

D1.3 – Guidelines for the Scientific and Technical Core Group

WP1 – Management



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Abstract

The following guidelines state the principles and practices for setting up and management of the Scientific and Technical Core Group (hereinafter STCG).

1. Role, membership and Chairperson of the STCG

The STCG is conceived as an *ad hoc* committee that intervenes when urgent decisions need to be taken on the scientific and technical work carried out throughout the MARGIN project. It consists of a subset of 14 researchers, 2 from each participant institution (7 permanent members for urgent decisions and 7 as potential substitutes). Researchers within the STCG are responsible for data collection in each country and have been selected by each institution for their expertise in research methods.

The STCG has decision-making power restricted to the activities of the WP4 (cf. Survey design and data collection) and WP5 (cf. Anthropological dimension of insecurity), although it could operate as a ‘task force’ in order to create and implement rapid solutions to any problems arising during the research activity (including data collection and statistical analysis foreseen in WP2 and WP3). In short, it guarantees that the research teams at the national level work as a homogeneous group so as to ensure the quality of the research activity. Other specific tasks of the STCG are:

- Develop and implement a mechanism that encourages the definition of a set of indicators for the assessment of insecurity;
- Identify the best scientific approach for the anthropological fieldwork;
- Develop an evidence-based methodology for analysing and interpreting the socio-political potential of CVSs for the implementation of policies aiming at reducing insecurity.

The STCG is composed of 6 women and 8 men. Sonia Stefanizzi from the University of Milano Bicocca has been appointed as the Chairperson of the STCG during the Kick-off meeting, while a full list of the members of this body (with the respective substitutes in square bracket) is provided below.

STCG membership	Institutions
Sonia Stefanizzi (chair) [Domingo Scisci]	Università degli Studi Milano Bicocca (Italy)
Riccardo Valente [Sergi Valera Pertegas]	University of Barcelona (Spain)
Szandra Windt [Tünde Barabás]	National Institute of Criminology (Hungary)
Vincent Delbecque [Hugo d'Arbois de Jubainville]	Institut national des hautes études de la sécurité et de la justice (France)
Spencer Chaney [Aiden Sidebottom]	University College London (United Kingdom)
Silvia Ciotti [Filippo Balisteri]	Eurocrime (Italy)
Rosa Mur Petit [Montserrat Aguilera]	Departament d'Interior, Generalitat de Catalunya (Spain)

2. Indicators for undertaking urgent decision procedures

Sometimes events will occur which require decisions to be taken urgently. The STCG needs to be able to respond quickly where failure to do so would, or would be likely to, harm the interests of the Consortium and the project, for example:

- A task not being accomplished;
- Deadlines not being met for submission of a deliverable.

The STCG shall act under its urgent decision procedure when it deems it necessary to address serious risks affecting the implementation of the project work plan.

The management of the following risks falls under the exclusive competences of the STCG:

Description of risk	STCG risk-mitigation measure
Attempts to generalize methodologies aiming at measuring insecurity have failed up to date due to the existence of contextual and situational factors.	The research design encompasses the study of both cross-national and country-specific factors affecting insecurity. It distinguishes the data collection techniques for investigating each construct and the relationship between them thoroughly, which greatly reduce the likelihood of this risk.

