Program Objectives
The Hague Institute’s Rule of Law Program (RoL) fosters accountability and trust in societies in transition by supporting and promoting well-functioning formal and informal justice institutions. It considers the extent to which international, domestic and local institutions cohere with established international law and rule of law norms and principles. It focuses particularly on societies emerging from autocratic rule and conflict.

Institutions, codes and procedures are integral to the rule of law, but not sufficient unless buttressed by commitment to principles such as the supremacy of law, equality before the law, and accountability to the law. Therefore, the RoL program explores not only how people perceive the rule of law, human rights and its institutions, but also whether individuals conduct demonstrates commitment to these norms and values.

Furthermore, the RoL program examines standards of international law, development of transitional justice measures, and the impact of justice on popular trust and confidence in local communities. Key indicators of responsiveness include addressing stakeholder expectations and strengthening legal instruments and mechanisms.

Ultimately, through globally orientated policy relevant research and action, the RoL program aims to clarify how trends toward accountability and responsive institutions affect transition; and how such trends can be influenced to promote participatory and democratic societies.

Thematic Focus and Key Projects

- **International Justice Instruments and Mechanisms:** The Hague Institute looks at the integrity of international norms and standards, as well as legal institutions, codes, procedures and measures their long-term impact and linkages with international as well as domestic and local jurisdictions.
- **Domestic Justice:** Transitional justice efforts correlate with institutions and policies at all levels and contribute to good governance and democratic institutions. The Rule of Law program uses normative and empirical research to study societies in transition and deduce how transitional justice measures such as truth commissions, lustration, trials, and reparations improve the rule of law.
- **Local Justice:** The program assesses levels of trust among citizens and the accountability of local mechanisms, especially how individuals affect security and strategic interaction between justice providers and communities.

Research and Training
Rule of law is crucial for creating sustainable peace in societies making the difficult transition from violent conflict and autocratic regimes.

The Hague Institute’s Rule of Law program will contribute to sustainable development, stable democratic institutions, and peacebuilding by engaging in interdisciplinary, empirical research; and fostering dialogue between government institutions, donors, civil society organizations, academia and private enterprises.