the principle of leaving no one behind in its interventions, but gaps remain in fully institutionalizing these approaches. The project's **Gender Action Plan (GAP)** provides a structured framework for advancing gender-sensitive justice reforms, with measurable progress in legal aid services, judicial capacity-building, and policy advocacy. Notable achievements include training judicial officers on child protection, amending legal frameworks to enhance gender equity, and improving infrastructure for gender-sensitive justice delivery. However, while progress has been made in **legal reforms, community engagement, and service expansion**, systemic barriers such as **institutional biases, cultural norms, and underrepresentation of women in law enforcement and justice sector leadership** continue to limit full gender integration (Finding 13).
176. Despite these advancements, the project's 2024 work plan **places heavy emphasis on capacity-building without sufficiently addressing structural barriers and accountability mechanisms** within justice institutions. Limited funding for economic empowerment programs and **delays in implementing victim-sensitive infrastructure risk slowing progress** toward gender-responsive justice outcomes (Finding 14). Additionally, **JURE's efforts to economically empower women, particularly single mothers, have had a transformative impact on preventing institutionalization of children**, yet these interventions are not fully documented within the GAP, reflecting a missed opportunity to highlight the project's broader contributions to gender equity (Finding 14).
177. One of the most critical gaps identified is the **lack of gender-responsive, people-centred indicators** in JURE's monitoring framework. While output-level data on legal aid provision and training participation are available, **current indicators do not sufficiently capture transformative outcomes**, such as the restoration of women's rights to property and inheritance. Improved disaggregation of data—particularly in tracking compensation awards, case types, and the long-term impact of legal aid interventions—would significantly enhance the project's ability to demonstrate meaningful progress in gender justice (Finding 15).
178. Disability inclusion remains another area requiring strengthened monitoring and reporting mechanisms. While JURE has contributed to advancing disability rights, including **supporting the Human Rights Commission's work on employment quotas and legal protections**, systematic data collection on persons with disabilities remains limited. **The lack of a structured framework for tracking the justice needs of persons with disabilities, particularly in access to legal aid and judicial proceedings, hinders the ability to evaluate impact and ensure full inclusion** (Finding 16).
179. While JURE has laid a strong foundation for gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion, **its impact could be significantly enhanced by strengthening data-driven decision-making, ensuring full implementation of gender-sensitive justice reforms, and addressing structural barriers to inclusion**. Institutionalizing these efforts through improved monitoring systems, sustained funding commitments, and strengthened accountability frameworks will be essential to achieving long-term transformative change.

180. EU added value. **Developing specialized legal expertise**, particularly through the establishment of the **LLM in Environmental Law**. This initiative directly addresses a major gap in Sri Lanka's legal system, ensuring that future legal professionals are equipped to handle environmental justice issues. The long-term impact of this program **goes beyond immediate justice sector reforms**, contributing to **broader governance and sustainable development goals** (Finding 18).
181. However, despite these achievements, the project has **not fully leveraged EU best practices and institutional expertise**. The **lack of integration of proven European judicial reform tools**, such as **CEPEJ methodologies on court efficiency and case flow management**, has limited the project's ability to optimize justice sector performance. The CEPEJ comprises representatives from all 46 member states of the Council of Europe. Among these, 27 are also member states of the European Union. Additionally, **stronger academic partnerships with leading European institutions** could have enhanced the credibility and sustainability of the **LLM program and other legal education initiatives** (Finding 19).
182. Another gap lies in the **partial alignment with EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III)**. While the project incorporates gender-responsive interventions, **key indicators related to GBV case resolution, state resource allocation for gender justice, and survivor access to justice are not fully integrated into the project's monitoring framework**. Strengthening these aspects would enhance the **EU's visibility as a leader in gender justice reforms in Sri Lanka** (Finding 19).
183. **EU support has been a driving force behind the most significant justice sector reforms in Sri Lanka**, enabling large-scale, institutional changes that **extend beyond immediate outputs and contribute to long-term transformation**. To **maximize its impact**, future initiatives should **prioritize the integration of EU best practices, enhance collaboration with European institutions, and ensure full alignment with EU gender and justice policy frameworks**. Leveraging **EU-added value** in Sri Lanka's child protection system would mean adopting proven, internationally recognized EU best practices that received recognition from the **International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (IPSCAN)**, as well as support from the **UN Special Representative on Violence Against Children (Barnahus model as multidisciplinary, child-friendly response to child victims and witnesses of violence)**<sup>59</sup>.
184. **Result Framework**. While the JURE Results Framework provides a solid foundation for tracking progress, there are areas that could be further refined to enhance its effectiveness in measuring real change. Clarifying assumptions, strengthening and calibrating the indicators, ensuring comprehensive baseline data, and refining target setting would help improve the framework's robustness. Utilizing the **Logframe** as a project monitoring tool is crucial for ensuring systematic tracking of progress. Moreover, advancing reporting beyond activity-based updates to focus on measurable progress toward impact will enhance accountability, facilitate informed decision-making, and strengthen the project's overall effectiveness. Addressing these aspects through clearer logic, more precise indicators, better data disaggregation, and enhanced monitoring mechanisms will further support evidence-based decision-making and the overall success of the evaluation.

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<sup>59</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding Observations on the Sixth Periodic Report of Hungary' (3 March 2020) CRC/C/HUN/CO/6, para 3.  
Council of Europe, 'Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: Child-Friendly, Multidisciplinary and Interagency Response Inspired by the Barnahus Model' (2018) <https://rm.coe.int/protection-of-children-against-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-child-fri/168079426a> accessed 3.02.2025

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation resulted in eight key recommendations aimed at strengthening the effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of the JURE programme. These recommendations address critical areas such as enhancing inter-agency coordination, improving the capacity of government institutions, ensuring sustainable funding, refining the targeting of vulnerable groups, reinforcing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and proactively addressing systemic challenges. Importantly, the recommendations also incorporate the insights and suggestions provided by national stakeholders and beneficiaries, ensuring that the proposed measures reflect the needs and priorities of those directly engaged in and affected by the programme. By integrating these perspectives, the evaluation provides a comprehensive roadmap for improving justice sector reforms and ensuring that the programme remains responsive, inclusive, and sustainable.

### RECOMMENDATION 1 – RELEVANCE: STRENGTHEN THE RESULTS FRAMEWORK (FINDING 8, 13)

*Responsible Entity: JURE Project Implementing Team*

*Priority Level: High*

*Timeframe: Immediate to Mid-term*

- 1. Improve logical alignment and change language:** Revise **outcome and output statements** to explicitly describe **the transformation expected** (e.g., "Enhanced capacity of legal aid providers to deliver timely justice" instead of "Number of legal aid providers trained"); Exclude irrelevant indicators and ensure that **outputs clearly lead to the stated outcomes** and include **intermediate change steps**.
- 2. Enhance the indicator framework:** Add **qualitative indicators** (e.g., beneficiary satisfaction surveys, and institutional compliance assessments) alongside quantitative ones; Define **baseline values** for all key indicators where they are currently missing; Ensure all indicators have **clear means of verification** beyond government reports, incorporating independent monitoring.
- 3. Consider building the capacity of national partners to measure these impact-level results:**
  - **Increased Age Limit for Imprisonment:** Number and percentage of children aged 16-17 diverted from detention facilities; Legislative or policy changes implemented to enforce the new age limit.
  - **Reduction in Recidivism Rates:** Percentage change in recidivism rates among children within the project period; Number of children successfully reintegrated into society after mediation and diversion-like measures or rehabilitation programs; Qualitative data on factors influencing reductions in reoffending (e.g., improved support systems, rehabilitation services).
  - **Shift in Societal Perceptions:** Percentage of surveyed stakeholders and community members expressing support for rehabilitative justice for children (pre- and post-project surveys); Changes in media representation of children in conflict with the law (frequency of articles with positive narratives).
  - **Mediation and diversion-like measures for Children:** Number and percentage of children diverted from formal court proceedings to alternative mechanisms.
  - **Expanded Mediation for Minor Offenses:** Number of cases involving children resolved through mediation for petty offences under the increased monetary threshold; Percentage change in children entering the court system for petty crimes.
- 4. Strengthen Gender-Responsive and vulnerability considerations Monitoring and Data Collection Make gender-disaggregated data collection mandatory** across all relevant indicators.
  - Introduce indicators to assess how justice reforms **impact women, children, and marginalized communities** (e.g., "Percentage of women accessing legal aid who report improved justice outcomes").
  - Ensure all justice sector data is disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and case type to track progress on human rights and gender equality commitments.
  - Refine JURE's gender indicators to measure not just service provision (e.g., legal aid numbers) but actual legal outcomes, such as restored property rights, case resolutions, and compensation received.
- 5. Develop a centralized data management system for the MoJ, Legal Aid Commission, Bar Association, and Women in Need to improve tracking and coordination of gender and disability-inclusive cases.**

**Clarify and rationalize targets:**

  - Set **realistic, evidence-based targets** for all indicators, ensuring that they align with **historical trends and available resources**.
  - Include **mid-term milestones** for institutional reforms to track incremental progress.

**Improve monitoring and data collection mechanisms:**

  - Develop a **data collection strategy** that ensures consistent reporting across different institutions.
  - Ensure that **perception survey methodologies are clearly defined**, including sampling methods, frequency, and intended use of findings.

- Utilize the **Logframe** as a project monitoring tool to ensure systematic tracking of progress. Moreover, advance reporting beyond activity-based updates to focus on measurable progress toward impact in order to enhance accountability, facilitate informed decision-making, and strengthen the project’s overall effectiveness.
- Enhance environmental risk tracking, particularly in court infrastructure, digital transformation, and resource consumption.
- Improving data collection on risk mitigation effectiveness, particularly in judicial efficiency, case backlog reduction, and the adoption of new justice policies.

## RECOMMENDATION 2 – STOCKTAKING AND PRIORITIZATION FOR THE NEXT WORK PLAN (FINDING 1, FINDING 2).

*Responsible Entity: JURE Project Management Office*

*Priority Level: Medium*

*Timeframe: Next 6 Months*

1. **Conduct a comprehensive stocktaking exercise to assess the feasibility of the newly introduced initiatives and focus on the most relevant areas.**
2. **Redirect resources to strengthen judicial efficiency, digital transformation, and institutional sustainability, rather than overextending into new areas that may not be fully implemented within the available timeframe.**
3. **Establish a fast-track approval process for fund disbursement, ensuring approvals are completed within a fixed timeframe:** Develop a **financial risk management plan** to prevent future tranche reductions due to unreported expenditures.
4. **Address Staffing Shortages and Technical Capacity Gaps**
  - **Recruit additional personnel** to prevent administrative and technical bottlenecks.
  - Adjust salary scales or explore **performance-based incentives** to attract and retain qualified experts.
5. **Optimize Value-for-Money and Resource Allocation**
  - Conduct a **cost-effectiveness review** to evaluate procurement efficiency and realign spending towards high-impact activities.
  - Pre-plan work plan approvals for 2025 in Q4 2024 to **avoid disbursement delays in the next cycle.**

## RECOMMENDATION 3 – MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF CANCELED ACTIVITIES ON NATIONAL PARTNERS (FINDING 3,11)

*Responsible Entity: JURE Project Management Office*

*Priority Level: Medium*

*Timeframe: Next 6 Months*

1. **Reinstate Critical Activities or Develop Alternative Solutions:**  
Efforts should be made to either reinstate the cancelled activities or identify alternative mechanisms to achieve similar objectives. This could include allocating additional resources, fostering partnerships, or prioritizing high-impact components such as the development of training programs and databases critical for institutional capacity-building.
  - Reassess the feasibility of reinstating critical cancelled activities, such as the higher diploma on human rights-based prison administration, the prison code of ethics, and the fundamental rights judgments database.
  - Identify alternative funding streams through national budget allocations or partnerships with other international donors to sustain essential initiatives.
  - Provide technical assistance to partners, such as the Human Rights Commission and Government Analyst’s Department, to help them absorb and continue key activities independently.
  - Restore and expand environmental justice initiatives, building on the successes of JURE’s prior interventions and integrating legal frameworks to address climate-related challenges.
  - Strengthen institutional and legal capacities to enforce environmental laws and provide legal redress for affected communities.

## RECOMMENDATION 4 - INTERNAL COHERENCE: ADOPT AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (FINDING 4)

*Responsible Entity: JURE Program Coordination Unit*

*Priority Level: High*

*Timeframe: Within 1 Year*

1. **Building on UNDP’s integrated approach, the JURE Programme should consider further strengthening internal coherence by systematically linking its interventions across thematic areas.**

This includes aligning its economic empowerment initiatives with UNDP's broader economic resilience programmes and embedding environmental justice efforts within UNDP's sustainability agenda. Establishing structured collaboration mechanisms within the SDG 16 portfolio would ensure that different projects contribute jointly to achieving CPD outcomes.

2. **Strengthen Coordination with Other Donor-Funded Initiatives**  
Given the crowded donor landscape, JURE should actively engage in structured donor coordination mechanisms to prevent duplication and maximize synergies with other internationally funded justice sector initiatives. Establishing regular dialogue platforms with USAID, the EU, KOICA, JICA, and UNODC will facilitate better alignment in areas such as forensic capacity building, virtual trials, and anti-corruption measures.
3. **Enhance Strategic Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)**  
To improve outreach and sustainability, JURE should strengthen partnerships with CSOs, ensuring that interventions are more inclusive and responsive to the needs of vulnerable populations. This will help bridge gaps in service delivery and enhance programme effectiveness by leveraging grassroots networks for legal aid, victim support, and justice sector reforms.
4. **Develop a Coherent Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**  
A structured M&E framework should be established to track synergies between JURE and other projects within the SDG 16 portfolio. This framework should assess how well interventions complement each other, ensuring that programme outputs collectively contribute to broader governance and justice reforms.
5. **Institutionalize Cross-Sectoral Linkages**  
JURE should formalize collaboration with UNDP's other programme areas, particularly in economic empowerment and environmental justice. For example, initiatives supporting small businesses for mothers could be integrated into UNDP's economic resilience programmes to provide sustained support beyond state assistance. Similarly, environmental justice interventions should be embedded in national sustainability policies through partnerships with environmental agencies and academic institutions.
6. **Enhance Knowledge Sharing and Best Practice Exchange**  
Facilitating regional and international knowledge-sharing platforms will help integrate global best practices into JURE's implementation. This could be done through study visits, joint training, and experience exchange forums with other countries implementing similar justice sector reforms.

#### RECOMMENDATION 5 – EXTERNAL COHERENCE: IMPROVE COORDINATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT (FINDING 4)

*Responsible Entity: Ministry of Justice and JURE Implementing Team and other relevant donors*

*Priority Level: High*

*Timeframe: Long-term (Throughout project duration and beyond)*

1. **Strengthen Donor Coordination for Long-Term Impact**
  - Facilitate a **justice sector donor coordination platform** to align UNDP, UNICEF, EU, USAID, KOICA, and JICA funding streams to support ongoing reforms.
  - Promote **co-financing models** where national institutions gradually take over funding responsibilities for ongoing justice sector reforms.
  - Engage private sector and legal associations to **mobilize domestic resources** for training programs and digital justice initiatives.

