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Government of India
Department of Justice
Ministry of Law and Justice

Jaisalmer House, 26-Mansingh Road,
New Delhi – 110011
Date: 31st July, 2026

Subject: Call for Proposals under “Scheme for Action Research and Studies on Judicial Reforms” of Department of Justice-reg.

The National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms was set up by the Government to achieve the twin goals of (i) increasing access by reducing delays and arrears; and (ii) enhancing accountability through structural changes and by setting performance standards and capacities.

2. With a view to involve Judicial Academies, Law Universities, Indian Institutes of Management/Technology and reputed Institutions/Organizations working in the field of justice delivery, legal research and judicial reforms for achieving the objectives of the National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms, the Department formulated “Scheme of Action Research and Studies on Judicial Reforms”. Recently, we have added emergent areas of research to the list of topics for studies under the said Scheme, as enclosed.

3. All projects sanctioned under the said Scheme are subject to the approval of Project Sanctioning Committee (PSC) of Scheme. The “Guidelines of the Scheme” and “Proforma” for submitting proposals is available at <https://doj.gov.in/scheme-for-action-research-and-studies-on-judicial-reforms-5/> including further information regarding the said Scheme.

4. Department of Justice invites proposals for undertaking research on the indicated topic(s) from afore-mentioned esteemed institutions. The proposals, as per the prescribed format, may please be sent to the undersigned for consideration by the Project Sanctioning Committee **latest by 31st August, 2026.** In case of any further queries, kindly contact the undersigned.

Enclosed: List of topics/areas

Yours faithfully,


(Monica Ram) 31/7/26
Director

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

For Undertaking Research Studies under the

“Scheme for Action Research and Studies on Judicial Reforms”

1. Background

The National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms was established with the objective of improving access to justice by reducing delays and arrears in the justice delivery system and enhancing accountability through institutional reforms, capacity building and performance standards.

To support evidence-based policy making and strengthen the justice delivery ecosystem, the Department of Justice invites proposals from eligible institutions for undertaking research studies under the “Scheme for Action Research and Studies on Judicial Reforms”.

2. Invitation for Proposals

The Department of Justice invites proposals from eligible institutions for conducting research studies on the themes specified in this RFP.

3. Research Themes

Proposals are invited for the following studies:

- i. Scope and Possible Models for Commercial Use of Data Generated under the e-Courts Project.
- ii. Scope for Expansion of Virtual Courts as an Effective Alternative to Regular Courts in Petty Offence Cases.
- iii. Issues Related to Digitalization of Courts – A Ground Report.
- iv. Review of Implementation and Functioning of Gram Nyayalayas.
- v. Institutionalising Pro Bono Culture in India: A Study of Advocate Participation and Role of Pro Bono Clubs in Law Schools under Nyaya Bandhu Programme.

- vi. Advancing Access to Justice through Pro Bono Lawyering: A National Study of Nyaya Bandhu Programme Implementation and Impact.
- vii. Bridging the Justice Gap: Evaluating the Reach and Impact of Pro Bono Legal Services under Nyaya Bandhu Programme in India.

Detailed scope of work, methodology requirements and expected deliverables for each study are provided in Annexure-I.

4. Eligibility Criteria

4.1. The following institutions are eligible to submit proposals:

- a. National Law Universities and other recognized Universities.
- b. Judicial Academies.
- c. Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).
- d. Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).
- e. Reputed research institutions, think tanks and organizations working in the field of justice delivery, legal research, public policy and judicial reforms.
- f. Any other institution considered suitable by the Department of Justice.

4.2. The proposing institution shall satisfy the following minimum eligibility requirements:

A. Institutional Eligibility

- (a) The institution shall have completed at least three (3) research studies/projects during the last five (5) years for any Ministry/Department of Central Government, State Government, Constitutional Body, Statutory Authority, Court, Tribunal, Regulatory Authority, International Organization or Multilateral Institution.
- (b) The institution shall have published at least five (5) research reports, policy papers, peer-reviewed journal articles or books in the fields of law, governance, public policy, justice delivery, digital governance, public administration or allied subjects during the last five (5) years.

