



# correctional services

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Department:  
Correctional Services  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

## **DCS RESEARCH AGENDA**

### **MARCH 2019**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) serves an essential role in the Criminal Justice System in the Republic of South Africa in “*Building Safer Communities*” (National Development Plan 2030 goal) through effective and humane incarceration, rehabilitation and social reintegration of offenders. The DCS recognises that these aspirations cannot be achieved without the involvement of external stakeholders. The White Paper on Corrections (2005) indicates that the rehabilitation of offenders can only be truly successful and their reintegration into society meaningful if all stakeholders participate in the process, viewing corrections as a societal responsibility. In this regard the participation of all spheres of Government, institutions of learning, community, faith based, non-governmental organisations, civil society and communities in strengthening and enhancing the corrections value chain of incarceration, rehabilitation and social reintegration is crucial.

The DCS has developed long-term plans to realise its outcome oriented goals and ultimately have a positive impact on society. These plans are primarily grounded in the primary and supplementary legislation that imbue the Department with its mandate and are also aligned to the Government medium to long-term strategy articulated in the National Development Plan 2030. The White Paper on Corrections expresses the long-term ideal philosophy for correctional services, however operational realities and introspection bear the realisation that ideal is not being achieved. The long-term planning session held in July 2018 revealed that research and evaluations are required across the DCS value chain in order to inform strategy and evidence based policies into the future. The Research Agenda (2019 – 2023) identifies topics/ priority areas that will guide research activities in Correctional Services in the next five years.

## 2. THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH IN CORRECTION

Governments are increasingly using research to make informed decisions and DCS is not an exception. Research in corrections has a high value to society. It has been used to provide important information about incarceration trends for planning and identified risk factors to improve security in corrections. Research in corrections has led to significant discoveries, development of new ways of rehabilitating offenders and improvements in correctional care.

## 3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH AGENDA

The overarching aim of the Research Agenda is to build an evidence-based body of knowledge that can be used by decision-makers to realise the DCS strategic objectives. The sub-aims of the Research Agenda are to:

- Provide focus and direction towards corrections research for 2019-2023.

- Guide research institutions, individuals and independent researchers to contribute towards achieving the strategic objectives of DCS.
- Provide the Department with recommendations and findings that will enable the core business to change its strategies.

## 4. THE RESEARCH CONCEPT

Research is a systematic inquiry following scientific principles. In the context of this Research Agenda, the term “research” means rigorous, systematic process of collecting and analysis of data. It is the organised and systematic method of finding answers to research questions. Such research will be applied, action, policy oriented and may be quantitative or qualitative in nature.

## 5. METHOD OF COMPILING THE RESEARCH AGENDA

The DCS research priorities were developed through a wide consultation process with DCS Branches and Regions. This process also involved the analysis of DCS annual reports for the past five years and the July 2018 strategic session reports that included stakeholder external inputs.

## 6. THEMES FOR THE RESEARCH AGENDA

The Department’s strategic planning and management cycle provides a framework for prioritizing DCS’s research priorities. The Research Agenda is built around themes of the White Paper on Corrections. The topics presented in this document do not aim to provide an exhaustive list, but rather guide the DCS’s current and immediate research priorities. The Research Agenda identifies research priorities and these are organised according to the themes of the White Paper on Corrections and other themes that were deemed useful in categorising DCS research priorities:

### 6.1: The Ideal Correctional Official

The White Paper on Corrections asserts that the Department should develop and align its organisational structures, organisational culture, and human resources with its rehabilitation objectives. This will enhance the effectiveness of Department’s rehabilitation processes which will contribute to the ultimate goal of successful reintegration of offenders. The official’s attitude of serving with excellence, relating to others, just and caring attitude are essential ingredients to successful rehabilitating the offenders. Research priority areas for theme Ideal Correctional Official are as follows:

- Survey on organisational culture.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research into a world class organisation and its application to DCS.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of artificial intelligence in corrections.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research into universal and virtual corrections.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the impact of centre and non-centred based system in the DCS.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of workplace learning in the training and development of Ideal Correctional officials.</li> </ul>
<b>6.2: Needs-Based Intervention Plans</b>
<p>The needs-based intervention plans are types of interventions that specifically balance the casual factors of crime with the unique offence profile of the individual offender. The aim of needs-based rehabilitation is to influence the offenders to adopt positive and appropriate norms and value systems and equip them with social and vocational skills to function effectively without re-offending. The research priority areas for theme Needs-Based Intervention Plans are as follows:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the appropriateness of pre-natal and post-natal care provided to female inmates and their new-born babies in correctional facilities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of the Primary Health Care Services rendered in DCS.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Care Service provision in correctional facilities for improved health outcomes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infection Prevention and Control in DCS correctional facilities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the state of readiness of DCS in the implementation of the National Health Insurance.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rehabilitation path of post matric offenders.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After care programmes and services of offenders for successful reintegration.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical analysis of the scope and functions of social workers at Community Corrections.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to increase mass participation in formal education programmes and services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relevance of Community Development Model to correctional setting.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can technology be used to improve quality correctional education program.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practices in terms of correctional academy: recruitment, curriculum and in-service training.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effectiveness of rehabilitative programmes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of illiteracy on delivery of rehabilitation programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact of formal education programmes/ services in offender's rehabilitation path.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of the effectiveness of Palliative Care Services in DCS.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negative effects of drug and substance abuse on rehabilitation in correctional centres.</li> </ul>

