

# A shared research agenda

CIRCLES4EU, Deliverable W3D1



## Imprint

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# 1 Introduction

This research agenda provides an overview of the research programme which has been developed by the researchers network of Circles4EU. The research agenda has been developed through a series of e-mail discussions and researcher meetings at both the Kick off meeting and the 1<sup>st</sup> Circles4EU International Conference and partner meeting.

Different countries are in different stages of project development, therefore research needs are different and a differentiated research agenda has been developed.

**Orienting countries** are involved in 'market research' (the feasibility study); they need:

- A database of English research articles showing the effectiveness of COSA – to build political support and support from other stakeholders and the community;
- Circle narratives by core members to illustrate the impact of circles;
- Research demonstrating the quality of the COSA model (e.g. support by stakeholders, effect studies, outcome studies, to be conducted in starting and operating countries);
- Survey of community support.

**Starting countries** are involved in setting up projects and need tools to assess outcome and to safeguard the quality:

- A protocol/system on data collection: which data (of core members, volunteers etcetera) are to be collected for future research purposes?
- Facilitation of risk assessment;
- Measuring change in core members / the desistance process;
- Evaluative research into quality of deliverance (process evaluation);
- Designs for effectiveness studies, developed in collaboration with operating countries;
- Research into best practices in dealing with unforeseen situations (operating circles and project implementation).

**Operating countries** which are expanding and consolidating their projects need to demonstrate effect in order to get sustainable financing, need to maintain quality of deliverance, develop knowledge about circle effectiveness:

- Effectiveness studies (recidivism studies; effect on community safety, effect on volunteers);
- Research into circle processes;
- Research into quality of deliverance;
- Pilots of circles for new target groups.

## 2 Shared research agenda

General Topic	Action	Specific research needs		
		<i>Orienting countries</i>	<i>Starting countries</i>	<i>Operating countries</i>
Database containing all past and ongoing COSA research	<b>In this project:</b> Incorporate in Circles4EU website	Agreement on research characteristics to be displayed		
Quality of tools for risk assessment	<b>In this project:</b> national feasibility/adaptation study	Review of existing tools and applicability in national context (differentiating between initial risk assessment for selection and ongoing risk assessment for monitoring progress)	Review and adaptation needs of instruments for dynamic risk assessment, adaptation needs regarding risk assessment procedures	
Quality of professional network	<b>In this project:</b> national feasibility/adaptation study	Level of service provision and level of support for COSA	Level of service provision & support for COSA, adaptation needs in sex offender management protocols and systems to be able to embed COSA in professional network	
Best practices	<b>In this project:</b> qualitative research		Best practices regarding project implementation and high quality circle deliverance	Best practices regarding high quality circles deliverance and project sustainability
Community support	<b>In this project:</b> web based survey	Support for implementation plans	Support for starting COSA projects	Support for operating COSA projects
Designs for effectiveness studies	<b>In this project:</b>		Design for prospective, longitudinal studies into core member change in research	Design for prospective, longitudinal studies into core member change in

				proposal no 2.	research proposal no 2.
General Topic	Action	Specific research needs			
		<i>Orienting countries</i>	<i>Starting countries</i>	<i>Operating countries</i>	
Concerted data collection for future research	<b>In this project:</b> research database on website (NU)			Protocol on data collection for future research	Protocol on data collection for future research
COSA effectiveness  & Quality of deliverance	<b>Research proposal no 1:</b> Feasibility study of RCT's in combination with process evaluation			Feasibility study of RCT's In combination with process evaluation in national context ; international agreement on matching criteria;  International comparability of outcome.	Feasibility study of RCT's in combination with process evaluation in national context ; international agreement on matching criteria;  International comparability of outcome.
Core member change  & tools for measuring change	<b>Research proposal no 2:</b> Longitudinal desistance study (qualitative & quantitative) & Evaluation of quality of risk assessment by volunteers (DRR)			Change in core members & core members' networks; core member narratives & narratives of family of core member	Sustained change in core members & core members' networks; core member narratives about desistance ; narratives of core member family on core member change; DDR-results
Impact of COSA on society	<b>Research proposal no 3:</b> International qualitative comparison, (ORA study)*			Impact of COSA projects on subjective feelings of public safety and attitudes towards sex offender community reintegration.	UK, CAN, NL, USA*: Nature and wider impact of community engagement (e.g. through COSA) in

					reintegration of sex offenders
General Topic	Action	Specific research needs			
		<i>Orienting countries</i>	<i>Starting countries</i>	<i>Operating countries</i>	
Impact of COSA on victims	<b>Research proposal no 4:</b>	Support for COSA implementation by victim support organizations	Support for COSA by victim support organizations, attitudes of victims (e.g. family members of core members) towards COSA projects	Impact of circles on victims (e.g. family members; volunteers who have been victims)	
Quality of deliverance	<b>National research</b> Qualitative evaluation		Quality of circle deliverance & circle dynamics: program integrity; model integrity; stakeholder satisfaction (core member, volunteer, project org, professional institutions)	Quality of circle deliverance & circle dynamics: Determinants of quality; Impact of COSA on professional network	
New target groups	<b>National pilots</b>			Adaptation studies and pilots for new target groups (e.g. sex offenders who are not under judicial supervision)	

## **3 Additional remarks**

### **Research Database**

An up-to-date research repository and an overview of ongoing research will be incorporated into the Circles4EU website. It will help starting countries to access the most important studies. It may also be useful for future research, for example, countries will be able to look at what has already been done or what is underway, when designing their own research studies – this could avoid duplication, or alternatively be useful for replication of studies in new sites.

### **Effectiveness studies design**

One of the research proposals in this project will be a feasibility study of national RCT's. This will involve also an evaluation of standards of measurement (risk, recidivism, other outcome measures), since we aim for international comparability.

### **Research proposal on quality of deliverance**

Quality of circle deliverance will be incorporated as part of the planned RCT – since the quality of deliverance may affect the effectiveness, a process evaluation of circles involved in the RCT will be necessary.

More comprehensive studies into quality of deliverance will be up to national researchers and are not dealt with in research proposals. The Circles4EU researchers network however will assist national researchers in developing designs for process evaluations.

### **Research proposal on longitudinal outcome study**

One of the research proposals will incorporate a design for a longitudinal desistance study. As part of this proposal an assessment of tools to measure change (qualitative & quantitative) will be completed. This desistance study will include changes in the core members network, and will assess the perceptions of core members' change held by people in the core members' network.

### **Research proposal on community engagement and its wider impact**

This will be research proposal no 3.

### **International cooperation**

Research proposals will be written as standard proposals for research projects in different countries (starting and operating). We are aiming for international comparability of results. Therefore standards of measurement and implementation of research projects will be part of proposals.