B. Research Team Eligibility

1. The Project Director/Principal Investigator shall possess:

- A postgraduate degree in Law, Public Policy, Public Administration, Economics, Statistics, Data Science, Management or any other relevant discipline.
- Minimum ten (10) years of professional experience in research, policy analysis, programme implementation or consultancy.
- Experience of leading at least three (3) completed research studies/projects.

2. The research team shall comprise at least:

- One Team Leader/Principal Investigator.
- Two Research Professionals having postgraduate qualifications and minimum three years' experience.
- One Data Analyst/Statistician wherever primary survey or quantitative analysis is proposed.

3. Any replacement of key personnel after award of the project shall require prior approval of the Department of Justice.

5. Duration of Study

The duration of each study shall be twelve (12) months from the date of signing of the Memorandum of Agreement unless otherwise approved by the Department of Justice.

6. Scope of Proposal

The proposal shall clearly indicate:

- a. Understanding of the subject matter and objectives.
- b. Detailed methodology.
- c. Sampling framework and geographical coverage.
- d. Stakeholder consultation plan.
- e. Data collection tools and techniques.
- f. Work plan with timelines and milestones.
- g. Risk mitigation strategy.
- h. Team composition and institutional expertise.

7. Deliverables

The selected agency shall submit, as applicable:

- a. Inception Report.
- b. Baseline Assessment Report.
- c. Stakeholder Consultation Reports.
- d. Interim Progress Reports.
- e. Draft Final Report.
- f. Presentation before the Department/Project Sanctioning Committee.
- g. Final Report incorporating comments of the Department.
- h. Policy Briefs, Frameworks, Guidelines or Roadmaps as specified under the selected research theme.

8. Proposal Submission Requirements

The proposal shall contain the following:

Part A – Technical Proposal

1. Title of Study.
2. Institutional Profile.
3. Details of Principal Investigator/Project Coordinator.
4. Relevant Experience of Institution.
5. Understanding of the Assignment.
6. Objectives.
7. Scope of Work.
8. Detailed Methodology.
9. Sampling Design.
10. Work Plan and Timeline.
11. Team Composition.
12. Expected Outputs and Deliverables.
13. Details of similar assignments undertaken.

Part B – Financial Proposal

Detailed budget under the following heads:

Sl. No.	Budget Head
1	Research Personnel
2	Field Visits/Court Visits
3	Data Collection
4	Travel and Local Conveyance
5	Data Entry and Analysis
6	Workshops/Consultations
7	Report Writing and Editing
8	Printing and Dissemination
9	Contingencies/Miscellaneous

The budget shall be realistic, justified and supported by detailed calculations.

9. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals shall be evaluated by the Project Sanctioning Committee on the basis of:

- a. Institutional capability and relevant experience.
- b. Understanding of the research problem.
- c. Quality and robustness of methodology.
- d. Expertise of the proposed team.
- e. Feasibility of work plan and timelines.
- f. Value for money and reasonableness of budget.

10. Selection Process

The Department reserves the right to:

- a. Seek clarifications from applicants.
- b. Call institutions for presentation of proposals.
- c. Accept or reject any proposal without assigning reasons.
- d. Modify the scope of work, timelines or deliverables before award of the project.

11. Payment Terms

11.1. Financial assistance shall be released in installments subject to:

- a. Approval of the Department of Justice and IFD.
- b. Execution of requisite documents.
- c. Submission and acceptance of deliverables.
- d. Submission of Utilization Certificates and Statement of Expenditure as applicable.

11.2. The financial assistance shall ordinarily be released in the following manner:

First installment upon the DoJ's receipt of a copy of this Agreement signed by the Implementing Agency along with detailed work plan.	20 %
Second installment upon the DoJ's receipt of an interim- progress report confirming completion of the preparatory work for the implementation of the Assignment, including selection/ appointment of staff, preparation of surveys, questionnaires, training materials, drawing of sample, collection of data, as applicable	40 %
Third installment upon the DoJ's receipt of the final report from Implementing Agency.	30 %
Final installment upon acceptance of Final Report to the DoJ.	10%
Total	100%

Release of funds shall be subject to satisfactory performance and acceptance of deliverables by the Department of Justice.