#### RECOMMENDATION 6- SUSTAINABILITY: DEVELOP A STRUCTURED EXIT AND TRANSITION PLAN (FINDING 13, 14, 15)

*Responsible Entity: Ministry of Justice and JURE Implementing Team*

*Priority Level: High*

*Timeframe: Long-term (Throughout project duration and beyond)*

1. **Work with MoJ, the Human Rights Commission, and other national institutions to create a phased transition strategy for handing over JURE-supported initiatives.**
  - Establish a **formal sustainability agreement** with government institutions to ensure the continuity of key justice reforms after the project ends.
  - Advocate for JURE-supported interventions to be incorporated into **national strategic plans and state budget cycles** to ensure sustained financing.
2. **Secure the Sustainability of Digital and Technological Innovations**
  - Provide technical support to national justice institutions to **develop long-term digital infrastructure plans** that integrate JURE-supported platforms.

- Conduct **training for IT and administrative staff** within courts and legal institutions to maintain digital tools beyond the project's duration.
  - Support **legislative or policy frameworks** that formalize the use of digital justice tools, ensuring their continued relevance and funding.
3. **Expand and Institutionalize Legal Education and Capacity-Building Initiatives**
    - Ensure the **LLM in Environmental Law** is fully embedded in Sri Lanka's legal education framework and linked to continuing legal education programs.
  4. **Support Institutional Ownership of Legal Aid Reforms**
    - Assist the **Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Legal Aid Commission (LAC)** in fully integrating decentralized legal aid services into national justice policies.
    - Provide technical expertise to **develop standardized training modules** for paralegals and law students, ensuring the long-term availability of trained legal aid providers.
  5. **Enhance the Sustainability of EU-Funded Justice Sector Reforms**
    - Develop a Justice Reform Sustainability Roadmap with clear strategies for the Ministry of Justice, judiciary, and legal aid institutions to continue reforms beyond EU funding cycles.
    - Support the institutionalization of specialized legal training programs (e.g., environmental law, gender-sensitive justice) within Sri Lankan law schools and professional training institutions to ensure long-term capacity development.

### RECOMMENDATION 7 - GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS (FINDING 13)

*Responsible Entity: JURE Project Implementing Team and Ministry of Justice*

*Priority Level: Medium to High*

*Timeframe: Immediate to Long-term*

1. **Ensure sustainable funding for gender-responsive legal aid by advocating for permanent state budget allocations for free legal aid services targeted at GBV survivors and marginalized groups.**
2. **Integrate economic empowerment initiatives with legal aid** to prevent financial dependency as a barrier to justice: support **income-generating programs** for women facing legal disputes related to family law, inheritance, or domestic violence.
3. **Institutionalize Disability-Inclusive Justice Services. Develop disability-inclusive legal procedures** by ensuring courts and police stations are equipped with **sign language interpreters, accessible digital tools, and trained personnel** to support persons with disabilities.
  - **Train justice sector actors on the rights of persons with disabilities** by institutionalizing **mandatory courses on disability law, accessibility, and inclusion** for police, judiciary, and legal aid providers.
  - **Formalize disability inclusion policies** within the Ministry of Justice, ensuring persons with disabilities have **equal access to legal representation, court proceedings, and justice system protections.**

### RECOMMENDATION 8 - EU-ADDED VALUE: ENHANCE THE EU'S ADDED VALUE IN FUTURE JUSTICE SECTOR INTERVENTIONS BY INTRODUCING BEST EU PRACTICES (FINDING 14)

*Responsible Entity: JURE Project Implementing Team and Ministry of Justice*

*Priority Level: Medium to High*

*Timeframe: Immediate to Long-term*

1. **Strengthen Integration of EU Best Practices in Justice Sector Reform** Consider facilitating **technical bi-literal exchanges with European institutions** such as the **European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)** to integrate EU best practices in **court efficiency, case flow management, and judicial performance assessment.**
  - Consider introducing **CEPEJ's digital justice tools** to support the ongoing modernization of Sri Lanka's legal system, ensuring improved transparency, case resolution efficiency, and user-centred legal services.
  - Establish **structured learning partnerships between Sri Lanka's Ministry of Justice and EU Member State justice institutions** to enhance knowledge-sharing and policy alignment.
2. **Expand EU-Sri Lanka Academic and Professional Linkages**
  - Strengthen partnerships between Sri Lankan law schools and **leading European universities** to enhance the credibility and international recognition of programs such as the **LLM in Environmental Law.**
  - Facilitate **EU-funded scholarships and academic exchanges** for Sri Lankan legal professionals and students to **study EU legal frameworks and best practices** in access to justice, human rights, and judicial governance.
  - Explore **dual accreditation opportunities** with European institutions to ensure Sri Lankan graduates benefit from international recognition and career pathways.
3. **Fully Align Project Indicators with EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III)**

- Consider integrating **missing EU GAP III indicators** into the JURE Project’s monitoring framework, including: **Percentage of GBV cases investigated and sentenced; Extent of state resource allocation for gender-based violence prevention and response; Access to justice for women facing multiple forms of discrimination** (including disability, ethnicity, and socio-economic barriers).

#### **5. Increase Visibility and Recognition of EU Support in Justice Reforms**

- Enhance **EU branding and visibility** in all JURE-supported legal infrastructure projects, digital platforms, and institutional reforms to reinforce the EU’s role as a **leader in justice sector transformation**.
- Promote **EU-led knowledge-sharing initiatives** showcasing the impact of JURE’s reforms, particularly in **anti-corruption, gender justice, and environmental law**, to strengthen EU influence in Sri Lanka’s governance and legal landscape.

## V. LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

### LESSONS LEARNED

The evaluation reveals that while the current implementation of strategies in Sri Lanka's justice system is generally adequate and incorporates, to some extent, lessons learned, it falls short in addressing systemic root causes, particularly regarding the persistent backlog of cases.

The evaluation found evidence of extensive support for access to justice in Sri Lanka's justice system, including efforts to reduce the backlog and advance digital transformation. However, it did not identify any evidence-based study explaining why decades of support from development partners in these areas have not led to sustainable success.

These backlogs, spanning investigations, judicial proceedings, sentencing, and sentence serving, reflect deep-seated inefficiencies that require more than temporary solutions. Although the project may succeed in reducing some backlogs within its lifetime, there is no clear long-term strategy to prevent such accumulation from recurring.

The absence of a preventive framework risks undoing progress after the project's conclusion. A sustainable solution demands a comprehensive, systemic reform approach that combines capacity building, process optimization, enhanced accountability mechanisms, and long-term financial and technical support to ensure the justice system's resilience and efficiency.

### GOOD PRACTICES

By addressing legislative gaps, fostering family-based care, and advancing restorative approaches, the JURE has strengthened protections for children while enhancing their prospects for reintegration. The Department of Probation and Childcare Service's interventions with the support of JURE have led to:

1. **Increased Age Limit for Imprisonment:** Raising the age from 16 to 18 for sending children to prison has led to significant improvements in child protection, aligning with international standards and reducing the exposure of minors to harmful environments.
2. **Reduction in Recidivism Rates:** Although national data does not yet indicate a decline in recidivism among children, which would demonstrate the effectiveness of separating minors from adults in detention facilities, national stakeholders believe there is—and will continue to be—a positive trend in preventing children from re-entering the system. Therefore, conducting baseline research and establishing reliable data is crucial. A structured approach to data collection has strong potential to support long-term reintegration efforts and reduce repeat offenses.
3. **Shift in Societal Perceptions:** Advocacy efforts with the justice sector have contributed to changing public officials' attitudes toward children in conflict with the law, fostering greater acceptance of rehabilitative and restorative justice approaches.
4. **Mediation and diversion-like measures for Children:** Initiatives to implement mediation and diversion-like measures are underway, aiming to rehabilitate children outside the formal justice system, preventing their criminalization and promoting reintegration.
5. **Expanded mediation for minor offenses:** increasing the monetary threshold for mediation from 5,000 to 100,000 sri lankan rupees (approx. 350 usd) since january 2024 has reduced the number of children entering the court system for petty crimes, promoting alternative resolution methods. Sustained investment, monitoring, and further scaling of these efforts are critical to maintaining the momentum and ensuring the long-term welfare of children in conflict with the la

## VI.ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SERVICES

<b>Tender Title</b>	Support the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) for Support to Justice Sector Project (JURE) of UNDP Sri Lanka
<b>Agency/Project Name</b>	Support to Justice Sector Project (JURE)
<b>Reports to</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Management Specialist
<b>Type of Contract</b>	UNDP contract for Services
<b>Languages required:</b>	English, Sinhala and Tamil
<b>Duration of Contract:</b>	4 months

#### A. BACKGROUND

Access to justice is recognized as a fundamental human right and essential for the protection of all other rights. In 2012, the UN General Assembly reaffirmed the linkages between the rule of law, democracy, development, and fair legal systems as mutually reinforcing foundations for a more peaceful and just world. The declaration highlighted the importance of equal access to justice for all, including vulnerable groups. However, Sri Lanka's justice system faces significant challenges.

While Sri Lanka has made progress on gender equality policies, there remains low trust and limited reporting of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) cases. SGBV trends, including domestic violence and violence against children, worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, with helpline calls increasing significantly. The justice system is inadequately resourced to address these issues, and the public remains largely unaware of their rights and redressal mechanisms.

Children's access to justice is also severely limited due to chronic underfinancing. Empowering survivors, strengthening essential services, and expanding safe spaces are critical to improving access to justice, especially for the most vulnerable.

Following the Covid pandemic, the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal have commenced digital hearings, including electronic filing of documents and virtual hearings with remote attendance. The government has also initiated a "Judicial Reforms Project" to introduce sweeping reforms across the justice sector. The pandemic also exacerbated challenges like case backlogs, overcrowded prisons, and reluctance of litigants to testify in person, leading to the pioneering of remote court hearings. Overall, the judicial sector in Sri Lanka is undergoing a significant digital transformation driven by the COVID-19 crisis and a broader reform agenda.

Despite Sri Lanka's progress in socioeconomic development, the country faces a complex political environment, debt burden, inefficient bureaucracy, and other challenges that threaten to reverse development gains. Strengthening the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, and access to justice for all will be critical for

Sri Lanka to achieve sustainable and equitable development. In the socio-political context of Sri Lanka, and the socio-economic impacts of a delayed justice system, the European Union commenced the JURE project, appointing UNDP and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) as the implementing agencies. The project was actioned by the European Union (EU) and approved by its Member States. Whilst UNDP is playing the lead technical and coordination role of JURE covering multiple aspects of the justice sector, UNICEF is focusing on creating a comprehensive child-friendly justice system ensuring children’s access to justice in Sri Lanka, being the leading agency on justice for children.

The JURE is a four years and 5 months project (01 January 2022 to 31 May 2026) including the inception period from January to August 2022 with a total budget of United States Dollars (USD) 19,422,120, with an EU contribution of USD 17,072,075, under a grant modality according to the Contribution Agreement ACA/2021/425-459. The objective of the inception period was to study and understand the realities in the justice sector considering the prevailing conditions in the country in 2022. During this period the project teams consulted various sector institutions, the judiciary, the lawyers, as well as members of the public. As such, the EU funded JURE project currently continues in close consultation with key justice sector institutions such as the Ministry of Justice, Judicial Service Commission, Legal Aid Commission and Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

The overall objective of the JURE project is to effect transformational reforms that contributes to an accessible and responsive justice system in Sri Lanka. As such, the broader vision of JURE project was designed to yield three main outcomes that will be reached through 11 outputs.

**Outcome 1:** Improved access to justice for all, in particular women, the poor and persons in vulnerable situations.

- Output 1.1: Efficient and accessible legal aid including legal representation for vulnerable communities (including women, IDPs, PwDs, children)
- Output 1.2: Equal Access to Justice strengthened including through language mainstreaming across the justice sector (through improved translation/interpretation capacities)
- Output 1.3: Improved legal awareness amongst the public (especially vulnerable communities)

**Outcome 2:** Improved accountability, transparency, and credibility of the justice system.

- Output 2.1: Strengthened data collection, analysis and dissemination capacities of government institutions, professionals, CSOs, and other accountability organizations on justice sector performance for the public.
- Output 2.2: Increased capacities of different justice sector actors to develop and implement codes of ethics and professional conduct.
- Output 2.3: Strengthened capacity of independent institutions to carry out their mandate.

**Outcome 3:** Improved efficiency and quality of justice.

- Output 3.1: Efficient and age-appropriate child justice services available for every child in contact with the law
- Output 3.2: Strengthened policy and legal reforms in line with international standards, norms and best practices.

- Output 3.3: Increased management, administrative and technical capacities and improved processes of the justice actors through expansion of digital solutions, skills developments and enhancement of infrastructure
- Output 3.4: Strengthened commercial and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to provide expeditious remedies and create an investor-friendly environment.
- Output 3.5: Established mechanisms/platforms for improving cooperation and coordination between justice actors.

In January 2024 EU conducted a Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) mission and the primary objective of the review was to provide an external opinion on project implementation, progress, and achievements, aiding the management efforts of EU services and implementing organizations. In terms of the project agreement and evaluation policies of both EU and UN, a Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) is scheduled to be carried out with the project completing halfway mark between the end of inception period and project end.

Therefore, on behalf of the donor EU, and the participating UN organizations, UNDP is seeking the services of a local consultancy firm comprised of a team of experts (refer to section 6 of the terms of reference) to provide services as part of an independent evaluation, specifically the collection of data, led by the UNDP International Main Evaluator for the MTE who is already on board to lead.

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION**

The main purpose of the mid-term evaluation (MTE) is to provide an independent assessment of the performance and the progress made by the project towards the achievement of the expected results, including on the quality of such progress, and identify areas to improve.

The selected firm will be led and guided by the UNDP International Main Evaluator for the MTE and shall support data collection with why, whether and how the project has contributed to the achievement (or not) of the expected results and seek to identify the factors driving or hindering progress.

The evaluation shall pay particular attention to the project's different levels of results measured against its expected objectives and to the reasons underpinning such results, or lack thereof. The evaluation shall also make suggestions for the direction of implementation of the project in the broader justice sector reforms context. In addition, to fulfilling the accountability requirements of EU and UN, the midterm evaluation will also review the Results Framework<sup>60</sup> of the project and provide recommendations for improving project monitoring and management.

The main users of the MTE are the EU, UNDP, UNICEF, MOJ and government stakeholders, implementing partners and other justice sector actors.

## **C. SCOPE OF SERVICES, EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES, TARGET COMPLETION**

### **2.0 EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **2.1 Scope**

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<sup>60</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/115X008tm-aF1w29pGJGaPW8NDD5zOEGK/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/115X008tm-aF1w29pGJGaPW8NDD5zOEGK/view?usp=drive_link)

The MTE will assess/appraise the performance of the JURE project as described in the purpose above in accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria<sup>61</sup>. Further, the MTE will assess the project implementation strategy including implementation modalities and extent to which the design, implementation and monitoring of the project incorporates a gender equality perspective and human rights-based approach vis-a-vis development priorities and any emerging country context. The MTE will cover the project duration from 1 January 2022 to 31 May 2024. The geographical focus of the MTE will be ten (10) selected districts<sup>62</sup> of Sri Lanka namely Colombo, Nuwara Eliya, Hambantota, Mullaitivu, Batticaloa, Kurunegala, Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Badulla, and Ratnapura. The MTE will be completed in close consultation with the reference group, and collaboration with the project stakeholders and beneficiaries. The project districts have been selected based on rural, urban mix, language, ethnic dynamics, etc.

