

Project Title	Court Watching
Institution/Department	Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety, Western Cape Province
Innovation	<p>Due to the data that is extracted from the court records which is relevant to ascertain why matters are withdrawn or struck off the court roll, the CWB Team recorded the required information manually using a pro forma tool/questionnaire. The expansion of the project led the Team to develop an automated tool to capture the data via MS Tools using a QR Code. A mobile device (smart cellphone) is used to complete the questionnaire. The data captured is uploaded to a central database. After the upload, the system automatically does a high-level analysis of the data. Once all the cases are captured - that data can be extracted into an Excel sheet. In Excel, each question becomes a column heading, allowing for easy filtering. This verification process allows for due diligence and in making sure that the correct information is captured before it is reported to SAPS. The CWB is now assured of quality in capturing and recording of data and the amount of cases has increased exponentially as well due to this smart method of work.</p>
Impact	<p>The scope of the 2023/24 financial year CWB was confined and limited to 4 different themes (crime categories) namely, illegal possession of firearm and ammunition; gender-based violence; murder and assault cases. Largely, the focus was on cases that were previously withdrawn or struck-off the court roll for various reasons.</p> <p>Over the past five financial years - 2018/19 to 2022/23 - the CWB team created a database of cases struck-off the court rolls by visiting the courts to peruse charge sheets to determine police inefficiencies in terms of criminal investigations and record these accordingly. Occasionally, live court proceedings were attended for the same purpose requested from the Ministry of Police Oversight and Community Safety, the Head of Department and on occasion from the Portfolio Standing Committee on Community Safety. The relationship built over the years allows officials from the CWB Unit to establish a working relationship with court officials in order that required information is provided without delay and without hampering any court processes or duties of court officials. This value chain has been significant and in the 2023/24 financial year, the CWB extended its footprint and reached all 56 Magistrates courts in the Province and doubled the number of cases monitored. This was achieved through proper planning and scheduling of engagements with identified stakeholders. Through this collaborative partnership, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Departments of Justice and Police Oversight and Community Safety which sets out the roles and responsibilities of the two Agencies.</p> <p>The CWB visits rural courts once every quarter and plays a significant role in rural safety cases monitored where farm attacks have been prioritized by the Department of Agriculture as a negative impact on food security and economic sustainability, jobs and safety. A list of rural safety cases are received by the Department of Agriculture to be monitored by the CWB Unit and feedback is given to the Rural Safety Inter-Ministerial Committee.</p> <p>This initiative has improved efficiency, allows for follow up on cases that are struck off the roll and withdrawn and ensure that reasons for this are sorted with</p>

	the police. The app dashboard helps politicians and decision-makers to make an informed decision due to an umbrella view of cases. It also strengthened a working relationship between the CWB team and court officials when it comes to provision of required information.
Contact Details	E-mail: Knowledge@cpsi.co.za