12. Submission of Proposals

The proposal should be submitted in the prescribed format along with all supporting documents on or before the date specified by the Department of Justice.

13. Proposal Validity

The proposal shall remain valid for a period of one (1) year from the last date prescribed for submission of proposals.

14. Undertaking by the Bidder

The proposal shall contain a signed undertaking stating that:

- a. All information furnished in the proposal is true and correct.
- b. The institution is legally competent to enter into contracts.
- c. The institution has not been blacklisted, debarred or declared ineligible by any Central Government Ministry, State Government, Court, Tribunal, Regulatory Authority or Public Sector Undertaking.
- d. No conflict of interest exists that may affect execution of the project.
- e. The institution agrees to abide by all terms and conditions contained in the RFP.

15. Flexibility in Methodology and Deliverables

The scope of work, methodology and deliverables prescribed under each research theme indicate the minimum requirements of the Department.

The proposing institution may suggest additional methodologies, stakeholder consultations, surveys, analytical frameworks, outputs or deliverables which, in its opinion, would enhance the quality and utility of the study. Such additions shall clearly be identified and justified in the proposal.

16. Grounds for Summary Rejection

A proposal shall be summarily rejected if:

- a. It is submitted after the prescribed deadline.
- b. It is incomplete or lacks mandatory documents.
- c. It fails to satisfy any of the minimum eligibility criteria.
- d. It contains false, misleading or fabricated information.
- e. The financial proposal is not submitted in the prescribed format.
- f. The proposal is conditional in nature.

- g. The bidder has been blacklisted or debarred by any Government authority.

17. Clarifications

Any clarification regarding the RFP may be sought in writing through e-mail from:

Under Secretary (National Mission for Judicial Reforms)

Department of Justice

Ministry of Law and Justice

Email: dir-nm-doj@gov.in

No clarification shall be entertained after seven (7) days prior to the last date of submission of proposals.

18. Disclaimer

The Department of Justice reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal, annul the selection process, modify the scope of work, or cancel the RFP at any stage without assigning any reason whatsoever and without incurring any liability to the applicants.

Submission of a proposal shall not confer any right upon the proposing institution for award of the project.

19. Non-Negotiable Conditions

The successful proposing institution shall agree to the following conditions:

- i. All intellectual property rights, data, databases, reports, survey instruments and other outputs generated under the project shall vest exclusively with the Department of Justice.
- ii. No report, article, paper, presentation, publication or dissemination of findings shall be undertaken without prior written approval of the Department of Justice.
- iii. The proposing institution shall maintain confidentiality of all information, records and data obtained during the study.
- iv. The Department shall have the right to seek revisions, additional analysis or clarifications before acceptance of any deliverable.
- v. The Department may terminate the project for non-performance, breach of contract, misrepresentation or violation of applicable laws.
- vi. The proposing institution shall comply with all applicable laws, including data protection, privacy and confidentiality requirements.

- vii. The proposing institution shall preserve all project records for a minimum period of three years after completion of the project and shall provide access to such records whenever required by the Department.
- viii. The Department shall have unrestricted rights to use, reproduce, modify, publish and disseminate the outputs of the study.

20. Proposal Submission Checklist

The proposing institution shall ensure submission of the following documents:

Sl. No.	Document	Submitted (Yes/No)
1	Covering Letter	
2	Technical Proposal	
3	Financial Proposal	
4	Institutional Profile	
5	Details of Relevant Research Projects	
6	Details of Publications	
7	Curriculum Vitae of Key Personnel	
8	Work Plan and Timeline	
9	Detailed Budget with Break-up	
10	Undertaking and Declaration	
11	Any other supporting document	

Incomplete proposals are liable to be rejected.

