



STRATEGY FOR THE COURTS OF DENMARK 2019-2022

1. The Courts' Role and Duties

The Courts safeguard our democracy, the rule of law, and the legal rights of the individual.

The Courts' duties are defined in the Constitution and other legislation.

The Courts impose sentences and settle disputes between individuals, businesses, and public authorities. The Courts decide issues on the legality of the actions of public authorities and ensure that legislation is in accordance with the Constitution and Denmark's international obligations. The Courts also decide enforcement proceedings, probate matters, and land registration.

In the words of the Constitution: **The Courts have the judicial power.**

The Courts must ensure equality before the law for all, and must protect the individual against abuse of power. According to the Constitution, judges are therefore independent. They must decide cases only according to the law, and they must be impartial. They must not allow themselves to be influenced by political or other extraneous interests.

2. Background for the Strategy

The aim of the Strategy is to meet the wishes and expectations of Court users and other interested parties as regards the development of the Courts of Denmark in the coming years. This is central to the Courts' ability to create value for Court users and to fulfil their role in society as the judicial power.

At the same time the Strategy must reflect and meet the operational challenges which the Courts of Denmark face. The solution is of great importance in both the long and the short term: to ensure law and justice in a productive and effective way. The operational problems are particularly linked to the IT-support of the work of the Courts and the forthcoming replacements of technical systems; these are critical for the Courts to perform their duties.

The IT operational challenges mean that in the first instance the emphasis will be on continuing to secure a stable, future-proof running of the system, after which the focus will be directed more towards business development initiatives.

In the previous period (2013-2018) the Courts worked purposefully with a number of strategic objectives, focus areas, and projects. This strategy built on the valuable experiences and results already achieved by the Courts, e.g. best practice across the Courts, communication, digitalization, and competence development.

The vision and values of the Courts from the previous period are to be maintained, while the new strategy for 2019-2022 continues two of the four objectives, namely: short case-processing times, and consistency. The vision, values, and the four objectives constitute the strategic framework for ensuring that the Courts continue to guarantee and protect our democracy, the rule of law, and the rights of the individual.

The actual implementation of the Strategy will be linked to the financial framework for the Courts of Denmark in the period 2019-2022, for which there is a multi-annual agreement. In accordance with this agreement an annual effectivity saving of 1.2 pct. will be carried out.

3. The Strategy Framework

The Strategy steering-documents consist of a 4-year strategy (vision and values, objectives, and strategic themes), an annual cycle, and an annual plan of action with projects.

The Strategy framework for the Courts of Denmark in the period 2019-2022 consists of the following components:

- **Vision and values:** The vision and values of the Courts of Denmark will be maintained.
- **Objectives:** Four objectives have been set for the period 2019-2022. Two of the objectives are a continuation of the previous Strategy period, whereas the two others are new. The two new objectives express the relations which Court users, other interested parties, and employees of the Courts have placed particular emphasis on during the formation of the Strategy, including an analysis of our Court users and other interested parties.
- **Strategic themes:** The Strategic themes set a collected, prioritized focus on a specific problem-complex, or on a change which is sought within the scope of the four objectives. With the theme as spring-board a single or a diverse number of projects can be set in motion in support of one or more of the objectives. As a starting-point the Strategic themes are required to have validity for the Strategy period in general, but they will be revisited annually, so that there is an ongoing guarantee that the Courts are working with the correct themes in support of the four objectives.
- **Projects (plan of action):** The Strategic themes are to be realized through implementing projects that will support one or more of the objectives. In the prioritizing process, emphasis will be laid on the extent to which the projects can be expected to promote one or more of the four objectives. Measuring-points, which must be realized, are to be included in the actual projects. The projects will be prioritized, controlled, and executed according to a joint project-model, to be developed in 2019. The projects are brought together in an annual joint plan of action for the Courts of Denmark. The plan of action also contains the concrete objectives for case-processing times.
- **Measuring-points:** At the beginning and end of the Strategy period a user-survey is to be carried out, while the specific objectives for actions and activities are to be formulated in the concrete projects.

4. The Strategy for the Courts of Denmark 2019-2022

VISIONS AND VALUES (long-term)

The Courts work for law and justice in a modern and professional manner, making the right decisions at the right time – decisions that are well-founded and easy to understand. In this way we earn the public’s trust and respect.

Our values are accountability, respectful treatment, credibility, openness, and receptiveness.

OBJECTIVES (4-yearly)

USER FOCUS	SHORT CASE-PROCESSING TIMES	CONSISTENCY	QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY
STRATEGIC THEMES (annually revisited)	Stable and future-proof system support Best practice A modern and attractive workplace with the relevant competences Criminal case domain Common, shared solutions and effective operations Communications and branding User-oriented culture		

Consolidated governance and executive power

PROJECT PORTFOLIO

(annual plan
of action)

Projects in the plan of action (x 4)

5. Values

The Courts build on strong values, which, every day and in every context, we do our best to live up to, both externally and internally.