## 2.2 Objectives

More specifically, the objectives of the MTE will be to assess the project using the **six standard DAC evaluation criteria**, namely: **relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability** and perspectives of **impact**. In addition, the evaluation will assess the intervention(s) through an **EU specific evaluation criterion**, which is the **EU added value**. In details:

- 2.2.1 Progress made towards project outcomes, outputs, results and targets outlined in the Description of Action and Results Framework.
- 2.2.2 *Relevance*: Evaluate the extent to which the project aligns with the identified needs, priorities, and country context.
- 2.2.3 *Coherence*: Examine the project's coherence in terms of its design, strategies, and interventions, particularly to the UNDP SDG 16 portfolio, with emphasis on gender mainstreaming, and rights-based approach.
- 2.2.4 *Examine Efficiency and Effectiveness*: Evaluate the efficiency of project implementation, including utilization of resources, value for money/ cost-effectiveness, and coordination among project partners and relevant justice sector institutions. Evaluate the effectiveness of project activities in achieving the intended outcomes and goal, and in addressing primary issues of concern, particularly in promoting equal access to justice, accountability and transparency, quality of justice and justice sector service delivery.
- 2.2.5 *Sustainability and Impact*: Evaluate the sustainability of project's results, assessing the prospects for continued impact and the capacity of justice sector institutions to maintain and build upon achievements. Identify key factors that may influence sustainability of project results and outcomes and provide recommendations to enhance the long-term impact of the project.
- 2.2.6 *Cross Cutting Areas, Gender Mainstreaming and Inclusivity*: Analyze how the project has mainstreamed gender equality and women's empowerment, and incorporation of children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups throughout its interventions. Assess the extent to which gender-responsive approaches have been integrated into project activities, especially the Gender Action Plan (GAP), and identify best practices and areas for improvement in promoting gender equality and inclusivity.

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

- 2.2.7 *Contribution to SDGs*: The contribution of project towards the results of the overall portfolio on SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). The evaluator will also look into the project's contribution to other SDGs, such as SDG 5 and 10.
- 2.2.8 *EU added value*: the extent to which the project brings additional benefits to what would have resulted from project's financed only by one (or more) of the EU Member States present in Sri Lanka<sup>63</sup>.
- 2.2.9 *Recommendations*: Provide practical recommendations stemming from findings in regard to the strategic direction of the project, project design, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, strategies and directions of the project for the remaining period of implementation period. While doing so the selected evaluator will emphasis on; a) The Results framework, b) Work Plan, and Gender Action Plan. C) Theory of change.

### 3.0 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The MTE will comply with the UNDP/UNEG evaluation guidelines. The evaluation questions should be formulated for 1) Relevance, 2) Coherence 3) Effectiveness, 4) Efficiency, 5) Progress towards Impact, 6) Sustainability and National Ownership, 7) Gender Equality and Human Rights Based Approach, and 8) EU Added Value. The sample sets of tentative questions under each criterion are given below that could be further refined and finalized during the inception phase by the service provider in consultation with UNDP and UNICEF. Once agreed through the approval of the Inception Report, the Evaluation Questions will become contractually binding.

1. Relevance:

- a. To what extent is the JURE Project in line with national development priorities, country programme of UNDP and UNICEF, the UNSDCF, and the SDGs?
- b. Has the project demonstrated responsiveness and adaptability to ensure its alignment and relevance with the evolving environment across legal, political, social and economic domains.
- c. How effectively has the project addressed the needs of the target group and beneficiaries in terms of enhancing access to justice for vulnerable people and strengthening the rule of law?
- d. To what extent is the project still relevant in relation to its original problem and context analysis, as well as its intervention logic/theory of change?

2. Coherence:

- a. To what extent do JURE link with similar interventions of UN Sri Lanka including the other interventions under SDG 16 Portfolio of UNDP, the government, and other donors?
- b. To what extent is the project aligned with interventions by other actors operating in the same context? This includes aspects such as complementarity, harmonization, and coordination with their interventions.

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<sup>63</sup> This criteria stems directly from the principle of subsidiarity defined in the Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union (<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/7/the-principle-of-subsidiarity>).

- c. To what extent is the project adding value to other similar interventions by the government and other donors, while also ensuring that efforts are not duplicated?
3. Effectiveness:
- a. How effective is the project strategy in achieving the planned outputs and outcomes, as well as in engaging with the targeted justice sector actors and beneficiaries?
  - b. How far does JURE provide strategic guidance to justice institutions, fostering their learning and understanding of the importance of implementing transformative policies?
  - c. How effective are the activities implemented by JURE in fostering transformative actions in the justice sector in Sri Lanka under each of the three outcomes?
  - d. How effective are the governance and management arrangements of the project, including the existing human resources and organogram?
4. Efficiency:
- a. Do the processes, including financial management, demonstrate efficiency in achieving results?
  - b. Do the costs justify the actual results achieved and were the resources effectively utilized?
  - c. How effective are the mechanisms for measuring change and impact of the project using the project's Results Framework, monitoring and reporting framework along with other monitoring mechanisms?
  - d. Are the project indicators gender-responsive, and do they capture relevant data and changes?
5. Progress towards impact:
- a. To what extent are the achievements at the output level in-line with the planned outcome level results of the project? Are there early indications of impact?
  - b. To what extent have vulnerable groups benefited by the work undertaken by the project?
6. Sustainability and National Ownership:
- a. To what extent have the capacities been strengthened at both individual and organizational level to ensure sustainability of project results in the stakeholder and beneficiaries' institutions?
  - b. What are the immediate and long-term risks that could hinder the project from sustaining its planned results?
  - c. What measures need to be considered, including establishing alternative strategic partnerships, to overcome the mentioned risks and achieve enhanced long-term sustainability?
7. Gender Equality (GE) and Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA):
- a. To what extent has the design, implementation, and results of the project incorporated gender equality perspectives and rights-based approaches?
  - b. To what extent has the Gender Action Plan (GAP) of the project been implemented and what results have been achieved so far?
  - c. What are the risks and/or challenges and/or limitations faced in incorporating the project's GE strategy and HRBA?

8. EU Added value:

- a. Is the JURE project able to achieve, as a result of EU support, results or outcomes that cannot, and could not, have been achieved in the same way through the support of other donors, in particular of EU Member States?

**4.0 Methodology:**

The selected firm's evaluation team led by the UNDP International Main Evaluator for the MTE, already on board, shall undertake an independent evaluation. The MTE shall be conducted in-line with the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Groups (UNEG) “**Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations**” and the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (Revised edition: June 2021 - [Detail of UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation \(unevaluation.org\)](https://www.unevaluation.org)). It should also be guided by the purpose, scope and objectives stipulated above. The mid-term evaluation should employ a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and instruments as well as a participatory approach whereby interviews with key stakeholders will provide and verify the key elements of the findings. Information and data will be triangulated to the extent possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source to be mentioned. Analysis leading to the evaluative judgments shall always be clearly spelled out. The selected firm led by the UNDP international evaluation expert, already on board, will clearly outline the limitation of the methodological framework in the MTE report .

The methodology used in this mid-term evaluation, including data collection and analysis methods shall be human rights and gender sensitive to the greatest extent possible, with evaluation data and findings disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age, etc. Detailed analysis on disaggregated data will be undertaken as part of the mid-term evaluation from which findings are consolidated to make recommendations and identify lessons learned to enhance gender responsive and rights-based approach of the project. The evaluation will use a range of methods and tools tailored to the national context and to the specific evaluation questions above. The findings and recommendations need to be evidence-based, supported by an open and participatory consultative process for adequate stakeholder engagement. The methodology could preferably include some or all of the following:

**4.1 Preparatory phase**

The service provider will be provided key documents of the project to prepare and submit an inception report for the MTE report in consultation with the UNDP, UNICEF and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG). With substantial inputs from the the UNDP International Main Evaluator, specifically on data collection and analysis, will prepare the inception report that includes a work plan and methodology for review and approval from UNDP, UNICEF and the ERG, to carry out the evaluation study according to the approved methodology.

**4.2 Desk Review**

The service provider will be expected to review key programme documents (e.g. project documents, progress reports, activity completion reports, monitoring visits reports, Baseline and other assessments, communication materials, disbursement report/financial report etc.) to respond to some of the evaluation questions.

**4.3 Data Collection:** With technical inputs from the International Main Evaluator for the MTE, the service provider will Gather data through qualitative methods, including:

- 4.3.1 Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD):** KIIs and FGDs with a range of the stakeholders and beneficiaries, i.e., justice sector actors, beneficiaries, government officials, development partners, UN Agencies, and community-based organizations. (Note: Part of the technical and financial proposal the bidder will submit a representative gender and disability sample for the KIIs and FGDs along with cost.) 15 focus groups, 35-40 interviews and 3-5 case studies from Justice Sector Actors and partners; Six to ten (6-10) Case Studies mostly identified through FGD participants and Justice Sector Actors interviewees covering all 10 districts.
- 4.3.2 Case studies:** Select representative case studies to provide in-depth analysis of specific project interventions, their impact, and factors contributing to success or challenges faced.
- 4.3.3 Field Visits:** The consultants are expected to visit the field for focus group discussions and key informant interviews with some beneficiaries, project staff and stakeholders to understand their perception of the project and validate some of the project interventions and results. The field visits plan will be developed in consultation with the JURE project teams from UNDP and UNICEF.
- 4.4 Data Analysis:** Analysis should examine Project progress, achievements, strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, in line with the UNEG/DAC evaluation criteria, as well as Evaluation research questions. The selected evaluation firm in collaboration with the UNDP International Main Evaluator for the MTE should describe expected data analysis, instruments and methods to be used for the Mid-term evaluation in the inception report. To ensure accuracy and credibility of the findings, data should be triangulated with the use of multiple primary and secondary data collection methods and sources. The findings and recommendations need to be evidence-based, supported by an open and participatory consultative process for adequate stakeholder engagement.
- 4.5 Cross-cutting Analysis:** Ensure cross-cutting analysis of gender equality, human rights, children and disability inclusion. Analyse the extent to which the Project has mainstreamed gender equality, adopted human rights principles, and related issues within its activities and outcomes.

## 5 EXPECTED OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

The team of national consultants is expected to submit a proposal with relevant annexes for all the requirements listed in this section.

Key deliverables	Details of expected deliverables	Payment Percentage of total contract	Indicative Timeframe for the submission of deliverable	Review, approvals and timeframe
Evaluation Inception Report (EIR)	The inception report should be carried out following and based on preliminary discussions with UNDP and UNICEF after the desk review and should be produced before the evaluation starts (before any formal evaluation interviews, survey distribution or field visits) in consultation and collaboration with International Main Evaluator for the MTE consultant. The EIR should also include	30%	25th September 2024	Upon submission of the inception report, the approval will be provided by Evaluation Manager after the detail reviews and endorsements by UNDP+UNICEF technical Teams and the ERG.

Key deliverables	Details of expected deliverables	Payment Percentage of total contract	Indicative Timeframe for the submission of deliverable	Review, approvals and timeframe
	<p>A workplan for the evaluation clearly reflecting all processes and steps involved in the evaluation process.</p> <p>A complete set of data collection tools such as KIIs and FGDs, and field/logistic plans.</p> <p>Liaise with and support the UNDP International Main Evaluator for the MTE, in presenting evaluation design, methodology and research tools to UNDP and UNICEF for review and approval and submit to UNDP International Main Evaluator for the MTE, the finalized draft Inception Report, with feedback provided by UNDP, UNICEF, ERG and if necessary, other project stakeholders.</p>			
Evaluation debriefing	<p>Immediately following an evaluation, UNDP and UNICEF require for a preliminary debriefing and findings.</p> <p>Completion of data collection and analysis efforts (including field visits, where required) as per the finalised methodology and submission of the draft Preliminary Findings Report to International Main Evaluator for the MTE for further review.</p> <p>Liaise with the International Main Evaluator for the MTE on conducting a presentation of preliminary findings and submitting the draft report including strategic recommendations.</p> <p>Provide soft support to the International Main Evaluator for the MTE in drafting a Short Brief summarizing evaluation finding, lessons learned and recommendations.</p>	Linked to deliverable 03 completion	1st November 2024	A consultative discussion and simultaneous comments and reviews by the UNDP, UNICEF and ERG to be incorporated.
Draft Evaluation Report (within agreed length) with Evaluation Brief and audit trail	<p>With technical inputs from the International Main Evaluator for the MTE:</p> <p>The draft report incorporating the comments and feedbacks received from the evaluation debriefing with the evaluation brief in an agreed length should be submitted.</p> <p>UNDP to compile and amalgamate comments and feedbacks from ERG, UNDP and UNICEF technical teams and other stakeholders on the draft report in an audit trail and submit to the evaluator/s.</p> <p>The national consultants must maintain a clear audit trail with responses to evidence the incorporation of comments to the draft Evaluation Report.</p>	40%	12th November 2024	<p>The UNDP and UNICEF Technical team and ERG should review the draft evaluation report and provide an amalgamated set of comments using the audit trail to the evaluator/s within an agreed period, addressing the content required (as agreed in the TOR and inception report) and quality criteria as outlined in these guidelines.</p> <p>Timeframe for the approvals: 15 working days from the submission of the comments incorporated draft report</p>

Key deliverables	Details of expected deliverables	Payment Percentage of total contract	Indicative Timeframe for the submission of deliverable	Review, approvals and timeframe
Draft Final Evaluation Report	In collaboration with International Main Evaluator for the MTE: Compile and submit the final draft of the evaluation report with evaluation brief to UNDP, incorporating feedback received from UNDP and UNICEF to the International Main Evaluator for the MTE using the audit trail. Provide a power point presentation of key findings and recommendation to: ERG, UNDP and UNICEF Co-chairs of the project steering committee	30%	20th December 2024	The draft final report will be quality checked along with the UNDP Evaluation Quality guidelines and approved by the Evaluation manager upon the endorsement of ERG. Timeframe for the approval: 5 days of the completion of the presentation to the ERG and project steering committee

## D. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT

### 5.4 International Main Evaluator for the MTE and service provider:

As the lead recruiting agency, UNDP shall enter into two separate contractual agreements with an International Main Evaluator for the MTE and selected service provider of this tender. The International Main Evaluator for the MTE shall be contractually responsible for completing and submitting the deliverables outlined below. His/her responsibilities include the provision of technical expertise and overall direction in support of the data collection and field efforts led by the service provider and the management of all communication and coordination with the UNDP Evaluation Manager. The service provider will also be responsible for the data collection as per the approved methodology in the inception report.