Annexure-I

Detailed Scope of Work, Methodology and Deliverables

“List of Topics/Areas” for inviting new research proposals under “Scheme for Action Research and Studies on Judicial Reforms”, Department of Justice.

The following are the proposed research topics/areas identified under the “Scheme for Action Research and Studies on Judicial Reforms” of the Department of Justice. The timeline for completion of each research study/project shall be **12 months** from the date of sanction/commencement of the project.

1. Scope and possible models for commercial use of data generated under the e-Courts Project.

i. Expected Scope of work:

- Proposals may be invited from appropriate agency/institutions, etc., to identify the types of data and services generated under eCourts Mission Mode Project that can be monetized given their commercial viability.
- Classify potential commercial users (e.g., law firms, data analytics companies, legal tech platforms).
- To examine the feasibility of levying charges out of the royalty earned for any book/article/research material published using data from eCourts Project and the possibility of giving due credit to Dept. of Justice & Committee.
- Research global best practices for monetizing public sector digital services and propose a tiered pricing model based on usage volume, data type, and user category.
- Engage with legal experts & commercial entities to find suitable models for implementation without infringing upon rights of citizens to access public data. Come up with draft policy guidelines for levying user charges.

ii. Methodology:

Any methodology adopted should mandatorily include the following:

- Organize consultations with legal tech firms, law associations, law institutes and other concerned stakeholders.
- Deploy surveys to assess willingness to pay and pricing sensitivity.
- Incorporate feedback into pricing and policy design.
- Conduct legal review to ensure compliance with privacy and data protection laws.

iii. Expected Deliverables:

- **Baseline Report:** Baseline Report would contain the assessment of current eCourts services and usage patterns
 - **Commercial Use Inventory:** This includes the list of data/services with commercial potential
 - **Pricing Model Proposal:** The proposal will contain tiered user charge framework.
 - **Stakeholder Feedback Summary:** Insights from consultations and surveys should be documented and submitted to DoJ for perusal
 - **Draft Policy Document:** These would contain the guidelines for implementation of user charges.
2. **Scope for expansion of Virtual Courts as an effective alternative to regular courts in petty offence cases.**

i. Expected Scope of Work:

- Identification of offences that can be brought under the adjudication of Virtual Courts and conducting feasibility study in this regard. The offences may include summary trials, petty traffic and municipal offences, small claims, tax or GST-related violations, and other matters punishable with fine.
- Assessment of existing Virtual Courts for traffic challan cases to identify strengths, gaps, and areas for technological or procedural enhancement.
- Identify framework for integration of virtual courts with secure digital payment gateways for online fine deposit, real-time data exchange with enforcement agencies, and automated updating of case status in ICJS and eCourts databases.
- Draft uniform model guidelines for e-filing, e-challan generation, online adjudication and transfer of contested cases to regular courts.

- Suggesting a comprehensive framework for implementation of the Virtual Courts for the offences identified.

ii. Methodology:

Any methodology adopted should mandatorily include the following:

- **Stakeholder Consultation:** Meetings with legal policy firms, law associations, law institutes, Judicial Officers, Police Departments and other concerned stakeholders.
- **Feasibility Study:** Conduct feasibility study for 2-3 categories of offences to evaluate scalability and user readiness.
- **Best Practice Analysis:** Identify best practices from national/international models for digital justice in petty offences.
- **Legal Compliance:** Conduct legal review to ensure compliance with procedural laws and rules governing court processes and electronic adjudication.

iii. Expected Deliverables:

- **Baseline Report:** Containing the assessment of existing Virtual Courts and feasibility for expansion.
- **Stakeholder Feedback Summary:** Insights from consultations and surveys should be documented and submitted to DoJ for perusal.
- **Draft Policy Document:** A policy framework containing model guidelines, digital process flows, e-payment and e-challan mechanism, and specific recommendations for any statutory or procedural requirements, including for expansion of Virtual Courts.
- **Implementation Roadmap:** Develop a time-bound roadmap for expansion of Virtual Courts, beginning with pilot testing of few categories of petty offences in selected jurisdictions. This should include key milestones, capacity-building measures and integration with existing digital infrastructure under eCourts project.

