

law rather than putting them in custodial facilities. In Adamawa state, the Chief Judge issued a Practice Direction for adjudicating cases involving children in conflict with the Law and later designated two more juvenile courts in response to the recommendations from a RoLAC assessment of remand homes in the state. In Anambra state, the Family Court has continued to be utilised with cases involving juveniles being handled with the assistance of family court assessors trained by RoLAC.

In the anti-corruption sector, the programme contributed to the adoption of a National Anti-corruption strategy to improve behavioural changes at both federal and state levels, namely in transparency of procurement processes, convictions of anti-corruption cases, and investigative reporting. Improved inter-agency cooperation was reinforced through targeted strengthening of anti-corruption agencies (ACAs) institutional and operational capacities, particularly as remediation response to Nigeria's poor performance in the Mutual Evaluation Exercise of Financial Action Task Force (FATF). A key outcome of this was the development and adoption of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for parallel investigation and exchange of intelligence among competent authorities, which was developed and adopted by 11 key anti-corruption agencies. The SOP has since been approved by the Attorney General of the Federation

There are still systemic bottlenecks, especially regarding transmission and processing of cases along the criminal justice chain. Data tracking and case management initiatives that enable ease of sharing and follow up on criminal cases have been developed, as well as procedures accelerating the treatment of criminal cases, by preserving the fair trial guarantees of offenders and increasing the application of alternative measures to detention. These initiatives are still perceived as new for a culture that remains punitive and requires further support to ensure long-term impact.

While some state governments targeted by the programme demonstrate sufficient budgetary investment in the justice and AC reform process, some gaps remain and some lack of ownership over reform process in which further investment from states is required.

EU intervention has largely and visibly changed the anti-corruption landscape in the focal states, promoting transparency and accountability in the public procurement space. However, established protocols and systems still need to be further concluded and embedded, with regard to full implementation of the national anti-corruption strategy, and results achieved within the public procurement space in the beneficiary agencies need to be consolidated, such as the establishment of anti-corruption transparency units in relevant government institutions.

Institutionalised and informal demand-side structures (coalitions, partnerships etc.) established by non-state actors ensure continuity of the programme results, favour empowerment of vulnerable groups on their rights, support prevention and monitoring of corrupt practices and foster advocacy on both justice and AC reforms. However, CSO engagement with justice institutions and anti-corruption agencies on law/policy decision making require further consolidation. Support for investigative journalism around criminal justice issues and support of the reporting/complaint aspect is just emerging, due to the difficulty to engage the Judiciary on transparency and integrity matters. Therefore confidence remains to be further strengthened.

This action will therefore address the foregoing as well as other Rule of Law and governance challenges identified by the relevant Nigerian development and sector policies and align with their priorities. Among them, the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2025 sets objectives and targets towards improving governance, institutions and national orientation by achieving strong public transparency, accountability and citizen engagement, as well as improving service quality by public institutions, ensuring respect for the law and improving level of governance in the country.

In the justice sector, the National Policy on Justice, the policy on prosecution and the National Legal Aid Strategy underline the priorities and objectives, which have been driving the justice sector reforms for the last five years. These policies are still valid to guide the justice institutions on the realisation of their mandate based on the relevant legal and policy framework described in the first section.

In the anti-corruption sector, the National Anti-Corruption Strategy is the reference policy for all AC, law enforcement and regulatory institutions. The Strategy is built around the pillars of Prevention, Public Engagement, Ethical Re-Oriented, Enforcement and Sanctions as well as Recovery and Management of Proceeds of Crime.