

## **Application of Information Systems to the Management of Chile's Courts of Justice, 1986**

### Summary:

This project arose in response to the increasing congestion of Chile's court system, which had severely limited the court's capacity to resolve cases in a timely manner. The cause of the congestion was that the number of cases coming before the courts was greater than the court's ability to resolve them.

The Ministry of Justice, through its Office of Budgeting and Planning, proposed to address the problem by reorganizing and streamlining work methods and the information management systems in the courts and commissioned CIAPEP to assess a project that would involve the introduction of computers to run three information systems, identified as: (1) a case tracking system, (2) a document processing system; and (3) a juridical and judicial database. The project was assessed on the basis of measurements and interviews in more than 30 individual courts throughout the country and determination of the number of staff hours (including those of judges) that would be saved per day by installing the new system. The study concluded that the case processing capacity would increase by at least 30% in each court in which the systems were to be introduced.

The methodology designed by the project assessment team involved identifying and measuring the benefits of the projects in terms of the number of new courts that would have to be created to obtain the same increase in capacity that would be achieved by introducing the computerized systems noted above. That methodology, however,

underestimated the project benefits, meaning it disregarded that implementation would shorten case duration as a result of increased control over case tracking, more timely case processing, and faster response times from collaborating agencies.

Given the extremely high social profitability of this project, the study concluded that it should be implemented as soon as possible in the most congested first instance courts and the Court of Appeals and then phased in throughout the rest of the country.