3. Issues related to Digitalization of Courts- A Ground Report.

i. Expected Scope of Work:

- Map and document the current state of digitalization across the justice delivery landscape, covering the range of institutions, mechanisms and service channels through which justice is accessed and delivered.
- Identify field-level challenges and process gaps in the implementation and adoption of digital systems, recognizing that different institutional contexts operate under distinct governance, technical and operational arrangements.
- Classify issues across relevant stakeholder categories, including adjudicatory personnel, administrative and registry staff, legal practitioners, litigants, service providers and technical personnel.
- Examine infrastructural, connectivity, hardware, manpower and training-related constraints that affect digitalization outcomes across the justice delivery system.
- Study variations in adoption and usage across institutions and geographies to identify systemic issues, contextual challenges and equity gaps, with particular attention to citizen access and last-mile service delivery.
- Assess the extent to which digital justice services are accessible, inclusive and user responsive, especially for marginalized and underserved populations.
- Research best practices and locally evolved solutions that may be standardized and replicated across the justice delivery ecosystem.
- Develop structured recommendations and draft guidance for improving digital processes, institutional workflows and citizen interfaces across the justice delivery landscape.

ii. Methodology

- Conduct field visits to selected court complexes, ADR and ODR service delivery points across varied geographies (urban, semi-urban and rural).
- Organize structured interactions with key stakeholders including adjudicatory personnel, administrative and registry staff, legal practitioners, legal aid personnel and dispute resolution service providers.
- Organize consultations with technical teams, system integrators and platform operators engaged in supporting digitalization within the justice delivery system.

- Engage with citizen users to capture ground-level experience of digital justice services across different access points and service channels.
- Deploy surveys and questionnaires to assess user experience, operational difficulties, access barriers and adoption challenges across institutional categories.
- Review available usage data, service logs, digital workflow records and citizen feedback mechanisms.
- Undertake comparative assessment across institutions, geographies and user segments to identify patterns, gaps and replicable practices.
- Incorporate multi-stakeholder feedback into analysis and recommendations, ensuring that citizen perspectives are accorded appropriate weight alongside institutional and technical inputs.

iii. **Expected Deliverables**

- **Baseline Assessment Report:** Documentation of the present status of digitalization, usage patterns and service delivery outcomes across sampled institutions within the justice delivery landscape.
- **Issue Compendium:** A categorized compilation of field-level issues, process gaps and stakeholder challenges, organized by institution type, user category and thematic domain.
- **Citizen Access and Inclusion Note:** A focused assessment of barriers to digital justice access for underserved populations, with specific reference to language, literacy, connectivity and awareness constraints.
- **Best Practices Note:** Identification of replicable practices and successful local innovations observed across the justice delivery ecosystem.
- **Process Improvement Recommendations:** Practical suggestions for addressing gaps in systems, training, infrastructure, workflows and inter-institutional coordination across the justice delivery landscape.
- **Guidance Report:** A structured, actionable guidance report for the Department of Justice to inform future policy interventions, standard operating procedures and investment priorities for effective and inclusive digitalization of the justice delivery system.

4. **Review of Implementation and Functioning of Gram Nyayalayas.**

i. Expected Scope of Work:

- To undertake a comprehensive assessment of the implementation and functioning of Gram Nyayalayas established under the Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 across States/UTS.
- Expanding the scope of Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 to include more civil and criminal matters.
- To examine the effectiveness of Gram Nyayalayas in providing affordable, speedy and doorstep justice to rural and marginalized citizens.
- To study the present operational status of notified Gram Nyayalayas, including availability of infrastructure, appointment of Nyayadhikaris, staffing pattern and case disposal trends.
- To identify key challenges faced by States/UTs in notifying, operationalising and running Gram Nyayalayas and suggest remedial measures for improving their effectiveness.
- To evaluate utilization of financial assistance released under the Scheme including recurring and non-recurring grants provided by the Central Government.
- To examine best practices adopted by States/UTs in operationalisation of Gram Nyayalayas and recommend a replicable model for wider implementation.
- To assess awareness and accessibility of Gram Nyayalayas among rural populations and stakeholders including litigants, Panchayati Raj Institutions, lawyers and judicial officers.
- To suggest measures for strengthening monitoring mechanisms including effective use of the Gram Nyayalayas Portal of the Department of Justice.
- To recommend policy interventions and institutional reforms for improving coverage, efficiency and long-term sustainability of Gram Nyayalayas.