### 5.5 Focal Point and Reference Group:

The MTE will be facilitated by UNDP. The focal point for leading this evaluation from UNDP will be the **Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Management Specialist** of Inclusive Governance Team as designated representative of the Resident/Deputy Resident Representative. A stakeholder group –Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) – will be established and engaged systematically at key milestones of the evaluation process to facilitate the conduct of a transparent and participatory evaluation. ERG comprises EU as Donor Agency, UNDP, UNICEF and other relevant experts.

The inception and final reports will be finally approved by the Evaluation manager after consultation with, and upon the endorsement of the ERG.

The main functions of the Reference Group are in details:

- to propose indicative Evaluation Questions
- to validate the final Evaluation Questions
- to facilitate contacts between the evaluation team and the JURE stakeholders
- to ensure that the evaluation team has access to, and has consulted with, all relevant information sources and documents related to the intervention.

- to discuss and comment on notes and reports delivered by the evaluation team. Comments by individual group members are compiled into a single document by the evaluation manager and subsequently transmitted to the evaluation team.
- to provide feedback on the findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations from the evaluation
- to support the development of a proper follow-up action plan after completion of the evaluation.

#### 5.6 Responsibilities of the service provider:

- Achievement of outputs/deliverables as per the scope of work.
- Timely reporting on the initiative, per the formats provided by JURE team
- The service provider will be expected to make their own arrangements for accommodation and transportation, which includes return travel from Colombo to selected field locations.
- The service provider should provide equipment, documentation and other inputs, as required for carrying out the deliverables.
- Should there be any deviation from the agreed upon plan of action (example: scope or timeline), the service Provider shall inform forthwith in writing and such deviation will be affected only in consultation with UNDP.
- The service provider shall alert UNDP to all risks and challenges associated with the execution of the assignment.

### E. DURATION OF THE WORK

The envisaged time frame of the campaign is 4 months starting from the start date of the contract. Considering the crisis situation in the country and major elections being expected in the year, the contract duration and requirements may change based on the measures imposed by the government, which may further impact data collection by restricting access to provincial/ district beneficiaries and stakeholders. The service provider must demonstrate flexibility given such shifting conditions.

### F. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE SUCCESSFUL SERVICE PROVIDER AT VARIOUS LEVELS

#### 5.7 Expected profile of the consultancy firm:

Technical skills:

- In-depth technical knowledge and experience to develop methodologies/tools, collect, collate, and analyze data, and produce reports conforming to highest ethical/quality standards.
- Proven ability to undertake and deliver high-quality evaluations, research studies, technical reporting and content production. (Submission of at least two (02) previous reports as evidence of required capacity with the technical proposal)
- Excellent skills in presentation and communication, and in liaising with all relevant stakeholders

The consultancy firm must have,

- At least 5years of experience in conducting evaluations/assessments with the participation of wider sections of stakeholders and the public.
- A legal sector expert and a data/research expert in the team.
- A Team Coordinator with substantial experience in evaluation and reviews, excellent writing and communication skills in English.

- At least one member of the core team should be proficient in either Sinhala or Tamil or preferably both.
- Registration as a valid business entity in Sri Lanka.

In addition, the following requirements are desirable:

- Experience and understanding on justice sector reforms in Sri Lanka will be an added advantage.
- Experience and understanding on gender, human rights and other cross cutting areas and integrating them in research/evaluations.
- Experience working with UN agencies/EU/ International Main Evaluator for the MTE.

### 5.8 Required corporate competencies of the Consultancy Firm:

- Comprehensive knowledge on the UN’s norms and standards.
- Demonstrates integrity by modeling the UN’s values and ethical standards.
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.
- Fulfills all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment.
- Demonstrate competency in local and official languages of Sri Lanka.

## 6 Team Composition

Proposals should include a brief description of the capability of the bidder to carry out the proposed assignment, describing any prior experience in undertaking project/ programme evaluations in Sri Lanka.

Proposals should identify personnel overseeing the proposed consultancy. The profiles of the team shared at the time of submission of proposal / bid shall be part of the planned survey throughout. Any changes in the team composition shall be communicated and approved by UNDP. To this end, the bidder must explain which proposed personnel would be facilitating / undertaking which activity/ deliverable and provide a paragraph with a detailed biography of each key member of the team.

The team shall compose of at least one Team Coordinator who may be the expert on the issue/ subject matter and also be the technical liaison person to the International Main Evaluator for the MTE, already onboard, who will lead/guide the design and implementation of the evaluation methodology, data and reporting analysis, one trained and experienced Evaluation Expert to design and manage qualitative, KIIs and FGD’s and data and reporting analysis, one Justice Sector Expert to assess Project's impact on the justice sector, one Gender and Social Inclusion Expert to assess Project's effectiveness in promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, and inclusion of marginalized groups. Team Coordinator for the national consultants will have the overall responsibility to oversee the implementation of each deliverable/ output and aligned tasks mentioned above for the team of national consultants.

A description of their responsibilities, qualifications, skills and professional experience is listed below:

Position	Academic Qualification	Experience
<b>Team Coordinator</b>	Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in subjects related to social science,	At least 5 years professional experience in Sri Lanka leading project/programme evaluations in the same or similar scale. Expertise in rule of law, access to justice, human rights and gender equality issues. Experience in managing and training 7–8-member survey team

	statistics, peace, security, law or related field.	Exposure in the Justice Sector as well as knowledge of the political and economic situation in Sri Lanka, would be additional assets. Excellent written and spoken English language skills.
<b>Evaluation expert</b>	A postgraduate degree (Master's or higher) in a relevant field, such as social sciences, statistics, economics, or research methods.	At least 5 years proven experience in conducting evaluations, preferably related to justice sector, or similar scale development projects/ programmes in Sri Lanka Familiarity with evaluation frameworks, theories of change, and evaluation methodologies is essential. Strong knowledge and experience in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Familiarity with various research techniques, such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and case studies. Excellent analytical and critical thinking skills to identify patterns, trends, and insights from complex data sets. Ability to draw meaningful conclusions and link findings to the project's objectives and outcomes. Excellent command of written and spoken English and knowledge of local languages.
<b>Justice Sector Expert</b>	Master's degree in Law and a strong background in rule of law, access to justice, criminal justice, or a related field	In-depth knowledge of national and international legal frameworks, including human rights, constitutional law, and justice systems. Extensive experience working on justice sector or rule of law projects/ programmes, preferably in the context of justice sector reform or access to justice initiatives. Familiarity with legal empowerment, and governance issues will be an added advantage. Demonstrated expertise in designing and implementing justice sector project/programmes, including developing strategies, action plans, and monitoring frameworks Ability to assess the effectiveness and impact of support to justice sector interventions. Strong interpersonal and communication skills to engage with diverse stakeholders, including government officials, judiciary, other justice sector actor, civil society organizations, and community members. Ability to facilitate dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders. Excellent analytical skills to assess legal and policy documents, identify gaps and challenges, and propose evidence-based recommendations. Ability to conduct legal research, analyze complex issues, and synthesize information. Excellent command of written and spoken English and knowledge of local languages.
<b>Gender and Social Inclusion Expert</b>	Advanced university degree (Master's or higher) in gender studies, social sciences, or a related field	In-depth knowledge of gender equality, women's empowerment, and social inclusion. Experience in integrating gender and social inclusion considerations into development programs. Familiarity with international standards and best practices on gender mainstreaming. Proficiency in gender analysis and assessment methodologies. Understanding of intersectionality and addressing the needs of diverse groups. Experience in conducting gender and social inclusion assessments. Excellent command of written and spoken English and knowledge of local languages.

## 7 Evaluation ethics.

The evaluation service provider should have both personal and professional integrity and abide by the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines](#) for evaluation and the [UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system, in addition to UNICEF Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, and Data Collection and Analysis](#), to ensure that the rights of individuals involved in the evaluation are respected. The service provider must act with cultural sensitivity and pay attention to protocols, codes and recommendations that may be relevant to their interactions with women. As part of the Inception Report, the service provider will develop a specific protocol for the conduct of the evaluation and data collection in line with respect to the do no harm principle, diversity, and gender equality. All data collected through the evaluation will be the property of UNDP and must be provided to the organization, if requested, in a Word format. The evaluator must explicitly declare their independence from any organizations that have been involved with UNDP in implementing any aspect of the SDG 16 portfolio and its projects, especially the Support to Justice Sector Project (JURE).

### G. SCOPE OF PROPOSAL PRICE AND SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The contract price is a fixed output-based according to the deliverables specified below. Cost Breakdown will be based on deliverables. The percentages below may be subjected to revision prior to signing the final contractual agreement with the selected service provider.

Tranche	Deliverable	% of the contract
1.	Completion of deliverable 1	30%
2.	Completion of deliverable 2& 3	40%
3.	Completion of deliverable \$	30%

### H. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING THE BEST OFFER

- Bids will be evaluated based on cumulative analysis of the offers being determined as:
- The selection of the best offer will be based on a cumulative scoring method where the technical evaluation will be weighted 70% and the financial proposal will be weighted 30%.
- The bidder will be evaluated based on the technical assessment criteria given below.
- Only those bidders scoring a minimum 70% (700 points) on the technical assessment will be qualified as technically compliant and whose financial proposal will be considered for financial evaluation.
- The technically compliant bidder with the lowest financial proposal will be allocated a maximum of 300 points and other technically compliant bidders will receive points in inverse proposition to the bidder with the lowest financial proposal.
- The award of the contract will be for the technically compliant with the highest cumulative score.

#### Structure of the technical proposal

The technical proposal should address the following areas:

- A detailed and realistic proposal and creative concept, including the service provider's profile, relevant experience of similar assignments undertaken (portfolio of work), list of previous clients, a detailed work plan for the identified scope of work.

- The detailed CVs of all team members, highlighting relevant qualifications, experience, etc. The proposed team should demonstrate the subject expertise as well as inter-disciplinary/ cross-sectoral composition of the consultancy team members, to undertake the scope of work and deliverables.
- Relevant sample materials of past assignments, studies, knowledge products, etc.

## **8 Additional information useful for the proposal:**

### 8.1 JURE Partners:

- Ministry of Justice
- Legal Aid Commission
- National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses (NAPVCW)
- Sri Lanka Women Lawyers' Association (SLWLA)
- Legal Aid Commission
- Government Analyst's Department (GAD)
- University of Colombo (UoC)
- Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC)
- Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL)
- Women In Need (WIN)
- Attorney General's (AG) Department
- National Institute of Social Development
- Department of Probation and Childcare Services – Central level and all 9 Provinces
- National Child Protection Authority

### 8.2 Other Justice Sector Stakeholders (*not limited to the following*):

Judges, Lawyers, Court Staff, Public Prosecutors, legal advisors, Police, Women & Children Desk of Police, Judges Institute Sri Lanka, Non-Judicial Training Institute, Child Protection Officers, medical and educational officers, Probation Officers, Counselors, Labour Department Officers, Consumer Protection Authority, Central Environmental Authority, Registrar of Marriages, Mediation Boards.

## **9 Proposed Evaluation Matrix**

The selected evaluation firm lead by the UNDP the International Main Evaluator for the MTE engaged for the MTE is expected to prepare an evaluation matrix to be included in the inception report. As an example, a couple of criteria are shown below to help the evaluation team (comprised of selected firm and International Main Evaluator for the MTE) prepared the entire matrix for all questions and UNEG criteria in consultation with UNICEF and partners.

<b>Key Evaluation question</b>	<b>Sub question</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Data collection methods</b>	<b>Data sources</b>	<b>Data Analysis</b>

**10 Final Report Contents (specimen) – Source (UNDP evaluation report template and quality standards – June 2021 update)**

- Title and opening pages
- Project and evaluation information details
- Table of Contents
- List of acronyms and abbreviations.
- Executive summary (four/ five page maximum)
- Introduction
- Description of the Intervention
- Evaluation Scope and Objectives
- Evaluation Approach and Methods
- Data Analysis
- Findings
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Lessons Learned
- Report Annexes

*The selected service provider led by the International Main Evaluator for the MTE /Evaluator will discuss and familise the evaluation report template and contents*

## ANNEX 2. EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Question <sup>64</sup>	sub-questions <sup>65</sup>	Indicators/	Data collection method(s) and triangulation <sup>66</sup>	Sources of information
<b>Relevance</b>				
1. To what extent is the JURE Project aligned with national development priorities, the UNDP and UNICEF country programmes, the UNSDCF, and the SDGs?	Sub-question: How well does the JURE Project reflect the specific national development priorities of Sri Lanka, particularly in the justice and rule of law sectors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of JURE Project activities aligned with national justice sector priorities.</li> <li>• N of project outputs contributing to UNSDCF goals</li> </ul>	<p>Document Review: project documents, national strategies, UNDP/UNICEF country programmes, and SDG/UNSDCF frameworks for alignment.</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): qualitative data from government officials, donors, and project stakeholders to assess project alignment with priorities.</p> <p>Questionnaires: perceptions from beneficiaries and stakeholders regarding the project's alignment with their needs.</p> <p>Context Analysis: socio-economic and political changes affecting the project's relevance.</p>	<p>National policies UNSDCF document</p> <p>Project documents UNDP/UNICEF plans</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews International frameworks</p> <p>Socio-economic data</p>
2. Has the project shown responsiveness and adaptability to evolving legal, political, social, and economic conditions to maintain its relevance?	To what extent has the project adjusted its strategies and activities in response to shifts in the legal and political landscape?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N of project adjustments made in response to changing conditions.</li> <li>• % of stakeholders who perceive the project as adaptable to external changes.</li> </ul>	Key informant interviews, document reviews, and stakeholder surveys.	Project reports, policy briefs, stakeholder feedback, and government policy documents.
3. How effectively has the project addressed the needs of target groups and beneficiaries in enhancing access to justice for	What specific measures have been taken by the project to enhance access to justice for vulnerable groups such as women,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N of vulnerable beneficiaries accessing justice services as a result of the project.</li> </ul>	Surveys, focus groups, case studies, and interviews.	Project reports, beneficiary feedback, justice sector data, partner institutions and NGO reports.

<sup>64</sup> Please include all evaluation questions in the evaluation matrix.

<sup>65</sup> Please state the sub-questions and indicators that will guide your data collection to respond to the evaluation question.

<sup>66</sup> Please state the data collection and triangulation methods that will be used to answer the respective evaluation question and the respective data sources.