The Courts' values are:

Accountability	Respectful treatment
<p>The Courts must make correct, justified, and clear decisions in a timely manner. We must therefore have the necessary professional competencies and personal skills to perform our duties with the highest possible quality and efficiency.</p> <p>Everyone at the Courts has a shared responsibility for both the individual court's outcome, and for the Courts in general. We therefore share our knowledge, and we develop and encourage the use of best practice.</p>	<p>We treat everyone properly and with respect. We demonstrate an understanding for the individual's situation and background, and we respect diversity. We express ourselves in a clear and comprehensive manner both verbally and in writing.</p>
Credibility	Openness and Receptiveness
<p>In the Courts we work according to the Law and are credible as such. We do not allow ourselves to be influenced by extraneous considerations. We are impartial and neutral, and we are aware that we must appear so at any given time.</p>	<p>The Courts must be open and accessible to all. We cooperate with one another and our court users with a respect for the framework that applies to the Courts. We work for the Courts to develop in a modern way as an organisation and a workplace.</p>

6. The Four Overall Objectives

Four objectives have been established for the Courts of Denmark for the period 2019-2022. They express the direction in which the Courts wish to work, and they constitute guideposts for the areas where the Courts particularly wish to develop.

Objective 1: User-focus

The Courts protect our democracy, the rule of law, and the legal rights of the individual. In order to live up to these objectives, the Courts must continue to be able to create value for our users and for our society. The increasing speed at which society is developing – not least due to new technologies – requires that we develop in a modern way to meet the demands and expectations of our users. User-focus is therefore an important area for the Courts to work on in the coming years.

The Courts will support the realization of the user-focus objective by employing up-to-date methods and by working with the culture of the Courts. The natural starting-point for the Courts' work with their day-to-day tasks and any possible changes therefore becomes to a greater extent a user-focus on how to meet the wishes, expectations, and needs of society.

It is expected that this objective will contribute to a consolidation of the services, frameworks, and processes which the Courts make available, thereby improving the value of the Court users' meeting with the Courts and enabling the Courts to continue to work for law and justice in a modern professional way.

Objective 2: Short Case-Processing Times

When individual citizens and businesses come into contact with the Courts, the situation is typically of great significance for their lives and future possibilities. It is therefore crucial that a decision is given at the right time. Short case-processing times are important for ensuring the rights of citizens and for experiencing timely law and justice.

In the criminal case domain some of the case-processing times are fixed politically, whereas this is not so with other cases. However, this does not mean that the case-processing time in, for instance, civil cases is not of central importance for the Courts' ability to administer law and justice to the citizens and businesses of Denmark.

The Courts will support the objective of short case-processing times by continuing to focus on optimizing and developing their procedures, including ongoing cooperation between the public authorities in criminal cases and an added digitalization of procedures.

During the Strategy period further concrete objectives will be formulated for case processing times. These will be accessible in the annual plan of action.

Objective 3: Consistency

Consistency is important for the experience of the rule of law. Citizens and businesses must be treated in a consistent manner. It is of practical significance for users of several courts that the case-processing and administrative procedures are consistent across these courts, so that they are – and increasingly so – predictable for users. Greater consistency will contribute to retaining public trust in the Courts.

The Courts will support the realization of this objective of greater consistency by sharing knowledge across the Courts, by activating initiatives which support best practice, by using a shared IT-system, and by establishing more shared solutions across the Courts.

Objective 4: Quality and Efficiency

The Courts of Denmark must be able to perform their duties efficiently both now and in the future. In doing so, they must at the same time maintain a high level of quality. It is therefore important to find the right balance between quality and efficiency, while making the right decisions at the right time with the best use of resources. This places a number of demands on the Courts of Denmark as an organisation.

The Courts will support the realization of the objective of quality and efficiency by attracting, retaining, and developing the relevant skills among leaders and other employees, as well as by maintaining stable and future-proof operations, including IT-support. At the same time, the Courts of Denmark should have a clear and efficient structure of governance for operating and for developing common, shared solutions, where it makes sense and can create an effective assignment result.

7. The Content of the Strategic Themes

The Courts of Denmark have set out eight Strategic themes which are regarded in particular as support for the realization of the four objectives. The Strategic themes will be revisited annually.

STABLE AND FUTURE-PROOF SYSTEM SUPPORT

CONTENT OF THE THEME

A stable and future-proof IT-system support is crucial to the ability of the Courts to meet Court users in a modern and professional way, with short case-processing times, increased consistency, and guaranteed quality and efficiency.

In the coming years the Courts of Denmark will be modernising large areas of our IT-systems and ensuring operational stability in the existing ones. To guarantee secure and satisfactory operations it is essential that this modernisation and stabilisation is successful, and that stable and future-proof results are achieved.

This theme is therefore the most urgent, and it has the highest priority of the Strategic themes in the coming years. It will also be of consequence for the emphasis in the other Strategic themes.