ii. Methodology:

Any methodology adopted should mandatorily include the following:

- Collection and analysis of data relating to notified and functional Gram Nyayalayas across States/UTs.

- Consultation with State Governments, High Courts, Nyayadhikaris, judicial officers, Panchayati Raj Institutions and other relevant stakeholders.
- Field visits/sample studies of selected Gram Nyayalayas for assessment of ground-level functioning and infrastructure.
- Review of financial assistance released under the Scheme and assessment of utilization by States/UTs.
- Study of pendency, disposal patterns and categories of cases handled by Gram Nyayalayas.
- Conduct stakeholder surveys/interactions to assess awareness, accessibility and effectiveness of Gram Nyayalayas.
- Identification and documentation of best practices and successful operational models.
- Examination of legal, administrative and financial constraints affecting operationalisation of Gram Nyayalayas.

iii. **Expected Deliverables:**

- **Baseline Assessment Report:** Detailed assessment of status and functioning of Gram Nyayalayas across States/UT's.
- **Infrastructure and Operational Analysis Report:** Assessment of infrastructure availability, staffing, appointment of Nyayadhikaris and operational challenges.
- **Financial Utilization Report:** Analysis of utilization of Central assistance released under the Scheme.
- **Stakeholder Consultation Report:** Summary of consultations/interactions conducted with stakeholders along with key findings.
- **Best Practices Compendium:** Documentation of successful practices/models adopted by States/UTs.
- **Policy Recommendation Report:** Recommendations for strengthening implementation, monitoring and sustainability of Gram Nyayalayas.
- **Draft Framework/Guidelines:** Suggested framework for improving operationalisation, monitoring and future expansion of Gram Nyayalayas under the Scheme.

5. **Institutionalising Pro Bono Culture in India: A Study of Advocate Participation, and Role of Pro-Bono Clubs in Law Schools under Nyaya Bandhu Programme in**

the States/UTs of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Kerala and Meghalaya.

i. Scope of Work:

- Assessment of participation trends, motivations and barriers among Pro Bono Advocates under the Nyaya Bandhu Programme across selected States/UTs.
- Evaluation of the functioning and effectiveness of Pro Bono Clubs in law schools in promoting student engagement and legal outreach activities.
- Beneficiary-centric assessment of accessibility, satisfaction and outcomes of legal services delivered under the Programme.
- Identification of gaps, best practices and formulation of policy recommendations for strengthening and institutionalising pro bono culture.

ii. Methodology of the Study:

- Mixed-method approach comprising quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with advocates, students, faculty coordinators and beneficiaries.
- State-wise sampling across Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Kerala and Meghalaya to ensure representative coverage.
- Use of structured questionnaires, interview schedules and field visits for data collection and validation.
- Data analysis through comparative assessment, trend analysis and case studies to derive evidence-based insights and recommendations.

iii. Expected Outcomes / Key Deliverables:

- Evidence-based insights on participation trends, motivations, and barriers among Pro Bono Advocates.
- Assessment of effectiveness of Pro-Bono Clubs in promoting student engagement and legal outreach.
- Beneficiary-centric evaluation of accessibility, satisfaction, and outcomes of legal services delivered under the programme.
- Identification of gaps and best practices in implementation across states and institutions.
- Specific recommendations for strengthening incentives, capacity building, and institutional support.

- Framework for sustainable integration of pro-bono culture within legal education and professional practice.