<b>6.3: Safety and Security</b>
<p>The Department is obliged to provide safe environment for inmates and enforce sentences and ensure that human rights of the offenders are protected. The balance between security, control and justice is the responsibility of all correctional managers. Therefore, given the security nature of the correctional centre environment, optimal utilization of integrated technology to enhance security is essential. The research priority areas for theme Safety and Security are as follows:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of overcrowding in the rehabilitation programmes and security as well as humane detention.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reasons for the offenders to return to correctional centres or correctional system after being placed on parole or released.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of the level of satisfaction of offenders and victims with the CSPB processes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effectiveness of the parole and correctional supervision as an alternative placement and sentencing option.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The role of Justice System on the successful implementation of Correctional Supervision as an alternative sentence.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of the gang phenomena and overcrowding in the correctional centres.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safety of officials based at Community Corrections.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of criminal record on the employability of ex-offenders.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of stigma on ex-offenders after release.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate of re-offending in DCS.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How effective was the impact of the implementation of Section 49G in reducing the overcrowding in Gauteng Region.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of non-bail payment on overcrowding.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation of the implementation of Half Way House policy.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A longitudinal study on the impact of rehabilitation programmes offered by the Department of Correctional Services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of skills development programmes on the employability of offenders upon release.</li> </ul>

#### **6.4: Special Categories of Offenders**

There is a tendency to regard all offenders in correctional centres as being uniform entity. Correctional services and interventions should be adjusted to different needs of offenders for example youth, child offender, elderly offenders, female offenders, offenders with disabilities and offenders with mental illness. This is in line with the principle of needs-based rehabilitation approach that emphasize the provision of appropriate facilities and services to accommodate all categories of offenders. The research priorities for Special Categories of Offenders are as follows:

- Research on the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) inmates.
- The impact of Spiritual Care Programmes on youth offenders in curbing re-offending.
- Experience of incarceration by female offenders.

#### **6.5: Appropriate and Cost-Effective Facilities**

The Department's correctional facilities were not designed to fulfil the objective of rehabilitation of offenders. The Department's approach to building and maintenance of correctional facilities must balance the enormous cost of procurement with the need for facilities to be structurally rehabilitation-friendly at the same time ensuring that they are safe and secure. The following are research priorities for Appropriate and Cost-Effective Facilities:

- Conduct conditional assessment plan and design for the upgrading or renovation of the dilapidated facilities to suit OHS and other legislated prescripts.
- Investigate possible renewable energy options for DCS.
- Feasibility study for environmental compliance and carbon free management options.
- Feasibility studies to identify alternative location of facilities for hard core criminals.
- Feasibility study for artificial intelligent facilities that are vandal proof.
- An assessment of the design of correctional facilities to control infection.

## **6.6: Self-Sustaining Corrections**

The phrase self-sufficient in corrections refer to strategies that aimed to reduce the human, environmental and economic cost of corrections. The DCS has the facilities, the offender labour force and the environment which if used appropriately and optimally, can enhance self-sufficiency and reduce costs. The Department of Correctional Services should be able to be self-sufficient in providing some of its services. Some of the initiatives that should be maximised are the utilization of its own farms and workshops to produce food supply and products for correctional centres. The Department should encourage the utilisation of offender labour to produce these products. This will not only reduce costs but promote the skilling of offenders. These initiatives can be complemented by short courses to improve offender skills in fields such as food production. The research priorities in Self-Sustaining Corrections are as follows:

- Research and Develop self-sustainability strategy for DCS.
- Conduct an audit on resources (Infrastructure, human, land, machinery and equipment, offender labour) to determine the state of self-sufficiency).
- Research and develop framework for the establishment co-operatives (DCS and Communities).
- Development of business case for the establishment of trading entity.
- Conduct an environmental impact assessment of water infrastructure of the farm prisons.
- How can food production be maximised to sustain DCS growing needs.