Evaluation Question <sup>64</sup>	sub-questions <sup>65</sup>	Indicators/	Data collection method(s) and triangulation <sup>66</sup>	Sources of information
vulnerable populations and strengthening the rule of law?	children, and marginalized communities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of beneficiaries who report improved access to justice.</li> </ul>		
<b>Coherence:</b>				
4. To what extent does JURE align with similar interventions of UN Sri Lanka, including those under the SDG 16 Portfolio, the government, and other donors?	How does JURE collaborate with other UN and donor-supported interventions to avoid duplication and enhance complementarity in strengthening the rule of law?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N of joint initiatives or partnerships with other UN and donor-funded projects.</li> <li>• Degree of coordination as perceived by key stakeholders (measured through surveys).</li> </ul>	Key informant interviews, partnership documentation, and project reports.	UN and government strategy documents, donor reports, and project collaboration records.
5. How well is the project harmonized with other actors operating in the same context, especially in terms of complementarity, coordination, and avoiding duplication?	What mechanisms are in place to ensure effective coordination and avoid duplication with other actors working in justice and rule of law sectors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N of coordination meetings held with other actors (UN agencies, government, NGOs).</li> <li>• Level of complementarity in project objectives as assessed by stakeholder</li> </ul>	Interviews, meeting records, and partnership agreements.	Collaboration reports, government and donor strategy documents, and minutes from coordination meetings.
<b>Effectiveness:</b>				
6. How effective has the project strategy been in achieving planned outputs and outcomes, particularly in engaging justice sector actors and beneficiaries?	To what extent have justice sector actors and beneficiaries actively participated in project activities aimed at achieving the planned outputs and outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of planned outputs completed within the set timeline.</li> <li>• N of justice sector actors and beneficiaries engaged in project activities.</li> </ul>	Progress reports, participant attendance records, and beneficiary feedback surveys.	Project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) reports, stakeholder engagement records, and justice sector feedback.
7. To what extent has JURE provided strategic guidance to justice institutions to implement transformative policies?	What specific guidance or frameworks has JURE provided to justice institutions to enable the implementation of transformative reforms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N of justice institutions adopting policies or reforms based on JURE's strategic guidance.</li> <li>• Level of satisfaction among justice institutions regarding the support received for policy transformation.</li> </ul>	Key informant interviews, policy review, and institutional surveys.	Institutional reports, JURE project documents, and justice sector feedback.
8. How effective are the project activities in fostering transformative actions in the	Which project activities have contributed the most towards implementing transformative changes in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N of transformative initiatives successfully implemented as a result of the project.</li> </ul>	Surveys, focus group discussions, and activity reports.	Project documentation, justice sector feedback, and monitoring reports.

Evaluation Question <sup>64</sup>	sub-questions <sup>65</sup>	Indicators/	Data collection method(s) and triangulation <sup>66</sup>	Sources of information
justice sector across the three outcomes?	the justice sector and achieving the three defined outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of stakeholders who report improved justice sector practices due to project activities.</li> </ul>		
9. How well do the governance and management structures, including human resources, support effective project implementation?	Are the current governance and management structures sufficient to ensure the timely and efficient implementation of the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ratio and competence of human resources deployed to meet project needs.</li> <li>• Level of stakeholder satisfaction with the governance and management structures.</li> </ul>	Staff evaluations, stakeholder interviews, and performance reviews.	Organizational charts, human resource reports, and project management documentation.
<b>Efficiency:</b>				
10. Do the processes, including financial management, demonstrate efficiency in achieving the project's intended results?	How effectively are financial resources being managed to ensure optimal use in achieving the project's objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of the budget utilized as per the planned timeline.</li> <li>• Ratio of administrative costs to overall project costs.</li> </ul>	Financial audits, expenditure tracking, and process reviews.	Financial reports, project audit findings, and budget documents.
11. Are the costs justified by the results, and were resources efficiently utilized?	To what extent do the outcomes achieved justify the financial and human resources invested in the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost-benefit ratio of project activities.</li> <li>• % of stakeholders reporting satisfaction with the cost-effectiveness of the project.</li> </ul>	Financial reviews, cost-effectiveness analysis, and stakeholder feedback.	Project financial reports, audit findings, and cost-benefit evaluations.
12. How effective are the project's mechanisms for measuring change and impact, especially using its Results Framework and monitoring systems?	Are the current monitoring tools and frameworks adequate for capturing real-time data on the project's outcomes and impact?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequency and quality of updates to the Results Framework.</li> <li>• N of key performance indicators (KPIs) regularly tracked and analyzed.</li> </ul>	Monitoring reports, system reviews, and key informant interviews.	Project's Results Framework, monitoring reports, and data from the project's M&E system.
<b>Progress towards Impact:</b>				
13. To what extent do the achievements at the output level align with the planned outcomes, and are there early signs of broader impact?	How closely do the project's immediate outputs reflect progress toward achieving its long-term outcomes, and what early evidence indicates broader impact?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of outputs achieved that align with intended outcomes.</li> <li>• Presence of early indicators showing positive trends towards broader impact.</li> </ul>	Output and outcome reports, early impact evaluations, and stakeholder interviews.	Project reports, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data, and beneficiary feedback.

Evaluation Question <sup>64</sup>	sub-questions <sup>65</sup>	Indicators/	Data collection method(s) and triangulation <sup>66</sup>	Sources of information
14. To what extent have vulnerable groups benefited from the project's interventions?	What specific benefits have vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and marginalized communities, gained from the project's interventions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N of vulnerable individuals receiving justice-related support through the project.</li> <li>• % of beneficiaries from vulnerable groups reporting improved access to justice.</li> </ul>	Beneficiary surveys, focus groups, and case studies.	Project beneficiary records, stakeholder interviews, and NGO reports.
<b>Sustainability and National Ownership:</b>				
15. To what extent have the capacities of individuals and organizations been strengthened to ensure sustainability of project results?	What capacity-building efforts have been implemented to equip individuals and organizations for sustaining project outcomes long-term?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N of individuals and organizations that have received training or capacity-building support.</li> <li>• % of trained individuals/organizations demonstrating improved skills and capacity post-intervention.</li> </ul>	Training records, capacity assessments, and follow-up evaluations.	Project reports, training evaluations, and feedback from participating organizations and individuals.
16. What are the immediate and long-term risks that could impede the sustainability of the project's results?	What potential financial, political, or operational risks could threaten the continuation of the project's benefits beyond its lifecycle?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N of identified risks (financial, political, institutional) categorized as high-impact.</li> <li>• Presence of mitigation strategies for identified sustainability risks.</li> </ul>	Risk assessments, stakeholder interviews, and document reviews.	Risk management reports, project evaluations, and feedback from key stakeholders.
17. What measures, including strategic partnerships, are needed to mitigate risks and enhance long-term sustainability?	Which strategic partnerships and interventions identified mitigate risks and ensure the continuity of project outcomes after completion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N of strategic partnerships formed to address sustainability challenges.</li> <li>• Existence of long-term sustainability plans, including risk mitigation strategies.</li> <li>• Status of exit strategy.</li> </ul>	Partnership agreements, sustainability reports, and stakeholder consultations.	Project documentation, partner reports, and feedback from involved organizations.
<b>Gender Equality and Human Rights-Based Approach (GE and HRBA):</b>				
18. How well has the project incorporated gender equality and human rights-based approaches in its design, implementation, and results?	What specific gender equality and human rights-based interventions have been integrated into the project's activities, and how have these been reflected in outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of project activities explicitly targeting gender equality and human rights.</li> <li>• N of beneficiaries from marginalized or vulnerable groups benefiting from gender and human rights-focused initiatives.</li> </ul>	Project reports, gender and rights-based assessments, and beneficiary feedback.	Project documentation, gender action plans, and stakeholder interviews.

Evaluation Question <sup>64</sup>	sub-questions <sup>65</sup>	Indicators/	Data collection method(s) and triangulation <sup>66</sup>	Sources of information
	What specific gender equality and human rights-based interventions have been integrated into the project's activities AND "how have these impacted different demographic groups"			
19. To what extent has the project's Gender Action Plan (GAP) been implemented, and what results have been achieved?	Which key components of the Gender Action Plan have been successfully implemented, and what specific outcomes have resulted from these actions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of GAP initiatives completed according to the project timeline.</li> <li>• N of gender-related outcomes achieved (e.g., increased participation of women in justice services).</li> </ul>	GAP progress reports, gender assessments, and gender expert, stakeholder interviews.	Project reports, GAP documents, and beneficiary feedback.
20. What are the key risks, challenges, or limitations in integrating gender equality and human rights-based approaches within the project?	What obstacles have been encountered in the implementation of gender equality and human rights-based interventions, and how have they impacted project outcomes? What steps have been taken to mitigate this impact?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N of gender and human rights-related challenges identified during project implementation.</li> <li>• % of planned gender and human rights activities delayed or uncompleted due to challenges.</li> </ul>	Risk assessments, stakeholder interviews, and progress reports.	Project documentation, gender action plan reports, and stakeholder feedback.
<b>EU Added Value:</b>				
21. Is the JURE project able to achieve outcomes or results, due to EU support, that could not have been realized through the support of other donors, particularly EU Member States?	What specific outcomes has the JURE project achieved that are uniquely attributable to the EU's support, and how do they differ from results supported by other donors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N of unique policies, best practices or institutional reforms directly attributable to EU-supported initiatives.</li> <li>• Degree of innovation or strategic collaboration achieved uniquely through EU-funded components, as assessed by key stakeholders.</li> </ul>	Comparative analysis, stakeholder interviews, and project reports.	Project documentation, EU funding reports, and stakeholder feedback.

## ANNEX 3. LIST OF PEOPLE CONSULTED

Cluster	Stakeholders	Number of Participants	Location	Gender Female	Gender Male
Justice System	Ministry of Justice	3	Colombo	3	
Justice System	Legal Aid Commission	3	Colombo	3	
Justice System	Attorney General's Department	2	Colombo	2	
Justice System	Judicial Service Commission	2	Colombo		2
Justice System	Sri Lanka Judges Institute	2	Colombo		2
Justice System	Sri Lanka Law College	1	Colombo		1
CSOs and Academia	Sri Lanka Women Lawyers' Association (SLWLA)	3	Colombo	3	
CSOs and Academia	Women In Need (WIN)	1	Colombo	1	
CSOs and Academia	The Asia Foundation (TAF)	4	Colombo	3	1
CSOs and Academia	University of Colombo (UoC)	12	Colombo	9	3
Law Enforcement	National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses (NAPVCW)	2	Colombo		2
Law Enforcement	Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC)	4	Colombo	3	1
Law Enforcement	Government Analyst's Department (GAD)	2	Colombo	1	1
Law Enforcement	Department of Probation and Childcare Services (National and Southern Regions)	1	Colombo, Southern	1	
Law Enforcement	National Child Protection Authority	4	Colombo	4	
	Direct beneficiaries				
Children, women, etc		5		4	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>14</b>

### Regional Meeting

Stakeholders	Number of Participants	Location	Gender Female	Gender Male
GMO	1	Galle		1
Women In Needs (including survivors )	4	Matara	4	
Legal Aid Commission	1	Matara	1	
Women Development Federation	3	Hambantota	2	1
Human Rights Commission	2	Hatton	2	

Legal Aid Commission	1	Nuwaraeliya	1	
Legal Aid Commission	1	Kurunegala	1	
Watareka Sunitha Vidyalaya (FGD)	11	Colombo	7	4
Probation Department (FGD)	5	Batticaloa	3	2
Legal Aid Commissions	2	Batticaloa	2	
Parents of reunified child victims	2	Batticaloa	2	
Legal Aid Commission	1	Rathnapura	1	
Legal Aid Commission ( FGD)	6	Rathnapura	3	3
Women In Needs (including Victim)	2	Anuradhapura	2	
Prison Department	7	Anuradhapura	6	1
Women In Need Centre	3	Jaffna	3	
Women in Ned (Victim)	1		1	
Legal Aid Commission	2	Jaffna	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>12</b>

## ANNEX 4. LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS REVIEWED.

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### 1. Project Documentation and Design

- JURE Project Proposal/Design Document
- JURE Project Baseline Report
- JURE Logframe & Results Framework
- JURE Gender Action Plan
- Communication & Visibility Plan
- JURE TOC, RRFs, and M&E Frameworks

### 2. Financial Reports and Budget Analysis

- JURE Project Budget
- Expenditure Report
- Budget vs Expenditure Reports
- Detailed Budget Expenditure Reports

### **3. Country-Specific Studies and Economic Reports**

- International Monetary Fund (IMF). 'Article IV Consultation Report on Sri Lanka,' 2022
- World Bank. 'Sri Lanka Development Update,' 2022
- Sri Lanka Bar Association 'Justice Sector Analysis,' 2022
- Fitch Ratings 'Sri Lanka Sovereign Credit Rating Report,' April 2021
- Moody's Investors Service 'Sri Lanka Credit Opinion,' June 2021
- Central Bank of Sri Lanka 'Annual Report,' 2021
- Legal Aid Sector of Sri Lanka Final Report on Stakeholder Mapping with Recommendations March 2023

### **4. Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Project Progress Reports/Donor Reports
- Quarterly Progress Monitoring Review
- Field Visits Monitoring and Evidence Records
- Activity Records
- SDG 16 Portfolio Strategy
- Monitoring & Assurance Report
- Annual Reports 2023, 2024
- AWP 2023, 2024
- Field Report
- JURE Perception Survey

### **5. Risk Management and Compliance**

- Audit Reports (Internal and External)
- JURE Risk Register
- Risk Logs

### **6. Stakeholder and Sector Analysis**

- Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

- Stakeholders' Coordination Meeting Minutes
- Final Report on Stakeholder Mapping with Recommendations
- Need Assessment on Infrastructure in Justice Sector Institutions including Child Friendly and Victim Centric

### **7. External Evaluations and Related Reports**

- Mid-term Evaluation cum Strategic Direction Setting of the UNDP's Portfolio on SDG 16+ Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- UNDP Country Programme (2018-2022) End Term Evaluation
- The Support to Justice Sector Project (JURE). Annual Report, January – December 2023
- EU-commissioned ROM Report, April 2024
- ROM Report Clarifications Addressing the EC Services Comments, April 2024

### **8. Related UN Reports**

- UNDP, UNHCR. (2021). Working Together on Rule of Law and Governance: Community Safety and Access to Justice Project
- UNDP IEO (2022). Evaluation of the UNDP Support to Access To Justice
- UNDP, UNICEF, and UN Women. (2012). Informal Justice Systems: Charting a Course for Human Rights-Based Engagement
- UNDP. (2022). Environmental Justice: Securing our right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment
- UNDP. (2020). From Justice for the Past to Peace and Inclusion for the Future: A Development Approach to Transitional Justice

### **9. Digital Resources and Websites**

- Commercial High Court of Colombo
- Sri Lanka Law College
- <https://colchc.gov.lk/home>
- <https://www.sllc.ac.lk/home>
- <https://arts.pdn.ac.lk/afcp/ativasi.php>
- <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20220327-sri-lankas-last-indigenous-people>
- <https://amazinglanka.com/wp/dimbulagala-kosgaha-ulpotha/>
- <https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/global/2023/Sri%20Lanka/>

## **ANNEX 5. JURE LOGFRAME**

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### **Justice Reforms Programme (JURE) 2022-2026**