BEST PRACTICE

CONTENT OF THE THEME

An increased securing of best practice in the Courts will contribute to an increase in the value of the meeting between the Courts and their users. It will also help to fulfil the concrete objectives for case-processing times, lead to greater consistency, and create a balance between quality and efficiency, including stable and effective operations.

The Courts of Denmark will therefore give added focus to ensuring that best practice is employed across the courts, so that the Courts learn from, make use of, and share the good solutions found in the individual courts. Part of the theme is that all activities concerned with the sharing of knowledge in the Courts of Denmark are also used to extend best practice.

A MODERN AND ATTRACTIVE WORKPLACE WITH THE RELEVANT COMPETENCIES

CONTENT OF THE THEME

The Courts of Denmark will continue to be a modern and attractive workplace which can attract, retain, and develop the relevant competencies among leaders and other employees of the Courts.

This goes not only for legal and other professional competencies but also for personal skills, including those to do with leadership, administration, procedure, and IT. At the same time it is essential that all employees and leaders in the Courts of Denmark are able to work with a user-focus, so that in the day-to-day performing of their duties the Courts continuously create value for their users and society.

The employees in the Courts of Denmark are the most important resource for fulfilling the Courts' vision. They are essential for meeting the four objectives.

CRIMINAL CASE DOMAIN

CONTENT OF THE THEME

With an increased number of criminal cases it is vital to retain a focus on the organisation, quality, and optimisation of the procedure of these cases both in the Courts and other authorities.

Smooth cooperation between all the actors in the criminal case domain is essential for the users' collective experience of their meeting with the Courts, as well as for ensuring short case-processing times. The Courts of Denmark form an important element in the procedure of criminal cases, and their case procedure and active participation in this cooperation is therefore of great significance for the results that are achieved in the domain.

The Courts of Denmark will continue to participate actively in cooperation across the authorities, and will work to achieve the results that are agreed and assumed in the criminal case domain, including continued high quality and increased goal-fulfilment in cases of violence, rape, and illegal weapon possession.

COMMON, SHARED SOLUTIONS AND EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS

CONTENT OF THE THEME

The Courts of Denmark are a large, widely-distributed, operational organisation, in which there are a number of areas with potential economic gain. There is also an opportunity to consolidate quality by solving a number of tasks across the Courts, or by otherwise making their running more efficient.

The Courts of Denmark will work for a continuous effectivization of operations, while simultaneously extending a number of common, shared solutions across the Courts, whereby they, for instance, undertake joint assignments, or where court employees by agreement do service in different courts.

More common, shared solutions and efficient operations will in the long run only benefit users of the Courts. They will release resources for case management and will thereby contribute to short case-processing times. They will also support greater consistency and consolidate quality in the right solutions across the courts.

COMMUNICATIONS AND BRANDING

CONTENT OF THE THEME

It is essential that communications from the courts, including decisions, are understandable for citizens and businesses. At the same time the value of a stable and well-run legal system must be extremely clear to citizens and businesses.

The Courts of Denmark will continue to make their communication – including communication of decisions – professional and easy to understand. They will also focus on better formulation and clarity with regard to who deals with which duties. This will reinforce the high level of trust and credibility which surrounds the Courts, giving them a user-oriented “brand” and a good reputation.

Modern, professional communication, a user-friendly “brand”, and a good reputation will help to maintain the confidence and respect which the Courts enjoy among the general public.

USER-ORIENTED CULTURE

CONTENT OF THE THEME

The Courts' culture must be further developed and strengthened in the direction of an even greater orientation towards the Court users' needs as the starting-point in the day-to-day duties, as well as when working with changes and new initiatives.

The Courts of Denmark will therefore increase their focus on a more systematic way of receiving input from both professional and non-professional Court users, who can inspire the Courts to organize duties with the high quality that matches the users' needs. At the same time the user-focus must be continuously secured and articulated by the leaders, both in the high level fora and locally in the individual courts. The Court users' perspectives and needs must be integrated through the development of work processes and through contact with the users in the court.

At the beginning and end of the Strategy period a user-survey is to be carried out. This can inspire the Courts to organise duties with their focus on the users.

CONSOLIDATED GOVERNANCE AND EXECUTIVE POWER

CONTENT OF THE THEME

It is essential for the agility and executive power of the Courts – and thus for their efficient operation and development of solutions – that there is clarity as to who has which role in the Courts.

The Courts of Denmark will work to strengthen and establish a clearer governance, so they collectively are better qualified to deliver both an efficient operation and a development input.

The theme is aimed at the Courts' internal organisation, but will support our vision of professional, up-to-date work for law and justice by making the right decisions at the right time. The theme will enable the Courts to create better value for the legal community and for Court users, among other things by users experiencing short case-processing times and high quality. At the same time an increased executive power in the Courts will contribute to increased consistency, while consolidating the Courts' quality and efficiency.
