



<b>1. Project Data:</b>		<b>Date Posted :</b> 08/20/2002									
<b>PROJ ID:</b> P044325		<b>Appraisal</b>	<b>Actual</b>								
<b>Project Name:</b> Ve Supreme Court Strgth	<b>Project Costs (US\$M)</b>	7.3	8.17								
<b>Country:</b> Venezuela	<b>Loan/Credit (US\$M)</b>	4.7	4.41								
<b>Sector(s):</b> Board: PS - Law and justice (100%)	<b>Cofinancing (US\$M)</b>										
<b>L/C Number:</b> L4270; LP327											
	<b>Board Approval (FY)</b>		98								
<b>Partners involved :</b>	<b>Closing Date</b>	06/30/2001	06/30/2001								
<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Prepared by :</b></td> <td><b>Reviewed by :</b></td> <td><b>Group Manager :</b></td> <td><b>Group:</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Michael R. Lav</td> <td>Gene Tidrick</td> <td>Rene I. Vandendries</td> <td>OEDCR</td> </tr> </table>				<b>Prepared by :</b>	<b>Reviewed by :</b>	<b>Group Manager :</b>	<b>Group:</b>	Michael R. Lav	Gene Tidrick	Rene I. Vandendries	OEDCR
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Michael R. Lav	Gene Tidrick	Rene I. Vandendries	OEDCR								
<b>2. Project Objectives and Components</b> <b>a. Objectives</b> To begin to improve the performance of the Supreme Court (SC) in terms of transparency, efficiency of administration and case management, and timeliness of decisions, through development of new work methods, attitudes, and behaviors that would have a demonstration effect leading to further judicial reform . <b>b. Components</b> As a LIL, the components changed during implementation, and the revised components were : (1) Improved communications (US\$ 1.27 million); (2) Improve Case Administration (US\$2.24 million) ; (3) Dissemination of Court Decisions (US\$ 1.1 million) ; (4) Court Administration and Management (US\$3.56 million); and (5) other activities, including promoting alternative judicial services for the public (such as mediation), and dialogues and discussion regarding judicial transparency, womens' and indigenous groups' issues . <b>c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates</b> The project cost US\$8.17 million financed by an IBRD loan for US\$4.41 million and the Government of Venezuela (US\$3.76 million). The project was appraised in August, 1997, approved on December 30, 1997, made effective on March 1, 1998, and closed on schedule on June 30, 2001.											
<b>3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:</b> (1) The SC opened a Civil Society Unit which met extensively with different interested groups on issues such as human rights, and promoted a wider range of activities involving them . In addition, the Danish Center Human Rights (DCHR) reviewed the performance and outcome of this component . The SC was judged to have become more accessible and transparent. The SC also encouraged the formation of an umbrella NGO group ("Alianza") which effectively promoted several issues and helped expand sector communications . The Civil Society Unit undertook to help disadvantaged groups enlarge their inadequate access to judicial services, and initiated a "Voices of the Poor" project. A website was developed. (2) The Project introduced new measures to enable the SC to discharge more effectively both the hearing and judging of cases . The number of cases heard by the SC increased by 10 percent, but because the number of cases also increased, the backlog was not materially reduced . However, new software and other systems improvements now allow for improved caseload processing and management . A number of extremely old cases (including from the 1940s and 1950s) were disposed of. (3) Court decisions are now disseminated virtually immediately, rather than with a delay of seven years as was the case previously . (4) Although not entirely due to this project (as Venezuela adopted a new Constitution in 1999), the SC underwent dramatic changes in its structure and management, and assumed responsibility of the operation of lower courts . Subsequently, new more transparent methods were adopted to select judges and a new system of evaluating judges was adopted, and, relatedly, 120 corrupt judges were dismissed . Other changes more directly assisted by the project included computerization and establishment of new units for each of the branches of the SC are improving archive, public information, management control and service functions . A substantial amount of training and other activities were also supported by the project.											
<b>4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:</b> The Supreme Court has gained stature in the judicial system and in the country, and the legal system earned increased respect from NGOs and society as a whole . The project helped the SC resolve a number of issues in the sector including improved access to and confidence in the judicial system . The project specifically assisted the SC to											

reach out to disadvantaged groups, NGOs, and other groups in improving access to and trust in the legal system .

**5. Significant Shortcomings (including non-compliance with safeguard policies):**

6. Ratings :	ICR	OED Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
<b>Outcome :</b>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	The project's outcome is rated "highly satisfactory" because the project achieved or exceeded all of its major relevant objectives without major shortcomings. Despite this rating, however, further progress will be needed in the future to reduce the SC's backlog of cases.
<b>Institutional Dev .:</b>	Substantial	High	To achieve an IDI rating of "high", the project as a whole needs to have made a critical contribution to the country's ability to effectively use its human, financial, and natural resources through achievement of the project's stated objectives. This project, underpinning such an important reform of the Supreme Court with impacts on the rest of the legal system, has met this criteria.
<b>Sustainability :</b>	Likely	Likely	Recognizing that political upheavals can adversely affect the country's legal system, the project nevertheless merits a sustainability rating of "likely" much more than a lower rating.
<b>Bank Performance :</b>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	
<b>Borrower Perf .:</b>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	
<b>Quality of ICR :</b>		Satisfactory	

**NOTE:** ICR rating values flagged with '\*' don't comply with OP/BP 13.55, but are listed for completeness.

**7. Lessons of Broad Applicability:**

1. Involving an "NGO unit" in a project to assist with implementation can help build bridges with skeptical civil society groups and help develop solutions to difficult problems . 2. Substantial and widespread improvement of judicial systems seems to benefit from collaboration of diverse stakeholders and a variety of concerned groups . Improved equipment alone is not enough. 3. Improving the integrity and competence of a Supreme Court can have wide-ranging benefits for the whole judicial system . 4 Transparency and participation, as promoted by this project, play crucial roles in establishing credible and effective judicial systems . 5. Defining realistic objectives, and, in the context of a LIL, flexibility in adapting objectives in the light of new information, play an important role in creating successful projects.

**8. Assessment Recommended?** ☐ Yes ☒ No

**9. Comments on Quality of ICR:**

The ICR clearly and thoroughly presents this multifaceted project .