## Results Framework

	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators <sup>67</sup>	Baseline	Target (Milestones)					Means of Verification (Sources of data)	Frequency	Responsibility
				2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 (Final)			
<b>Impact (Overall Objective)</b>	Improved independence of judiciary and responsive justice system in Sri Lanka	1.0: % of actors within the justice and accountability sector that have a positive perception of its efficiency, transparency, performance and independence* (disaggregated by sex, age and disability/social group, and type of case: criminal, civil or administrative)	TBD					TBD	Perception Survey/ADB Assessment Report/ Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Independence of the Judiciary	Start and End of the project	UNDP/UNICEF
		2.0: Rule of Law score (as measured by the World Bank Worldwide Governance indicators) **	53.37 (lowest-0 to highest-100 rank) - 2020	53.37	53.37	55	56	58	World Bank Governance Reports	Annual	UNDP
		3.0: Country score in the World justice project Rule of law index**	Global Rank: 76/139 with a score of 0.50 - in 2021	76	76	<76	<74	Global Rank: Below 72;	The World Justice Project	Annual	UNDP
		4.0 Number of children in conflict with the law subject to a diversion order or non-custodial sentence (mediation)	TBD					TBD	Mediation Board, Department of Probation, Police and Department of Prisons	Annual	UNICEF
<b>Outcome (s) (Specific Objective 1)</b>	SO1: Improved access to justice for all, in particular women, the poor and persons in vulnerable situations	1.1 Number of persons accessed legal assistance in SL (disaggregated by sex, age, type of request and type of service/mechanism solicited)	TBD					TBD	LAC, CSOs, Institutions Records (NVWPA) Survey results at institution level and Project annual reports	End of year 2 and annually thereafter	UNDP/UNICEF

<sup>67</sup> Where not specified, all indicators will be disaggregated by sex, age and disability/social group, and type of case: criminal, civil or administrative

	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators <sup>67</sup>	Baseline	Target (Milestones)					Means of Verification (Sources of data)	Frequency	Responsibility
				2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 (Final)			
		1.2 Extent to which an overarching J4C Data System is in place (a) Not in place, b) initial stage, c) in progress, d) In place. e) Operational	a) Not in place:	a	b	C	d	e) Operational :	J4C Routine Data System (Routine data is regularly collected, analysed and used for decision making)	Annual	UNICEF
<b>Outcome (s) (Specific Objective 2)</b>	SO2: Improved accountability, transparency and credibility of the justice system	2.1 Percent Change of Justice sector related RTI requests responded to	TBD					10% annual increase	Baseline and midterm/end-line surveys Survey results at institution level, if needed sample based Project annual reports Independent institutions data/statistics/reports M&E progress reports  MOJ / RTIC / Key sector institutions	Annual	UNDP/UNICE
		2.2 Percent change of requests responded in a timely manner disaggregated by Commission and type of case.	HRC- 2018 : 6548 NPC – 100%		10% annual increase			10% annual increase	HRC and NPC progress reports	Annual	UNDP
		2.3 % of women representation at decision making levels within the justice system (disaggregated by types of position)	TBD (Dec 2022)					TBD (Dec 2022)	JSC website and project partners. Baseline and midterm/end-line surveys Survey results at institution level,	Starting at the end of year 2 and annually	UNDP

	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators <sup>67</sup>	Baseline	Target (Milestones)					Means of Verification (Sources of data)	Frequency	Responsibility	
				2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 (Final)				
										thereafter		
<b>Outcome (s) (Specific Objective 3)</b>	SO 3: Improved efficiency and quality of justice	3.1 Number of pending cases in the Sri Lankan Judicial system (disaggregated by type of case: civil, criminal), commercial, administrative etc.) – as a proxy: restrict / (clarify – pending at....)	762,452 (2021) MoJ Statistics					400000	monitoring reports and annual review of the policies /plans of improvements pursued		UNDP	
		3.2 SDG16 indicator 16.3.2 Unsented detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	TBD					TBD				
		3.3 Number of (commercial) cases referred to Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms (arbitration, mediation) out of the total cases	Commercial courts / mediation boards / arbitration centers						TBD	Ministry of Justice reports and M&E Reports of the Ministerial (Parliamentary) Consultative Committee on Justice		UNDP
		3.4 Country ranking on “enforcement of contracts” in the WB doing business index	Rank : 164 out of 189 with 1318 days to enforce a contract (2019)	164	164	162	162	Rank 160	International ranking of SL on “enforcement of contracts” in the WB doing business index	Every 2 years if available from year 3	UNDP	
<b>Outputs</b>	<b>1.1.</b> Efficient and accessible legal aid including legal representation for vulnerable communities (including women, PwDs, children)	1.1.1 % change in number of cases registered with free legal aid mechanisms (LAC, BASL, Assigned Counsel System, Law schools – legal aid clinics), disaggregated by age, sex and nature of cases, girls and boys	Total number of LAC cases up to December 31, 2016 – 34,573 (From January 1 to					TBD 5% annual increase?	Review reports from the free legal aid centres		UNDP	

	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators <sup>67</sup>	Baseline	Target (Milestones)					Means of Verification (Sources of data)	Frequency	Responsibility
				2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 (Final)			
	Debt Conciliation and Community mediation		December 31,2016) Total number of consultations - 92,725 (From January 1 to December 31, 2016) Baseline for girls and boys ?								
		1.1.2: Number of new institutions registered with LAC	TBD					% Annual increase	LAC progress/annual reports	Annual	UNDP
	1.2.Equal Access to Justice strengthened including through language mainstreaming across the justice sector	1.2.1: Percentage of justice sector actors/institutions that mainstreamed the national language policy of Sri Lanka	TBD %					TBD?? %	UNDP and justice sector reports		UNDP
		1.2.2: Number of laws facilitated for translation into all three languages.			1	1	1	3	MoJ and LDD records		UNDP/UNICEF
		1.2.3: Number of manuals and guidelines developed for rightsholders to enhance their understanding and their ability access to the justice system	TBD	0				TBD	Manuals / Guidelines		UNDP
	1.3.Improved legal awareness amongst the public (especially	1.3.1: Number of legal awareness initiatives introduced targeting vulnerable communities	0					TBD	Survey on public awareness Institutional reports		UNDP

	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators <sup>67</sup>	Baseline	Target (Milestones)					Means of Verification (Sources of data)	Frequency	Responsibility
				2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 (Final)			
	vulnerable communities)	1.3.2: Number of awareness creation initiatives conducted including by non-state actors with the support from the project(disaggregated by type)	TBD					Target Total: Types:	Partner progress reports/ consultant's reports.		UNDP/UNICEF
		1.3.3: Number of awareness initiatives conducted on Environmental Justice	0					10	Survey on public awareness Institutional reports/campaign reports		UNDP
	2.1.Strengthened data collection, analysis and dissemination of capacities of government institutions, sector professionals, CSOs and other accountability organizations on justice sector performance	2.1.1: Number of reports/studies, research/surveys, data sets, press releases and other information material produced, published and disseminated by the justice sector institutions and other relevant actors with project support (disaggregated by type of information/research product)	0					15	Survey reports and institutional reports		UNDP
		2.1.2: % increase in the data available to measure SDG indicators	10%					25%	Survey reports and institutional reports		UNDP
		2.1.3: Number of indicators out of the 15 juvenile justice indicators for which the system is in place for monitoring/updating	0	0	TBD	TBD	TBD	Min 8 indicators	Juvenile Justice Indicator reporting for Sri Lanka	Annually from year 2	UNICEF
		2.1.4: Number of studies undertaken on justice for children issues, with support from the project disaggregated by type	0					5	Partner progress Report/Research studies	Annual?	UNICEF

	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators <sup>67</sup>	Baseline	Target (Milestones)					Means of Verification (Sources of data)	Frequency	Responsibility
				2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 (Final)			
	2.2. Increased capacities of different justice sector actors to develop and implement codes of ethics and professional conduct	2.2.1: Number of justice sector actors/institutions that have revised/developed, adopted and implement internal procedures, including codes of ethics and professional conduct	0	0	2	3	6	6	M&E, Institutional reports	Annually from year 2	UNDP
		2.2.2: Number of mechanisms introduced with project support to address and resolve ethical violations by the justice sector actors.	0	0	1	2	3	4% annual increase?			UNDP
		2.2.3: Number of justice sector actors/institutions that have developed internal procedures including code of ethics and professional conduct that support child-friendly justice	0					3			UNICEF
	2.3. Strengthened capacity of independent institutions (HRCSL, National Audit Office, NPC) to carry out their mandate	% of institutional mandate achieved, measured against <i>the stated powers, functions and objectives</i> Increase in the types of audits conducted by the National Audit Office	TBD					TBD	Commissions reports Annual Budget Reports GANGHRI Ratings (HRCSL) Institutional Assessment Reports		UNDP
		Number of requests/complaints made to the targeted institutions (disaggregated by institution and type of request/complaint)	TBD					TBD			
		Number of public outreach initiatives conducted by the targeted independent	0					10			

	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators <sup>67</sup>	Baseline	Target (Milestones)					Means of Verification (Sources of data)	Frequency	Responsibility
				2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 (Final)			
		institutions (disaggregated by institutions and type)									
	3.1. Efficient and age-appropriate child justice services available for every child in contact with the law	3.1.1: Number of amendments of laws related to children in line with international standards on child friendly justice, ready for submission to cabinet by MOJ with project support	0			2	1	3	Communications from the Ministry of Justice	Annual	UNICEF
		3.1.2: System for diversion in place and functioning	Framework exists for 1 Offence  Mediation Boards Act covers petty theft by children  1 Offence			Mediation Boards Act covers petty theft and drug use related offences  2 offences		Framework extended to 5 Offences  Mediation Boards Act covers main crimes committed by children  3-5 offences	Diversion System	End of project	UNICEF
		3.1.3: Number of child-friendly J4C spaces rehabilitated or constructed	3					6	Project M&E System and reports		UNICEF
		3.1.4: % of justice sector professionals trained with project support to work with a) child offenders and b) child victims (disaggregated by key justice sector institutions)	TBC after the J4C workforce mapping					TBD		Annual	UNICEF
		3.1.5: Status of the National Steering Committee for J4C (Status: Not existing, being setup, in place but not functional, functional)	No national steering committee for J4C/					National Steering Committee for J4C/Probati	Committee Reports		UNICEF

	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators <sup>67</sup>	Baseline	Target (Milestones)					Means of Verification (Sources of data)	Frequency	Responsibility
				2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 (Final)			
			Child Probation					on functional and meeting regularly			
	3.2. Strengthened policy and legal reforms in line with international standards, norms and best practices	3.2.2: Number of justice sector institutions that have adopted and implemented applicable international standards, norms and best practices through their policies, guidelines, schemes and internal operating procedures with project support	0	0	2	4	6	8	Institutional reports and /Policies/Circulars /SOPs Institutional reports/legislation(draft)	Annually from year 2	UNDP
		3.2.1: Number of policies, laws and regulations updated/developed with support from the project disaggregated by updated and newly developed, and Civil and Criminal;	0					TBD Policies Laws Regulations <u>Newly developed:</u> Policies Laws Regulations	MOJ and other partner progress reports/reviews, Laws, Policies, SoPs, Circulars	Annually from year 2	UNDP
	3.3. Increased management, administrative and technical capacities and improved processes of the justice actors through expansion of digital solutions, skills developments and	3.3.2: Number of targeted justice sector institutions that introduced and expanded digital technology	0	0	2	4	6	8	Institutional assessment, MOJ and other Partner progress reports/reviews, Consultants reports	Annually from year 2	UNDP
		3.3.1: Number of justice sector actors provided with enhanced administrative and technical capacity disaggregated by type of officials/professionals	0					TBD	MOJ and other Partner progress reports/reviews, Consultants reports	Quarterly from year 2	UNDP

	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators <sup>67</sup>	Baseline	Target (Milestones)					Means of Verification (Sources of data)	Frequency	Responsibility	
				2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 (Final)				
	enhancement of infrastructure	3.3.3: Number of process manuals, and regulations developed for improved efficiency and effectiveness	0	0	2	4	6	8	MOJ and other Partner progress reports/reviews, Consultants reports	Quarterly from year 2	UNDP	
		3.3.4: Number of institutions that synchronized infrastructure with applicable victim centric procedures	0						MOJ/MWA, and other CSO partners	Quarterly from year 2	UNDP	
	3.4. Strengthened commercial and alternate dispute resolution mechanisms to provide expeditious remedies and create an investor-friendly environment	3.4.1: Number of commercial laws, policies, regulations and procedures and practice manuals developed and reviewed with support from the project	0					TBD	MOJ reports  Institutional survey Institutional reports M&E reports	Annual	UNDP	
		3.4.2: Number of new fora (courts and processes) in mechanisms (e.g. pvt commercial mediation centers) related to commercial matters introduced with support from the project.	Current laws  (Arbitration Act No. 11 of 1995 , Civil Procedure Code, Commercial Mediation Centre of Sri Lanka Act No. 44 of 2000)						TBD	MOJ and other Partner progress reports/reviews, Consultants reports	Annual	UNDP
		Number of referrals for commercial mediation in the trial process (overall and commercial)										
		Number of knowledge products on commercial law and commercial dispute resolution developed										

	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators <sup>67</sup>	Baseline	Target (Milestones)					Means of Verification (Sources of data)	Frequency	Responsibility
				2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 (Final)			
		targeting prospective investors									
		Number of courses on commercial law and commercial dispute resolution introduced for training of sector professionals	Courses offered by SLNAC, ICLP Arbitration Centre, & CCC-ICLP ADR Center, SLJI, and Sri Lanka Law College								
	3.5. Established mechanisms/platforms for improving cooperation and coordination between justice actors	3.5.1: Number of mechanisms in place for improved cooperation/coordination/efficiency in the justice sector disaggregated by type/category	0	0	1	3	5	7	Institutional survey Institutional reports M&E reports Memorandum of Understanding, periodical coordination meetings, new policies/regulations on specialized courts	UNDP	

## ANNEX 6. COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF JURE PROJECT PROGRESS

The JURE Project progress framework consists of a total of 14 indicators across Impact and Outcome different levels:

- Impact Level: 3 indicators measuring the overall progress in strengthening the rule of law and judicial independence.
- Outcome Level: 11 indicators distributed across three outcome areas:
  - Outcome 1: Strengthened legal framework and policy reforms (4 indicators).
  - Outcome 2: Improved judicial efficiency and transparency (4 indicators).

- Outcome 3: Increased access to justice and alternative dispute resolution (3 indicators).

Each indicator tracks progress from its baseline value to a 2024 milestone target, with actual values recorded to assess performance.

### **Impact Level Indicators**

Indicator 1: Country Score In The World Justice Project Rule Of Law Index

- Baseline (2021): Sri Lanka ranked 76/139 with a score of 0.50.
- 2024 Milestone: Improve ranking to below 76.
- Actual Value (2024): Sri Lanka ranked 75/142 with a score of 0.51.
- Assessment: The project has achieved modest improvements in governance, access to justice, and anti-corruption measures. However, persistent gaps in regulatory enforcement and judicial efficiency continue to limit broader progress.

Indicator 2: Rule of Law Score (World Bank Governance Indicators)

- Baseline (2021): 53.37 (scale: 0 to 100).
- 2024 Milestone: Improve score to 55.
- Actual Value (2024): 50.
- Assessment: The target has not been met. Sri Lanka's governance rating has fluctuated over the years, with progress in some areas counterbalanced by stagnation or regression in others, particularly in civil justice and enforcement.

Indicator 3: Number of children in conflict with the law benefiting from diversion programs

- Baseline (2021): 0.
- 2024 Milestone: 2,000 children benefiting from non-custodial alternatives.
- Actual Value (2024): 4,146.
- Assessment: The project has exceeded its target. Diversion programs, mediation, and legal interventions have provided alternative resolutions for juvenile offenders, reducing the burden on the formal justice system.

