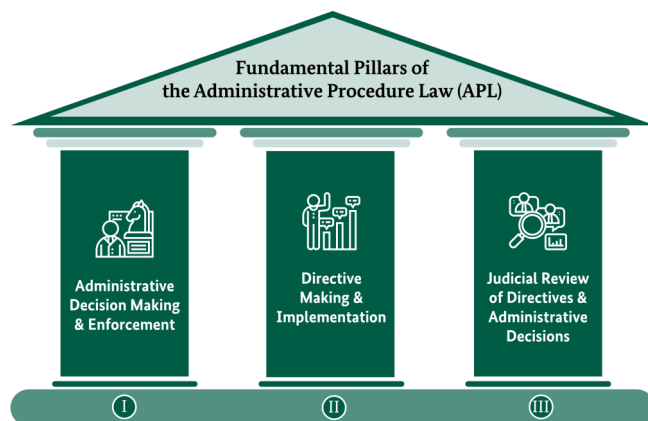


Shaping Public Service in Ethiopia: Regional Adoption of the Administrative Procedure Law

The Issue

At the heart of every interaction between a citizen and their government—whether applying for a business license, seeking a land permit, or accessing vital social services—lies the fundamental need for fairness, equity, and procedural protection. For years, the absence of a comprehensive legal roadmap for these interactions in Ethiopia meant that administrative decisions could often feel arbitrary, opaque, and difficult to challenge. The enactment of the Federal Administrative Procedure Proclamation (No. 1183/2020) marked a historic turning point in Ethiopian legal history, creating a statutory shield for individual constitutional rights and signaling a major shift toward transparency and public accountability. By defining clear rules for administrative decision-making, directive formulation, and judicial review, this federal law established a vital foundation for protecting citizens' rights to be heard and securing direct access to administrative justice.

However, after the passing of the federal law a critical gap emerged in its implementation and adoption of the law by the regions. While the federal proclamation covered federal public institutions and the city administrations of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, the vast majority of the Ethiopians living across the regional states remained entirely outside its protective umbrella.

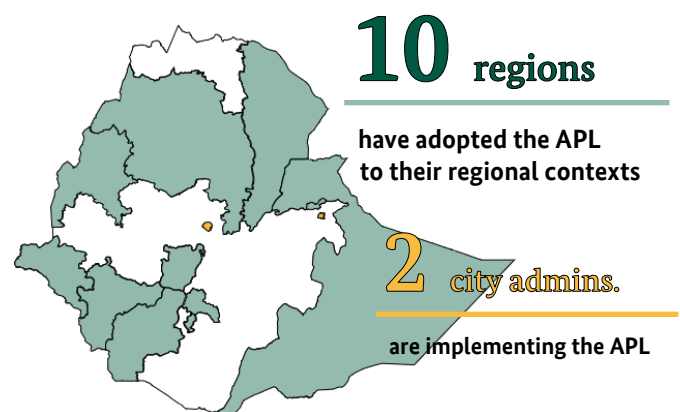


About the Support to Good Governance in Ethiopia (S2GG) Programme

The S2GG programme is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the Germany. The programme aims to gear the Ethiopian governance system towards the transformation into a democratic and inclusive state based on the rule of law.

The Programme and Partners

To bridge these gaps, the Support to Good Governance (S2GG) Programme - implemented by GIZ on behalf of Germany - recognized a vital opportunity to address a growing public demand for accountable governance. The programme established a landmark partnership with the Federal Ministry of Justice, whose institutional mandated role includes monitoring the implementation of laws, creating rule of law standards in legislation. The intervention strategy is anchored in the experience that effective legal reform extends far beyond drafting statutes; it requires building sustained institutional trust and administrative capacity. To achieve this, S2GG facilitated in-depth policy dialogues, provided specialized technical drafting assistance, and delivered tailored capacity-building workshops. These collaborative efforts ensured that administrative actions at both federal and regional levels - including rule-making, issuing directives, and executing executive orders- adhere strictly to statutory standards of legality, fairness, and predictability.



H.E. Mr. Belayihun Yirga, State Minister of Justice; Honorable Ms. Lelise Desalegn, President of the High Court; and Honorable Mr. Alemante Agedew, President of the Amhara Regional Supreme Court during the Conference on the APL to Enhance the Rule of Law & Good Governance in November 2024.



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Support to Good Governance
in Ethiopia (S2GG) Programme

Left to right:

H.E. Dr. Gedion Timothewos, former Minister of Justice, H.E. Mr. Belayihun Yirga, State Minister of Justice; and Dr. Mehari Redae, Associate Professor, Addis Ababa University; and during the national conference launched the cooperation on the APL between GIZ and the Ministry of Justice in the presence regional council members and heads of bureaus in April 2024.

The Reach

By actively engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders across 12 regional states and 2 city administrations, the adoption process ensured that the APL transitioned from a legislative draft into a law that protects citizens daily.

The impact of this outreach is evidenced by the successful scaling of the law. What began as a federal initiative has reached the regional level, creating a unified standard of administrative rules that now covers nearly all of Ethiopia's administrative jurisdictions.



Members of Parliament & Regional Policy Makers

engaged to build the political consensus necessary to pass the legislation, successfully securing legal adoption across 10 regional states and the 2 city administrations applying the federal law, while advancing engagements in 2 additional regions in drafting the laws.

Federal High Court Judges & Court Leadership

engaged in targeted workshops on the implementation of the law, while the President of the Federal High Court participated in a study tour to strengthen institutional capacity and enhance effective application of the legal framework.



Executive Leaders & Civil Servants

across federal government institutions were directly trained on their statutory obligations, building day-to-day institutional capacity to ensure public authorities observe fair procedural standards when exercising state power.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) & media representatives

participated in workshops designed to translate complex legal mechanisms into accessible public knowledge. These activities empowered CSOs to act as informed watchdogs and strengthened their role as a bridge between public authorities and the broader public.



Citizen Representatives

participated in the inclusive consultations throughout the drafting phase, ensuring that local administrative realities and genuine public demands for accountable governance were reflected in the regional legal frameworks.

The Impacts

The collaborative intervention established a strong, multi-tiered trajectory of socio-legal outcomes that are currently reshaping the foundation of administrative justice across Ethiopia:

The initiative established a robust statutory foundation by securing the formal enactment of regional Administrative Procedure Laws across 10 regional states and 2 city administrations, while actively engaging 12 regions in total. Through specialized consultations and technical training sessions, policy makers, judges, executive officials, and civil society representatives gained the essential legal knowledge, practical skills, and technical awareness needed to apply, enforce, and navigate the newly enacted procedural standards in their daily operations.

Regional administrative bodies are increasingly integrating mandatory transparency and fair-hearing standards into their routine decision-making processes, leading to greater consistency in public administration. Concurrently, judicial consistency has been strengthened as empowered regional judges hold executive bodies accountable to procedural rules, while citizens - often with the help of lawyers - utilize the law to challenge arbitrary state actions and defend their rights.

The programme is laying the groundwork for a permanent culture where state power is consistently checked by the rule of law. By institutionalizing predictable administrative processes, the intervention helps rebuild public trust in government institutions, fortifying a stable legal framework that protects the fundamental human rights of all citizens across Ethiopia.

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