

# Measuring non-tolerated cannabis outlets

N. Maalsté, I. Jansen, E. de Bie  
Den Haag, ES&E, 2003

## Summary

### Problem and method

The researchers conducted a *feasibility study* on the possibility of measuring the number of relevant non-tolerated cannabis outlets in the Netherlands. In addition they explored the validity, representativeness and efficiency of available measuring instruments.

To answer the research questions a diversity of research instruments is plied:

- The first step we took to gain a clear understanding of the subject was to carry out a study of literature.
- Next we organised a working conference, in which the views were shared with fifteen representatives of local governments, police and the cannabis trade (local level), but also policymakers (national level).
- Finally conversations with five key-informants (researchers in the field of illegal practices en representatives of the cannabis trade) and a number of brainstorming sessions were held to check and to estimate the feasibility of the outcome.

### Conclusions and recommendations

The researchers conclude that it isn't *not feasible* to develop a monitor which determines the exact number of non-tolerated cannabis outlets per municipality, on the base of which a national number can be determined. The available methods don't provide representative data or, if they do, are either very expensive or time-consuming. This means that they can't be used for a national measurement on a structural base.

Although the development of a national quantitative monitor doesn't seem to be feasible, it is possible to gain insight in developments and trends with regard to non-tolerated cannabis outlets. In that way comments can be made on the relation between these cannabis outlets and (tolerated) coffee shops and the effect of (local) cannabis policy.

The researchers recommend the following:

- It is possible to develop a monitor, which measures developments and trends of the supply of cannabis.
- The measurements don't have to be done all over the country. It's sufficient to measure in a few representative communities. The data can then be extrapolated to the rest of the Netherlands.
- By selecting communities one should particularly take into account the size, the location and the number of (tolerated) coffee shops in the communities. The researchers suggest to select ten representative communities: two larger cities, two medium-sized cities, two communities with a regional function, two border communities and two small communities. In addition, one of the two communities should be a community with relatively a lot of (tolerated) coffee shops and one with hardly any (tolerated) coffee shops.

Taking into account the range, representativeness, feasibility and expenses of the available methods it seems that the so-called panel method and the delphi-method.