Indicator 1: Number of new laws and regulations conforming to international treaties

- Baseline (2021): 0.
- 2024 Milestone: At least 2 new laws enacted.
- Actual Value (2024): 3 new laws enacted, including the CYPO Amendment, Mediation Boards Act, and Commercial Mediation Law.
- Assessment: The target has been exceeded, reflecting successful legislative reforms. However, challenges remain in implementation and enforcement, requiring further institutional support.

Indicator 2: Number of people directly benefiting from legal aid interventions

- Baseline (2021): 0.
- 2024 Milestone: 45,000 individuals receiving legal aid.
- Actual Value (2024): 16,111.
- Assessment: The project fell significantly short of its target, with only 35.8% of the intended beneficiaries reached. Funding limitations, administrative barriers, and accessibility issues have constrained the expansion of legal aid services, particularly in rural areas.

Indicator 3: Proportion of the population with confidence in accessing legal information and assistance

- Baseline (2021): 29%.
- 2024 Milestone: 50%.
- Actual Value (2024): 29.1%.
- Assessment: There has been no significant improvement in public confidence regarding access to legal assistance. More targeted awareness campaigns and outreach efforts are needed.

Indicator 4: Percentage of actors in the justice sector reporting positive perceptions of transparency and accountability

- Baseline (2021): 33.6%.
- 2024 Milestone: 50%.
- Actual Value (2024): N/A (data collection pending).
- Assessment: The lack of updated data limits a full evaluation of this indicator. Future assessments should focus on tracking perception shifts through qualitative and quantitative research.

## **Outcome 2: Improved Judicial Efficiency and Transparency**

Indicator 1: Percentage of cases responded to in a timely manner by key justice institutions

- Baseline (2019-2021): HRC 53%, NPC 100%, CIABOC 53%.
- 2024 Milestone: 10% annual increase.
- Actual Value (2024): 53% (no change).
- Assessment: Judicial efficiency has stagnated, with significant case backlogs remaining at key institutions such as HRC and CIABOC. Additional interventions in case management and digital processing are needed.

Indicator 2: Extent to which an overarching Justice and Accountability (J4C) Data System is operational

- Baseline (2021): Not in place.

- 2024 Milestone: System at an operational level.
- Actual Value (2024): In progress.
- Assessment: The project has made progress, but data system implementation remains incomplete. Further technical support and institutional buy-in are required for full adoption.

#### Indicator 3: Women’s Representation At Decision-Making Levels In The Justice Sector

- Baseline (2021): 51%.
  - 2024 Milestone: Maintain or improve gender parity.
  - Actual Value (2024): Women occupy significant leadership positions, though representation varies across institutions.
  - Assessment: Gender balance has been maintained, but more effort is needed to increase women’s leadership roles in judiciary governance structures.
- Outcome 3: Increased Access to Justice and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

#### Indicator 1: Percentage of Disputes Referred To Adr Mechanisms

- Baseline (2022): 50%.
- 2024 Milestone: 5% increase.
- Actual Value (2024): 73%.
- Assessment: ADR mechanisms have performed exceptionally well, exceeding the target and reducing court burdens.

#### Indicator 2: Number of regulatory mechanisms established for company dispute resolution

- Baseline (2021): 0.
- 2024 Milestone: 2.
- Actual Value (2024): 3.
- Assessment: The project has successfully established dispute resolution systems, reducing processing times and enhancing commercial mediation efficiency.

### **Outcome 3: Increased Access to Justice and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**

#### Indicator 1: Percentage of disputes referred to ADR mechanisms

- Baseline (2022): 50%.
  - 2024 Milestone: 5% increase.
  - Actual Value (2024): 73%.
- Assessment: ADR mechanisms have performed exceptionally well, exceeding the target and reducing court burdens.

Indicator 2: Number of regulatory mechanisms established for company dispute resolution

- Baseline (2021): 0.
- 2024 Milestone: 2.
- Actual Value (2024): 3.

Assessment: The project has successfully established dispute resolution systems, reducing processing times and enhancing commercial mediation efficiency.

The JURE Project has made notable progress in legal reforms, mediation mechanisms, and dispute resolution, exceeding several legislative and ADR-related targets. However, judicial efficiency remains a major challenge, with case response times stagnating and legal aid outreach significantly underperforming. While legislative achievements mark an important step forward, full implementation and enforcement remain ongoing concerns.

The most successful area of intervention has been ADR, where the resolution rate reached 73%, far exceeding the target. Conversely, legal aid interventions reached only 35.8% of their intended beneficiaries, limiting the project's impact on access to justice for vulnerable populations.

Overall, the JURE Project has partially delivered on its intended results. While it has strengthened legal frameworks and mediation mechanisms, challenges persist in judicial efficiency, case backlog reduction, and legal aid accessibility. Moving forward, targeted investments in case management improvements, digital justice solutions, and enhanced outreach for legal aid services will be essential to achieving the project's full potential.

## ANNEX 7. CONTEXT: SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

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Sri Lanka's development trajectory is shaped by a complex interplay of social, political, economic, and institutional factors, as well as its geographical landscape. The country has a diverse population comprising Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims, with historical ethnic tensions influencing governance and policy decisions. Post-conflict reconciliation remains a central challenge, with ongoing efforts in reconciliation, accountability, and social justice.<sup>68</sup> Additionally, high levels of educational attainment and human development present opportunities for economic growth and social stability.

Politically, Sri Lanka has a history of democratic governance, yet governance challenges persist, including allegations of corruption, weakened institutional transparency, and political instability. The economic downturn, compounded by the 2019 tax cuts and the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to fiscal distress, high inflation, and sovereign credit downgrades.<sup>69</sup> These economic challenges have contributed to social unrest, impacting the functioning of public institutions, including the justice sector.

Geographically, Sri Lanka's strategic location in the Indian Ocean offers economic opportunities, particularly in trade and tourism. However, it also exposes the country to climate risks such as floods and droughts, which pose additional challenges to sustainable development and governance.

### **Impact of the Economic and Fiscal Crisis on Governance and Development**

The persistent fiscal deficits, exacerbated by economic mismanagement, tax reductions, and external shocks such as the pandemic, have led to a severe balance-of-payments crisis. Public debt surged from 93.6% of GDP in 2019 to an estimated 118.9% in 2021, while global financial rating agencies downgraded Sri Lanka's

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<sup>68</sup> Source: Sri Lanka Statement at the 49th Session of the Human Rights Council)

<sup>69</sup> Source: IMF Article IV Consultation Report, 2022

creditworthiness, reducing access to external financing.<sup>70</sup>The result has been inflationary pressures, food and fuel shortages, and declining social sector investments, posing risks to achieving the SDGs.

The economic downturn has placed immense strain on governance and public services. Institutions, including the judiciary, have struggled with backlogs and limited resources to address the increasing demand for legal resolutions. The return of approximately 50,000 migrant workers due to the pandemic has further strained social protection networks, increasing vulnerabilities among women and marginalized groups.<sup>71</sup>

Despite these challenges, the crisis presents an opportunity for institutional reform, improved fiscal discipline, and greater transparency in governance. Strengthening economic resilience through diversified revenue generation and investment in sustainable development projects is crucial for long-term stability.

## **Gender Equality and Access to Justice in Sri Lanka**

### *i. Legislative and Policy Framework for Addressing SGBV and Gender Discrimination*

Sri Lanka’s Constitution provides a strong legal foundation for gender equality<sup>72</sup>. Special provisions may be made for the advancement of women, children, and disabled persons.<sup>73</sup>However, personal laws—including Kandyan, Thesavalamai, and Muslim laws—continue to discriminate against women in matters of marriage, divorce, and succession. The Ministry of Justice is engaged in efforts to revise these laws to align with international human rights standards. (Source: Ministry of Justice Reform Reports, 2021)

Sri Lanka has ratified key international frameworks supporting gender equity, yet gaps in implementation remain. For instance, abortion remains criminalized, and marital rape is not legally recognized unless the woman is formally separated from her spouse. The Vagrants Ordinance continues to be used to target individuals based on gender identity and sexual orientation, further limiting access to justice for marginalized groups.<sup>74</sup>

### *ii. Legal Reforms and Institutional Capacity-Building*

Efforts to promote gender-responsive legal reforms include amendments to the Land Development Ordinance, approved by the Cabinet in January 2021, ensuring equal inheritance rights for daughters alongside sons.<sup>75</sup>Additionally, UNDP and other agencies have supported capacity-building initiatives, training police officers, prosecutors, and magistrates on gender-sensitive legal enforcement and CEDAW principles.<sup>76</sup> Despite these advancements, gender capacity within justice institutions remains inadequate. A comprehensive gender capacity assessment is planned as part of the Gender Action Plan to identify systemic gaps and formulate targeted interventions to strengthen institutional responses.

### *iii. Challenges in Access to Justice for Women and Girls*

The 2021 Women’s Well-being National Study revealed troubling levels of gender-based violence:

- **Physical violence:** 18.9% of ever-partnered women
- **Sexual violence:** 6.8%
- **Psychological violence:** 27.9%

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<sup>70</sup> Source: Central Bank of Sri Lanka Annual Report, 2021)

<sup>71</sup> Source: International Labour Organization, Migrant Worker Brief, 2022)

<sup>72</sup> Sri Lanka Constitution, 1978. Article 12(1): All persons are equal before the law. Article 12(2): No citizen shall be discriminated against based on race, religion, language, caste, sex, or political opinion. Article 12(4): Article 12(4): Special provisions may be made for the advancement of women, children, and disabled persons.

<sup>73</sup> Source: Sri Lanka Constitution, 1978

<sup>74</sup> Source: Ninth Periodic CEDAW Report, 2021.

<sup>75</sup> Source: Cabinet Decision, January 4, 2021.

<sup>76</sup> Source: UNDP-supported training programs, 2015-2021.

- **Economic violence:** 18.1%
- **Controlling behaviour by partners:** 19.1%<sup>77</sup>

One in five Sri Lankan women has experienced multiple forms of violence, with younger women disproportionately affected. A 2016 UN Women study found that 96.5% of Sri Lankan men who admitted to committing rape faced no legal consequences.<sup>78</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these vulnerabilities, leading to increased cases of domestic violence, economic hardship, and greater reliance on informal coping mechanisms. Calls to SGBV helplines surged, yet access to shelters, psychosocial support, and legal aid remains inconsistent across regions.<sup>79</sup> While Sri Lanka’s Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (PDVA) of 2005 provides legal protection, enforcement is weak due to police reluctance and social stigma. Marital rape remains legal in most cases, and domestic violence is still widely regarded as a private issue rather than a criminal offence. The justice system faces severe inefficiencies, with an average of 17 years required for crime prosecution and appeals.<sup>80</sup> Limited legal aid, systemic delays, and the reluctance of law enforcement agencies to address gender-based violence further discourage survivors from seeking justice. Addressing these challenges necessitates investment in judicial efficiency, increased funding for legal aid programs, and greater coordination among service providers.

### **The Legal Aid Sector in Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka ratified the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1980**, reinforcing the government’s obligation to provide free legal assistance. Legal Aid Commission (LAC) is the mechanism through which the Sri Lankan government has institutionalized its commitment to the provision of legal aid. The LAC was established under the **Legal Aid Act No. 27 of 1978**, providing a statutory framework for legal aid services. LAC’s focus is litigation, but it also operates several subject-specific desks and projects. Despite these frameworks, **legal aid provision remains fragmented, with unequal geographic coverage and limited funding** (Source: Legal Aid Act No. 27 of 1978, ICCPR Act No. 56 of 2007).

The *Final Report on Stakeholder Mapping with Recommendations* presents key findings and strategic recommendations to enhance Sri Lanka’s legal aid system.<sup>81</sup> The report identifies significant gaps in accessibility, particularly for marginalized groups such as women, children, and persons with disabilities. A lack of coordination between key stakeholders—including the Legal Aid Commission (LAC), civil society organizations (CSOs), and law enforcement agencies—has hindered the efficient delivery of legal aid services.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, the report highlights deficiencies in legal aid infrastructure, including insufficient training for legal aid providers and an overly narrow focus on family law cases, which limits representation in criminal and fundamental rights matters. To address these issues, the report recommends broadening the definition of legal aid to encompass a wider range of legal services, establishing robust referral systems through local authorities, and formalizing law student placements to support legal counselling. Mid-term recommendations focus on improving staff training, restructuring the LAC to include a broader range of stakeholders, and integrating judicial oversight. Long-term strategies advocate for recognizing legal literacy as a constitutional right, creating an independent body to coordinate legal aid efforts, and developing a performance appraisal system for legal aid providers. These measures aim to make the legal aid system more inclusive, coordinated, and responsive to the justice needs of vulnerable communities.<sup>83</sup>

### **Donor support available to the Legal Aid sector.**

<sup>77</sup> Source: Department of Census and Statistics, Women’s Wellbeing National Study, 2021

<sup>78</sup> Source: UN Women Multi-Country Study, 2016.

<sup>79</sup> Source: National Committee on Women and National Institute of Mental Health Helpline Data, 2020.

<sup>80</sup> Source: Parliamentary Sectoral Oversight Committee Report on Legal Affairs, 2021.

<sup>81</sup> Source: Legal Aid Commission of Sri Lanka, JURE. 2023.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Source: Final Report on Stakeholder Mapping, JURE 2023.

The 2009 study, *The Legal Aid Sector in Sri Lanka: Searching for Sustainable Solutions*, conducted by UNDP, UNHCR, and The Asia Foundation, provided a comprehensive assessment of Sri Lanka’s legal aid system. It highlighted persistent challenges in accessibility, sustainability, and institutional effectiveness while offering strategic recommendations for long-term reform. It provides that Legal aid in Sri Lanka has historically relied on donor support, **with government funding increasing from Rs. 700,000 (USD 6,500) in 1996 to Rs. 50 million (USD 462,000) in 2007-2008**<sup>84</sup>. However, this funding remained insufficient and inconsistently allocated, with a disproportionate focus on family law cases rather than criminal defence, fundamental rights, or land disputes. The system also suffered from poor coordination between the LAC, civil society organizations, and law enforcement agencies, further limiting its effectiveness. Geographic disparities in service provision were stark. While urban areas had some legal aid presence, many rural and conflict-affected districts, such as Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, lacked any legal aid services. Vulnerable groups, including women, children, displaced persons, and persons with disabilities, faced additional barriers, particularly in accessing legal representation for domestic violence, inheritance, and land disputes. At the same time, court delays and case backlogs remained a major obstacle to justice despite a 72% beneficiary satisfaction rate<sup>85</sup>. The introduction of 329 Community Mediation Boards with 8,400 trained mediators provided an alternative to litigation, particularly in land disputes, but awareness and accessibility of these services remained limited.

The study recommended short-, mid-, and long-term reforms to address these systemic challenges. In the immediate term, it called for expanding legal aid coverage in underrepresented districts, enhancing referral mechanisms between legal aid providers and state institutions, and broadening the scope of legal aid to include criminal and administrative cases. Mid-term strategies focused on reducing donor dependency through the establishment of a government-backed Legal Aid Fund, strengthening training programs for legal aid providers, and introducing a performance monitoring system. In the long term, the report advocated for recognizing legal literacy as a constitutional right, establishing an independent legal aid oversight body, and digitizing legal aid services through e-filing and case tracking systems. **Despite being written 15 years ago**, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this study remain highly relevant today. The persistent lack of sustainability, weak institutional coordination, and inadequate access to legal aid for marginalized communities indicate that past interventions have failed to generate meaningful, long-term improvements. This underscores the urgent need for a fundamental shift in donor and national agency strategies—moving away from a business-as-usual approach toward a systemic, sustainable, and transformative model of legal aid provision.

