

## Summary

### **An approach to organized crime in three experimental gardens**

#### **First findings**

##### **Experimental gardens**

Experimental gardens are learning environments aimed at intelligence gathering, in which the Public Prosecution Service and the police not only conduct investigations with the aid of innovative investigative methods, but in the combat against a particular criminal issue also involve other partners, such as local government, providers and electricity companies. The approach consists of:

- innovative methods of investigation;
- involving other partners;
- a programmatic approach;
- the barrier model;
- administrative reporting.

##### **Evaluation**

The WODC has been commissioned to evaluate the experimental gardens' approach. To this end, a two-phased study has been proposed: a preliminary study to be conducted during 2009/2010 and, possibly, a follow-up study to be carried out during 2010/2012. For the first phase, three professors were approached, who have each followed and studied an experimental garden during the second half of 2009 (for the experimental garden of hemp cultivation also during the first months of 2010). This has resulted in three reports on their findings:

###### *1 Child pornography*

S. Bogaerts, *Proeftuin Zambezi: (digitale) Kinderporno, verslag van bevindingen (The Experimental Garden Zambezi: (Digital) Child Porn, first findings)*

###### *2 Human trafficking*

D. Siegel, *Proeftuin mensenhandel Bulgarije: verslag van bevindingen (The Experimental Garden of Human Trafficking in Bulgaria, first findings)*

###### *3 Hemp cultivation*

D. Korf, *Proeftuin Hennep: verslag van bevindingen (The Experimental Garden of Hemp, first findings)*

In this coordinating report, we have compiled the experiences from the three experimental gardens and present a proposal for the second phase of the evaluation.

##### **Immediate causes and cooperative partners (Chapter 2)**

The three studied experimental gardens were set up for a variety of reasons. The objective of the experimental garden of child pornography is to improve the investigation and prosecution of child porn through the development and testing of new software, and through a clarification of the legal boundaries involved. The experimental garden of human trafficking focuses on a chain-wide approach to traffic in women from Bulgaria, which aims to stimulate cooperation between the different partners. The immediate cause for setting up the experimental garden of hemp cultivation was the occurrence of a number of serious offences. This experimental garden focuses on more cohesion and cooperation between the chain partners in order to deal with the criminality behind hemp cultivation.

The number of cooperating partners is very different for each experimental garden. In all of them, the police and the Public Prosecution Service take part in the cooperation. Although in the experimental garden of child porn, the Public Prosecution Service and the police are the sole participating partners, they are represented by different departments of both organizations. In the experimental garden of hemp cultivation, they have been joined by municipalities, the tax authorities, and RIEC (Regional Centres for Information and Expertise). In the experimental garden of human trafficking, these same partners are taking part, completed with assistance bodies, scientists, and a variety of investigative services, - a total of twenty organizations is involved in this experimental garden.

The cooperation in the experimental gardens is intensive and enthusiastic. In the experimental child porn garden, the participants keep in close contact and are daily briefed by the police. In the experimental garden of human trafficking, the number of participating organizations has been steadily increasing, - during its course, the mutual contacts have gained in intensity. In the experimental garden of hemp cultivation, it has been decided to reduce the number of participants in the managerial case meetings to six, as it turned out that these meetings were attended by an ever growing number of people (mainly police officers).

### **Results (Chapter 3)**

In all three experimental gardens, the quality of the cooperation has been examined, as well as the extent to which internal objectives are being attained. As it turns out, the barrier model and the administrative reporting do not yet take central place. In the case of child pornography, these 'instruments' are not yet under discussion, while they are seen as 'too theoretical' in the experimental garden of human trafficking, and are still being developed in the case of hemp cultivation. Yet, the studied experimental gardens do work in a programmatic way (by a combination of repression, prevention and administrative measures). They also work in accordance with the philosophy of the barrier model (which prescribes, apart from an investigation, an examination of the possibilities of putting up barriers for organized crime), even though those involved do not always give it these names. Beside the barrier model and the administrative reporting, a total of eighteen 'internal' objectives have been discerned in the three studied experimental gardens.

With regard to the question whether the experimental gardens have fulfilled a function as learning environments, all three reports are positive. They have generated cooperation that did not exist beforehand (or did not exist to that extent). There has also been an exchange of information between partners who had not engaged in such an exchange earlier. In addition, the experimental gardens have generated new energy: ideology, engagement and adrenalin have turned out to be important ingredients of the cooperation.

The three reports do not pronounce upon a possible decrease in organized crime. Prior to this first part of the evaluation, it was foreseen that it would be early days for such pronouncements, which in practice turns out to be true. Furthermore, this has not been formulated as a direct objective by two of the three experimental gardens (child pornography and hemp cultivation).

### **Follow-up (Chapter 4)**

Each experimental garden is unique: this has become very clear during the first phase. Nevertheless, there is a need for an assessment covering all the experimental gardens, that is, for a common evaluative framework. Chapter 4 presents a pro-

posal for such a framework. In this approach, important questions regarding the cooperation are:

- To what extent is the cooperation either a means or an objective in itself?
- Is there any sharing of information, solutions and lessons?
- Is social capital being built up that will make it possible to achieve more with less physical capital?
- Is there a need for a lesser amount of formal supervision?

According to the three researchers, the *action research*<sup>7</sup> method used has not resulted in any unwanted influencing of the outcome. It has turned out to be possible to conduct a study in this manner. This research method is, however, labour-intensive, making it less suitable for the evaluation of a larger number of experimental gardens. In a follow-up study, researchers will be able to make use of the research questions regarding cooperation, formulated in Chapter 4. The exact formulation of the research questions, for that matter, still needs some more work.

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<sup>7</sup> Action research involves a reflective process, during which organizations try to optimize their strategy, practices and knowledge with the support of professional researchers. The researchers do not only derive information from the research process, but can also offer information and feedback in return.