## **6.7: Restorative Justice**

The Department adopted a holistic approach to Restorative Justice. This includes assisting the offenders to take responsibility of their offences, assisting victims to reach the stage of forgiveness and promotion of restoration of families and communities. The successful implementation of DCS restorative justice program is dependent on stakeholder involvement/partnership. The following research needs was identified in Restorative Justice:

- Research on victim compensation.
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in the restorative justice and victim empowerment processes.
- The effectiveness/success of Restorative Justice Programme.



- Moving from retributive to restorative justice: A spiritual Care perspective.

### **6.8 Human Dignity & Offender Development**

The United Nation Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Offenders asserts that all offenders must be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings. As a way of promoting respect of offenders' dignity DCS plans encourage entrenching of human rights culture. Part of recognising the human dignity of offender, the DCS provides correction, development and care programmes as stipulated by Correctional Services Act 111. The following are research priorities for Human Dignity & Offender Development:

- Overcrowding and its impact on service delivery.
- Benchmarking on utilization of latest technology on offender development (e-learning and telematics).
- Conduct an assessment of areas where surveillance technology (cameras and scanners) can be installed.
- Conduct an audit to determine the most prevalent foreign nationals within DCS correctional centres.
- Best practices on the management of overcrowding.
- Research on gangsterism.
- Best practices on Unit Management.

### **6.9 Social Reintegration**

Social reintegration is the support given to offenders during their re-entry into society following incarceration. This encompasses a number of interventions undertaken following incarcerations including a restorative justice process. The research priorities in Social Reintegration are as follows:

- The impact of non-custodial sentencing on society.
- The impact of community outreach programs on the reintegration of ex-offenders and society at large.
- The effectiveness of faith-based initiatives in the reintegration of offenders.

### **6.10 Organisational efficiency and effectiveness**

Organisational efficiency and effectiveness is aimed at achieving deliberate output through efforts to ensure proper accountability on the invested resources. This can be realised through

strengthening of internal controls measures and proper mitigation of identified risks. The balancing of organisational resources and services provided should result in the realisation of strategic objectives of the Department. The following is research priority in organisational efficiency and effectiveness:

- Feasibility study on the establishment of a trading entity.

#### **6.11 Technology in Security and Corrections**

As technology continues to evolve, so the nature of crime and conduct thereof change. Technological advancement in DCS is necessary to respond to changes in offender profile and needs, human rights and changing technical environment. DCS will continue to transform tapping on the market available technology, innovative and scientific innovations to improve its security and correctional services. New technologies will assist in reducing costs and improving the effective management of correctional facilities. Technology can make Correctional Centres safer for both correctional officials and inmates. The research priorities in Technology in Security and Corrections are as follows:

- Research on development of integrated systems and intelligent reporting.
- Research and development of Capacity Maturity Model.
- The relevance of the use of electronic monitoring in South Africa as an alternative sentence or as a condition of correctional supervision.
- Technological developments as a threat to corrections.

## **7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES**

The DCS is not prescriptive on the method to be selected for the studies. However, the methodology used will be fit for purpose of the study and employ enough rigour for evidence to be credibly used for policy making and strategy formulation. The Department encourages the use of an applied research approach that is systematic and practical in focus and aimed at addressing issues identified in the Research Agenda.

The research themes indicate areas of need and will require the development of proposals. Researchers will consider how their proposed study contributes to DCS's immediate and long-term theory of change as articulated in the Department's Strategic Plan.

## **8. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH AGENDA**

The DCS intends to implement the Research Agenda in collaboration with researchers/ academic institutions to implement some of the projects. The DCS will benefit from expertise within these institutions which will improve its capacity to conduct some of the research in a timely manner. The DCS also encourages internal subject matter experts or students to assist in executing the agenda. All research will be processed through the DCS REC to ensure that it is conducted in an ethical manner. Memorandum of Agreements will be signed with some of the institutions to ensure that these initiatives are mutually beneficial.

## **9. RESEARCH FUNDING**

The Department will budget each financial year for research activities according to its strategic and business operational plans. Funding will be allocated in terms of immediate, short-term and long-term priority research projects. Research budget allocation will cover all three research activities namely internal, commissioned and collaboration. The Department will ensure that the procurement process include research expertise in decision making process.

## **10. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

Research is best utilised when it is relevant, current and accessible as such, the research outputs from the research agenda, including instruments, design protocols, research and evaluation guidelines and reports will be shared timeously through multiple repositories accessible from the DCS website. Sharing of research will occur in several ways including submitting research reports to the DCS Resource Centre, publications, conferences, seminars, email circulation etc. It is important that research reports are packaged in a fit for purpose manner to reach various beneficiaries, e.g. students, funders, institutions in corrections etc. Different channels will be used to share research to reach multiple users of the research in DCS.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

Research areas and themes presented in this research agenda are not exhaustive, but provide guidelines on the DCS current and immediate research priorities, in line with strategic objectives of DCS.