### Judicial Sector Reforms

Sri Lanka faces a shortage of judges relative to its population<sup>86</sup>, significantly impacting case backlogs and judicial efficiency.<sup>87</sup>In response, the Ministry of Justice initiated a program in 2020 to expand judicial capacity by increasing the number of judges and courts. Despite economic challenges, 30 judicial officers were recruited in 2023, allowing for a modest expansion of judicial services. As a result, the number of judges per million people has risen to 19. Additionally, Small Claims Courts have been introduced to alleviate the burden on District Courts, particularly in financial cases, with new courts established in Colombo, Kandy, and Matara.

While infrastructure development efforts have progressed, economic instability and fluctuating market prices have posed challenges to the completion of new court facilities. Many projects faced temporary suspension due to expenditure control measures. Nevertheless, the Ratnapura and Welimada Court Complexes have been completed and handed over, while the Theldeniya and Galle Court Complexes are nearing completion. In 2020, the prison system operated at 260% capacity, the

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid, mentioned source Sri Lanka Legal Aid Commission Budget, 2007-2008.

<sup>85</sup> The Legal Aid Sector in Sri Lanka: Searching for Sustainable Solutions A Mapping Of Legal Aid Services In Sri Lanka.2009.

<sup>86</sup> Source: Ministry of Justice Sri Lanka, 2023.

<sup>87</sup> Source: Sri Lanka Judiciary Annual Report, 2023.

highest in South Asia, highlighting systemic inefficiencies.<sup>88</sup>The government has taken steps to mitigate these issues, including the release of 2,961 remand prisoners on bail, yet long delays in judicial processes persist, with 30% of remand prisoners awaiting sentencing for six months to over two years.<sup>89</sup>

Figure 11. MoJ Statistics on Court Cases

*Based on the provided court case statistics, the Sri Lankan judiciary continues to grapple with a significant backlog of pending cases despite achieving an overall case resolution efficiency rate of 73.64%<sup>90</sup>. Magistrate Courts demonstrate the highest efficiency rate at 91.84%, reflecting their role in expeditiously handling a large volume of minor offences and summary trials. Conversely, the Commercial High Court, with a resolution efficiency of just 13.52%, highlights a delay in adjudicating business disputes, which could have adverse implications for investor confidence and economic activity. The Supreme Court and District Courts also struggle with efficiency, indicating the need for judicial reforms to enhance case management and procedural efficiency. While efforts to recruit judicial officers and establish additional court infrastructure are ongoing, economic constraints have hindered the timely completion of court complexes. Additionally, the expansion of Small Claims Courts in key urban areas represents a positive step towards reducing the burden on the judiciary. However, systemic delays in high courts and appellate courts underscored the need for further digitalization, streamlined procedures, and improved coordination among legal aid providers to ensure equitable access to justice<sup>91</sup>.*

### Community Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution

It was reported that Sri Lanka has a well-established community mediation system, with 329 Community Mediation Boards operating across the country and 8,400 trained mediators providing services. To address land disputes, special mediation boards are functioning in 16 districts with the support of 489 mediators. These mechanisms play a critical role in reducing court caseloads and providing accessible, community-based dispute resolution options for citizens.<sup>92</sup>However, the same fact was mentioned in the 2009 development partners report: “**329 Community Mediation Boards** operate island-wide, with **8,400 trained mediators**.”

**Land dispute mediation** was introduced in **16 districts** with **489 mediators**<sup>93</sup>. While mediation is effective in reducing court caseloads, **awareness and accessibility remain low in rural areas.**”

### Digital Transformation of the Justice system.

The digitization of the Sri Lankan judiciary encompasses key advancements such as digitizing court records, e-filing of cases, virtual hearings, and live-streaming of court proceedings. While these initiatives gained momentum primarily during the COVID-19 pandemic, their implementation remains partial and uneven<sup>94</sup>. Despite progress in certain areas, significant gaps and challenges persist, requiring urgent attention and strategic intervention.

<sup>88</sup> Source: Department of Prisons, Sri Lanka, April 2020 Report)

<sup>89</sup> Source: Sri Lanka Bar Association Justice Sector Analysis, 2022)

<sup>90</sup> Source: Ministry of Justice Statistics, 2022

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Source: Community Mediation Board Annual Report, 2023.

<sup>93</sup>Source: Community Mediation Board Report, 2009, mentioned in The Legal Aid Sector in Sri Lanka: Searching for Sustainable Solutions: A Mapping Of Legal Aid Services In Sri Lanka. The Asia Foundation UNDP Equal Access to Justice Project UNHCR Ministry of Constitutional Affairs and National Integration Ministry of Justice and Law Reform.2009.

<sup>94</sup> Jayaweera, A. J. M. P. S. K. (2024). The path to E-judiciary: where does Sri Lanka stand? *Brazilian Journal of Development*, 10 (3), e68487.

Beyond technical and infrastructural limitations, several socio-economic barriers hinder the full establishment of an e-judiciary in Sri Lanka<sup>95</sup>. These include low IT literacy rates, particularly among legal professionals and court users, language barriers that limit accessibility to digital platforms, and a lack of public trust in digital legal processes. Financial constraints further slowdown modernization efforts, while limited public awareness and resistance to change among legal practitioners and court administrators continue to obstruct full-scale implementation<sup>96</sup>. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive, well-funded strategy that prioritizes capacity building, public awareness, and institutional readiness to ensure an inclusive and effective transition to a digital judiciary.

### **Child Justice System in Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka has an estimated child population of 6.2 million and a total population of 22.2 million.<sup>97</sup>The JURE project was developed to address longstanding challenges within Sri Lanka’s justice system for children, informed by sector analyses conducted during the identification and formulation process of the Action Document. At the time, children in conflict with the law, victims, and witnesses faced systemic challenges due to outdated laws, insufficient protections, and institutional inefficiencies. Hundreds of children interacted with the justice system annually—some as victims or witnesses of crimes, others as alleged offenders. However, rather than being supported by a specialized, child-sensitive system, they were often subjected to the same legal procedures as adults, leaving them vulnerable to further harm<sup>98</sup>. The justice sector was chronically underfunded, leading to delays, inefficiencies, and limited access to basic services<sup>99</sup>. As a result, Sri Lanka ranked 124 out of 197 countries in meeting international standards for children’s access to justice<sup>100</sup>.

Sri Lanka’s child justice system governed by laws dating back to 1929, with elements of the Penal Code from the 1800s still in force. These outdated legal frameworks failed to provide the necessary protections for children, leaving judges, law enforcement, and social workers without clear guidance on how to handle cases involving children. A major issue was the lack of child-sensitive procedures. Many lawyers, judges, and police officers lacked the training to communicate effectively with children, affecting investigations, legal representation, and advocacy efforts. Without age-appropriate justice mechanisms, children often experienced fear, confusion, and trauma while navigating the legal system. The urgency of reform became even clearer as official reports highlighted an alarming increase in child abuse cases. Reported cases of violence against children surged from 2,068 in 2004 to over 12,000 in 2015. In 2012, 89% of reported rape and incest cases involved children under 16. A 2009 study found that 14% of adolescent schoolgirls had been subjected to sexual abuse. Despite these shocking statistics, the justice system’s response was extremely slow. By 2014, UNICEF estimated that over 4,000 child abuse cases were pending trial, leaving victims in legal limbo for years. In many cases, victims had reached adulthood before seeing their cases resolved, enduring repeated re-victimization every time they appeared in court.

## **ANNEX 8. SAMPLING METHOD MATRIX**

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The following table summarizes the sampling approaches and their effectiveness in achieving their intended goals.

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<sup>95</sup> Discussion with the national stakeholders.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Annual Report, Volume I 2021., cited in UNICEF, *Sri Lanka Country Programme Document 2023–2027* (UNICEF Executive Board, 2022) [https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/12511/file/2022-PL37-Sri\\_Lanka\\_CPD-EN-ODS.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/12511/file/2022-PL37-Sri_Lanka_CPD-EN-ODS.pdf) accessed <<4.02.2025>>.

<sup>98</sup> See: Contribution Agreement ACA/2021/425-459

<sup>99</sup> Ibid

<sup>100</sup> Ibid

## Phase 2 –Field Phase: Interview, Data Collection

Category	Description	Key Activities/Facts	Key Findings/Observations
Data Collection Strategy	Overall approach.	Mixed-Methods: KIIs, FGDs. Primary & Secondary Data.	Ensured data reliability & strengthened validity. Facilitated continuous feedback.
Sampling Approach	How participants were selected.	Multi-Method: <i>Random</i> : Legal professionals, govt officials, academia. <i>Stratified</i> : Judicial actors, CSOs, Forensic Institutions. <i>Purposive</i> : Project stakeholders/beneficiaries, 50%+ female target. <i>Cluster</i> : Urban/Rural locations, high caseload areas. <i>Snowball</i> : Child beneficiaries.	Ensured representation from key stakeholder groups. Promoted gender balance. Maintained ethical considerations for vulnerable populations.
Sample Size Considerations	Factors influencing sample size	Based on stakeholder availability, logistical constraints, need for balanced representation. Explicitly addressed gender considerations (sex-disaggregated data). Focused on GBV/DV survivors, single mothers (JURE), marginalized groups. Sampling frame designed for inclusivity.	The evaluation methodology explicitly addressed gender considerations by integrating sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis. Sampling frame designed for inclusivity, reflecting diverse experiences.
Stakeholder Engagement	Who participated.	Government officials, Justice sector actors, Civil society, International partners, Direct beneficiaries (JURE women, GBV survivors, law students, law enforcement, judges).	Balanced perspective achieved through participation of both men and women.
Ethical Compliance	Adherence to standards.	Used OECD DAC/UNEG guidelines for ethical evaluations. Signed the UNEG Pledge to act ethically. Kept participant data confidential, as required by UNDP rules. Obtained informed consent, explaining the evaluation and asking for permission. Took steps to minimize any risks to participants during data collection. UNICEF provided training to data collectors on ethical data collection methods.	Stakeholder information treated with strict confidentiality. Adhered to ethical and legal principles.
Data Collection Execution	When and where it happened.	Oct 28 - End of November 2024. Locations: Colombo, Galle, Matara, Jaffna, Batticaloa, Anuradhapura, Ratnapura, Kurunegala, Hatton, Nuwara Eliya.	Extensive geographic scope ensured a diverse and inclusive dataset.
Data Outputs	Results of data gathering.	36 FGDs. 102 Participants (75 Female, 27 Male). Preliminary Findings Presentations (Dec 2024). Sex-disaggregated data collected.	Data collection included 36 FGD activities and key informant interviews at national and regional levels. 102 people were involved in the data collection, included 75 females and 27 males, have participated in the midterm evaluation.

### Phase 3: Analysis, Validation, and Report Writing - Summary Narrative

The data analysis for this evaluation employed a triangulation approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure validity and reliability of findings. Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs underwent thematic analysis, while quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and review of the project's Results Framework. Cross-cutting issues of gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion were specifically examined. Multiple triangulation methods (data source, methodological, and theory) were utilized to validate findings and ensure a comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of the JURE project.

### Phase 3: Analysis, Validation, and Report Writing – Matrix

Category	Description	Key Activities/Elements	Key Outputs/Considerations
<b>Data Analysis Methods</b>	How data was processed.	Triangulation approach (Qualitative & Quantitative)	Enhanced validity and reliability of findings. Conclusions based on multiple sources.
<b>Qualitative Analysis</b>	Methods for interview/FGD data.	Thematic analysis for patterns and themes.	Identification of key areas of success and shortcomings.
<b>Quantitative Analysis</b>	Methods for survey/secondary data.	Descriptive statistics, review of Results Framework indicators.	Assessment of progress towards planned outputs and outcomes.
<b>Cross-Cutting Issues</b>	Areas of specific focus.	Examination of Gender Equality, Human Rights-Based Approach, Disability Inclusion. Review of JURE Gender Action Plan.	Assessed integration of these principles in project design and implementation.
<b>Triangulation Methods</b>	Validation techniques.	1. Data Source (stakeholder comparison). 2. Methodological (KIIs vs. FGDs). 3. Theory (Governance, Human Rights, Gender).	Identified consistent patterns or discrepancies. Validated results across different data collection methods. Applied multiple theoretical perspectives.

## ANNEX 9. PLEDGE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN EVALUATION



By signing this pledge, I hereby commit to discussing and applying the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and to adopting the associated ethical behaviours.



### INTEGRITY

I will actively adhere to the moral values and professional standards of evaluation practice as outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and following the values of the United Nations. Specifically, I will be:

- **Honest and truthful** in my communication and actions.
- **Professional**, engaging in credible and trustworthy behaviour, alongside competence, commitment and ongoing reflective practice.
- **Independent, impartial and incorruptible**.



### ACCOUNTABILITY

I will be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken and responsible for honouring commitments, without qualification or exception; I will report potential or actual harms observed. Specifically, I will be:

- **Transparent regarding evaluation** purpose and actions taken, establishing trust and increasing accountability for performance to the public, particularly those populations affected by the evaluation.
- **Responsive** as questions or events arise, adapting plans as required and referring to appropriate channels where corruption, fraud, sexual exploitation or abuse or other misconduct or waste of resources is identified.
- **Responsible** for meeting the evaluation purpose and for actions taken and for ensuring redress and recognition as needed.



### RESPECT

I will engage with all stakeholders of an evaluation in a way that honours their dignity, well-being, personal agency and characteristics. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Access** to the evaluation process and products by all relevant stakeholders – whether powerless or powerful – with due attention to factors that could impede access such as sex, gender, race, language, country of origin, LGBTQ status, age, background, religion, ethnicity and ability.
- **Meaningful participation and equitable treatment** of all relevant stakeholders in the evaluation processes, from design to dissemination. This includes engaging various stakeholders, particularly affected people, so they can actively inform the evaluation approach and products rather than being solely a subject of data collection.
- **Fair representation** of different voices and perspectives in evaluation products (reports, webinars, etc.).



### BENEFICENCE

I will strive to do good for people and planet while minimizing harm arising from evaluation as an intervention. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Explicit and ongoing consideration of risks and benefits** from evaluation processes.
- **Maximum benefits** at systemic (including environmental), organizational and programmatic levels.
- **No harm**. I will not proceed where harm cannot be mitigated.
- **Evaluation makes an overall positive contribution** to human and natural systems and the mission of the United Nations.

I commit to playing my part in ensuring that evaluations are conducted according to the Charter of the United Nations and the ethical requirements laid down above and contained within the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. When this is not possible, I will report the situation to my supervisor, designated focal points or channels and will actively seek an appropriate response.

Bunafsha Gulakova, Team Leader

12.10.2024

*Bunafsha A. Gulakova*