<p>There are different ways to assess insecurity and different methodologies to do it. As such, collaboration could be problematic (for instance during the Delphi method), delaying the selection of items to be included in the MARGIN survey.</p>	<p>7 out of 13 experts involved in the Delphi method are also member of the STCG. In order to avoid conflict of interests during this research phase, a subgroup of researchers of PCT coordinate the implementation of the Delphi method, integrating anonymous participant responses into the first questionnaire and mediating the interpretation of the results after collecting the second questionnaire responses.</p>
<p>There are important variations between public fear of crime and personal fear of crime depending on cultural factors. Countries involved in MARGIN have different regulations and law enforcement traditions and this could present some difficulty in the comparison of national findings and results.</p>	<p>The STCG has been set up in order to ensure a balanced international participation. Within the framework of the STCG activities, experts from all countries involved in the project contribute to work on a comprehensive conceptual framework in order to mitigate risks involved in cross-national comparison.</p>
<p>Access to sensitive data is usually very difficult and the large sample size could lead to delays when implementing the MARGIN survey.</p>	<p>Researchers composing the STCG have long-standing experience in the implementation of CVSs at a national level. Nevertheless, they used a specialized company that was subcontracted to carry out the implementation of the survey in a determinate sample and geographical area. Previous experiences in working with these specialized companies will help to select a reliable company and avoid delays. The STCG, through the Eurocrime team, will monitor its progress and ensure that the expected outcomes are met on time.</p>
<p>During the anthropological fieldwork in marginalized areas, researchers deal with vulnerable populations such as economically disadvantaged persons and other individuals/groups (for</p>	<p>A training addressed to researchers who will carry out data collection during the anthropological fieldwork will be organized in Barcelona in order to agree on common elements for the collection</p>

<p>instance, victimized persons) that may be considered a vulnerable population depending on their circumstances in relation to the research.</p>	<p>of data. This will allow the comparison of at least a part of the qualitative data collected in each country in order to find common characteristics and factors affecting insecurity.</p>
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The STCG shall undertake urgent decision procedures according to the indicators set out below:

- If a request for the urgent submission of information is disregarded;
- If warning messages are ignored by the concerned party;
- If a deadline is fast approaching and there is evidence that the expected work will be not achieved on time.

The Chairperson as well as the other members of the STCG shall stay in close collaboration with the Steering Committee of the project since the latter is the solely responsible for taking decisions concerning any modification of the work plan.

3. Urgent decision procedures and decision-making process

Any member composing the STCG can raise issues to be submitted to urgent decision procedures, while the Chairperson shall take the decision as to whether or not a decision is urgent. The Chairperson of the STCG will be required to explain to the other members of the core group the reasons for the issue being dealt with as a matter of urgency.

The STCG shall not deliberate and decide validly unless two-thirds (2/3) of its permanent members are present or represented (quorum), that is to say 4 out of 7 permanent members. If the quorum is not reached, the Chairperson shall convene another ordinary meeting within 7 calendar days. If in this meeting the quorum is not reached once more, the Chairperson shall convene an extraordinary meeting that shall be entitled to decide even if less than the quorum of members are present or represented.

Each member of the STCG present or represented in the meeting shall have one vote and decisions shall be taken by a majority of two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast, that is to say 4 out of 7 permanent members.

The decision together with the reasons why it was determined urgent must be recorded in writing and uploaded to the MARGIN tool (<https://marginproject.teamwork.com>). The record of urgent decisions will be made

available for inspection by the Steering Committee. Following the decision, a report will be submitted to the partnership explaining:

- The decision;
- The reasons for it; and
- The reasons why the decision was treated as a matter of urgency.

4. Meetings

Any person who is a permanent member of the STCG must be present at any meeting of such body and, when unable to participate, appoint a substitute to attend and vote at any meeting. The meetings of the STCG may be held either with their members being physically present or by electronic means (e.g. Skype or Google Hangouts) according to the following rules:

	Ordinary meeting	Extraordinary meeting
STCG	During Consortium meetings	At any time upon written request of the Project Coordination Team, the Chairperson or 1 of the members of the STCG

The Chairperson of the STCG will give notice in writing of a meeting through the MARGIN tool (<https://marginproject.teamwork.com>) to each Member of that Consortium Body as soon as possible and no later than the minimum number of days preceding the meeting as indicated below.

	Ordinary meeting	Extraordinary meeting
STCG	45 calendar days	3 calendar days

The Chairperson of the STCG shall produce written minutes of each meeting, which shall be the formal record of all decisions taken. She shall send the draft minutes to all members within 10 calendar days of the meeting. The minutes shall be considered as accepted if, within 15 calendar days from sending, no member has sent an objection in writing to the chairperson with respect to the accuracy of the draft of the minutes. Once agreed, the minutes will be uploaded to the MARGIN tool (<https://marginproject.teamwork.com>).