SUMMARY

The intensive approach of (very active) multiple offenders has been given a pivotal role in the government’s plans to ensure the Netherlands is a safer place. Supposedly, a relatively small number of offenders are responsible for a large part of the criminality that occurs on a regular basis such as car theft, shoplifting and bicycle theft, burglaries and vandalism. Short sentences are usually given because the recidivism when imposing punishment is often not sufficiently considered. The main reason for this is that good insight into this is often lacking. Since the Wet plaatsing in een Inrichting voor Stelselmatige Daders (ISD; Placement in an Institution for Systematic Offenders Act) was implemented in 2004, multiple offenders can be locked up for a maximum of two years based on their criminal past. Recidivism will be reduced if they are also offered a judicial reintegration programme that focuses on their problems and if they are supervised better than in the past when they are returned to society. A good link up with social follow-on facilities related to judicial resocialisation programmes is viewed as an essential condition for a successful reintegration in the "Aansluiting nazorg" (2005; Follow-up link-up) improvement plan.

The judicial chain approach to multiple offenders is given a pivotal position in the first section of the research on which we are reporting through this document. We will discuss the connection between the judicial process and the social follow-on facilities in the second part of the research on which a separate publication will appear.

Research design
Different research activities have been performed. Firstly, the policy suppositions behind the multiple offender approach have been described based on national documents and interviews with the authors thereof. Subsequently, talks were held with representatives of the involved authorities in ten municipalities that participate in the Nazorg (Follow-up) project about the definition of multiple offenders, the set-up of the local approach, the goals that have been set in relation to this, the efforts of the implementing parties, the partnerships and consultation structures that have been set up for this purpose and the bottlenecks that occur when implementation takes place. Relevant (local) documents and registrations were also collected and studied. The research focuses on the pilot municipalities of Alkmaar, Amsterdam, ‘s-Hertogenbosch, The Hague, Eindhoven, Limburg South (Heerlen Maastricht and Sittard/Geleen), Tilburg, Utrecht and Zwolle.

Local interpretation
The national safety policy and related policy documents are the starting points in connection to the approach and the definition of the target group(s) in most municipalities. Another important incentive for the development of local policies is the Grotestedenbeleid (GSBIII; Large City Policy). Agreements have been made within this context as well as arrangements regarding other issues about the efforts that must be made, such as the number of multiple offenders who will be offered a follow-up or resocialisation programme. The locally formulated and operationalised goals are mainly in the area of reducing the burden and recidivism of the persons concerned by realising a fitting, person-focused approach. It should be possible to reduce criminal recidivism by increasing the efficiency of the criminal interventions for which sanctions, (local) surveillance, crisis centres and supervision must be developed.

Organisation and steering
The organisation has, in most municipalities, been defined in the project description or in a covenant between chain partners. The steering of the local approach takes place through a steering committee in which representatives of the municipality, the police and the Dutch PublicProsecutions Department hold a seat. It provides the administrative direction, it realises the preconditions, it provides recommendations regarding the selected approach and it assesses the progress of the results. The impression exists, with a few exceptions, that the steering committees are not sufficiently obtaining the required information on which they can base their approach. The
steering committee consists of administrative heavyweights chaired by the mayor in one municipality. This central management has strongly contributed towards the good collaboration that has been achieved and the results that are being booked in relation to the project implementation.

The steps that have been taken in most municipalities consist of the following: drawing up a list with names to identify multiple offenders (multiple offender lists), having case consultations, the arrest of and holding multiple offenders, and, as the last step, the placement of multiple offenders in compulsory programmes. The most important part of the implementation of the local multiple offender approaches is the person-focused approach that is given form in the case consultations. Multiple offenders are discussed individually, the information that is available at the participating authorities is exchanged and further person-focused actions are expanded upon within this context.

**Success and failure factors**
Good information provision is vital for implementation. The online web application that is accessible to all involved parties and that has been implemented in a few municipalities is a good example of this. This ensures that the administrative burden of the projects is smaller than in other municipalities and that the information is available earlier and is more current.

Clear failure factors that have been identified are the incompleteness of multiple offender files and the insufficient cooperation between the implementation organisations involved. As a result, the different local approaches have proven to be incapable of ensuring that offenders could be sentenced in large numbers in a systematic manner for an ISD measure. The available capacity of ISD cells has, in most municipalities, not been fully used.

The lack of the GGZ (Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg; Mental Healthcare) has been experienced as a bottleneck in connection to a few local approaches. It has been remarked at various municipalities that psychological and mental issues often occur in connection to multiple offenders but that not always sufficient attention is being paid to this factor. The possible underestimation of these issues in connection to multiple offenders may have disappointing results when offering and implementing treatment programmes.

**Side effects**
A negative side effect of the prioritisation of the multiple offender approach is the decreasing attention paid to other groups of individuals that disturb the peace, in particular, the homeless. A positive side effect is that the intensive collaboration amongst partners will lead to mutual understanding for the daily problems related to implementation. Many partners struggle, for example, with the interpretation of the approach of the double diagnosed individuals (comorbidity), one of the most stubborn target groups amongst multiple offenders.

**Recommendations**
A number of best practices emerged from the research. A good local approach to multiple offenders is characterised by the following:

- An appropriate organisation structure: clear steerage, definitions and collaboration;
- Good information provision: accessible and complete personal files and well-informed judges;
- Appropriate and sufficient interventions: implementing arrests and compulsory programmes.