



Action supporting the federal policy document on drugs

Project form for the Public institutions

This form needs to be filled in by the public institution. It is used to determine the nature of the project that will have to be carried out, as well as the tasks confided to the research team, the planning and how the public institution will integrate the results into its own activities.

1. Name and address of the public institution introducing the project

Federal judicial police, central drug department

2. Theme of the project

Estimate of the average yield of an illegal indoor cannabis plantation

3. Duration of the project¹

18 months

4. Description of the project and situation within the institution

4.1 Problem (identification of the needs within the framework of the project)

The past few years Belgium has been faced with a very important increase in the number of indoor cannabis plantations. Beside the small-scale plantations, we also observe an increase in the number of large plantations. The persons involved in such large scale plantations are attracted by the large profits that can be made with this activity. It is therefore important that the judicial reaction to it focuses on seizures (and later forfeitures) of the capital gains obtained by the offenders.

For want of factual elements, the Belgian justice will proceed by estimating the capital gains. This estimate takes into account the harvested cultures, the estimated yield of these cultures and the wholesale price of marijuana. In order to estimate the yield of cannabis plants, the Belgian justice bases itself on a Dutch study of 2005². This study presents the

¹ The study will start on 1 September 2009 at the earliest.

² *Opbrengstbepaling van illegale hennepcultuur in Nederland, deskundig onderzoek*, Toonen en Thissen, Plant research international bv, Wageningen, 12 April 2005.

yield of a cannabis plant according to the number of cultivated plants per square meter in a very straightforward way. This study has not been updated since 2005, whereas the cultivation methods have changed.

4.2 Objectives (research questions)

The research should enable us to update the average yield of a cannabis plant, especially taking into account the different cultivation methods used by the criminal networks and the plant species available on the market.

The research will also verify to which extent these variables influence the time necessary for the plants to bloom.

4.3 Please specify, on the basis of the table presented below, the context in which the projects will need to be carried out. The questions in the table are indicative and should help you fill in the answers. The aim of this table is to estimate the feasibility by examining the internal and external factors that might advance or hinder the research project.

Strength	Thanks to their knowledge of illegal cannabis cultivation, the federal police are able to inform the research team on the methods criminals most often use. They can also tell which size is most often discovered
Weakness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The federal police do not have the budget, nor, and especially, the know-how and knowledge necessary for such studies.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The will of the judicial authorities to proceed more and more often to the seizure of illegal assets.- We will appeal to the support of the Attorney General in charge of the drug issue.
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The refusal to allow cannabis cultivation for scientific purposes?- How do you think to influence these external factors? The federal police will contact the Ministry of Public Health and Justice as soon as the bilateral negotiations are finished.

5. Task (contents of the research project)

5.1 Scientific support expected by the public institution

Realization of the research as described above.

Regular meetings with the federal police to stay informed of the newly discovered methods.

5.2 Role of the public institution before and after the project³

The federal police will inform the research team on the illegal cultivation methods that are most often discovered.

The federal police will appeal to the Belgian and/or foreign judicial authorities so that cultivation material that has been confiscated during judicial interventions can be used within the framework of the research.

6. End result and its form

A matrix, if necessary with multiple entries, to calculate the yield of an illegal cannabis plantation.

7. Timing/planning of the activities (mentioning the fulltime equivalent – FTE)

7.1 Description and timing of the activities

- Giving information to the research team on the illegal cultivation methods that are most often discovered in Belgium and abroad, by studying reference books or by carrying out working visits/visits to the discovered plantations;
- Identifying and selecting the variables of the illegal cannabis culture having the largest influence on the yield of a plantation;
- Obtaining the material necessary to grow cannabis plants (cf. Paragraph 5.2 supra);
- Growing cannabis plants to calculate its yield according to the above-mentioned variables and the time necessary for the plants to bloom;
- Presenting the results in a way that they can be used by Justice.

7.2 Assessment of the necessary scientific staff (in fulltime equivalents)

1,5FTE

8. Possibility to valorize the end result(s) (workshop, publication, ...)

- The model will be presented within the federal and local police in order to use it to calculate the capital gains obtained by the persons illegally growing cannabis.
- The model will be presented to the expert network on drugs of the board of Attorneys General.
- The model will also be given to the law enforcement agencies of our neighbouring countries confronted with illegal cannabis cultivation.

9. Specific conditions

9.1 Suggestions on the constitution of the supervising committee

³ Among other things and if necessary the institution should mention when (months and year) it will provide the data for which it is responsible.

9.2 Secrecy clause

9.3 Other

(to be filled in by the Federal Research Policy)

Budget (estimate):

Contact person at the Federal Research Policy:

Information session : on **at** **. in room** **of the Federal Research Policy**

(registrations must be received at least one week in advance by email bonn@belspo.be; for want of interest, the meeting will not take place)