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**THE PRINCESS MÁXIMA CENTRE FOR  
PAEDIATRIC ONCOLOGY**

**PLENARY SESSION 4- ROUND TABLE**

STP goals and objectives that go above and beyond.  
STPs taking on new roles, missions and strategies

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# **The Princess Máxima Centre for paediatric oncology**

*How a Science Park became grown up.*

## The Princess Máxima Centre for paediatric oncology

The Netherlands has 17 million inhabitants. Spread throughout the country are (academic) hospitals, in which a total of 800 children are treated for cancer annually. The advantage of this is that the hospital is nearby. The disadvantage is that relatively few treatments are carried out per physician and the research taking place is also spread across the country. For a country on the scale of the Netherlands it would be better if all complex healthcare along with the associated research were to take place in one location. With an optimum pooling of knowledge and quality, the cure rate of children with cancer should be able to increase from 75% to 90%.

For the Netherlands, it was unique that the initiative was taken by doctors and parents and not by traditional structures and institutions, to arrive at one specialist hospital and research institute for paediatric oncology: the Princess Máxima Centre (PMC). The decision to open the PMC has meanwhile been taken. The PMC starts off in an existing building in 2015; the new proprietary building should be ready in 2017. It will become the largest healthcare and research centre in the field of paediatric cancer in Europe.

The Princess Máxima Centre is an exceptional institution for several reasons:

- It is an initiative of doctors and parents.
- It is co-financed by crowdfunding.
- It brings together all the expertise that is currently spread over an entire country.
- It is located on a Science Park, which has been willing to adjust the existing zoning plans to this end.
- It uses all the expertise in the Science Park, including expertise from other disciplines, such as in the area of sustainability.

This contribution is about the arrival of the Princess Máxima Centre to the Utrecht Science Park and the critical moments that this has entailed for all concerned. Before we go into this further, some information follows below about the Utrecht Science Park as it stood in 2012, when the decision had to be taken about the PMC coming to Utrecht.

## The Utrecht Science Park.

In 2009, the authorities, university and the business community decided to transform the traditional campus on the outskirts of the city into a science park and in 2011 the site was officially named the "Utrecht Science Park". As from 2009, a small project organisation was active in order to guide this process. At the end of 2012, this organisation was officially formalized as an independent foundation. In cooperation with all parties in and around the park, the aim of the foundation is to create an ecosystem that can ensure that the Utrecht region can maintain and strengthen its position in the long term as the most competitive region in Europe

On a small scale, in addition to the University and the University Hospital, there were already some private business activities in the park in 2009 but the "ecosystem" was

certainly not yet complete. This is why a development plan was made in order to reinforce the Utrecht Science Park with a large number of institutes and facilities in the period up to 2018. In 2012 this plan consisted of the following components:

- Establishment in the Science Park of the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, which together with the University's Faculties of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and some existing research institutes, will form a unique concentration of knowledge for Europe in the field of Public Health.
- Expanding the existing temporary incubator to two incubator facilities: one for office-based starters and one for Life Sciences start-ups with a combined capacity of about 400 work places.
- The establishment of an informal incubator for social entrepreneurship.
- Creating space for the establishment of new research branches of commercial enterprises. This led to Danone opening its European Research Centre for medical nutrition and baby food in September 2013, with 480 employees from 22 countries.
- The development of residential accommodation for 4,000 students.
- The building of a P&R facility for 2,000 cars (the largest in the Netherlands).
- The construction of an express tramway to the Central Station in Utrecht, which with 120 million visitors annually, is the largest station in the Netherlands and is located 29 minutes from the national airport (Amsterdam Airport Schiphol).
- The construction of new educational buildings whereby the number of students can increase from 50,000 to 60,000.
- Expanding catering facilities whereby the traditional Botanical Garden becomes the "Central Park" and festival grounds.
- Throwing open the park for large events such as the The Civilization science festival in the Botanical Garden and the start of the Tour de France in 2015.
- The significant expansion of a number of leading research institutes such as the Hubrecht Institute for stem cell research and regenerative medicine.
- Investigating the opportunities for developing satellite locations in the region.

The 2012-2018 investment program amounts to a total of € 1 billion and in that period provides a growth of over 4,000 jobs, thereby increasing the number of jobs in the Utrecht Science Park to about 26,000, on 300 acres of park area and with a constructional volume of 1,200,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

#### The Utrecht Science Park and the Princess Máxima Centre

In 2012 the Princess Máxima Centre decided to establish themselves in the Utrecht Science Park. Due to the breadth and the quality of the USP ecosystem in combination with the central position of Utrecht in the service area, this in itself is not an unexpected choice. However, the creation of the PMC, in all five aspects that make it unique, has yielded a "mind shift" and an acceleration of the development of the park. Below is an overview.

#### *An initiative of doctors and parents.*

Hospitals and academic research institutes in the Netherlands are almost always planned under the direction of authorities and institutions. The PMC was an initiative of doctors and parents. This led to a completely different approach to the acquisition efforts. The (still young) USP organisation was set up in close cooperation with the regional authorities for the purpose of approaching highly active parties to establish themselves in the Utrecht

Science Park. For the Princess Máxima Centre it turned out that sometimes it had to be completely different. In this situation, it was especially important to *do absolutely nothing visible*. The initiators of the PMC were busy with a spirited and difficult struggle to realize their dreams, with all its consequences for existing organisations and institutes. The chance of it succeeding would only diminish if everyone tried to get involved and interfere. Firstly this had to force a system breakthrough and only after that could the ideal place for the PMC be considered. For us, (the USP organisation and regional authorities) that was extremely difficult. Even after it became clear that the PMC really would be established, it was important to still do very little apart from *rely on the ecosystem*. If our plan was any good then the PMC would choose us on the basis of substantive arguments and we should not be seen to push that. These were very important lessons: *do nothing and rely on the strength of the ecosystem*.

### *Crowdfunding*

The PMC is co-financed with the proceeds of a major public fundraising campaign called Kika. Using well known Dutch people as ambassadors, 8.5 million Euro was collected in a very short time. It was the first time that a hospital has been financed in such a way. For the Utrecht Science Park, this was a unique development. In addition to the normal activities in the area of “matching” investors with initiators of projects in the USP, a public funds canvassing action was initiated, which was widely supported. When one of the members of the board of the University bid his farewell, he asked all the guests to contribute to the PMC and an action was initiated among students, including by "spinning" for the PMC. This was an important inspiration for us: what we do here is socially so important that we all are also really willing to pay for it. We can build on this in the future. It taught us once again that a Science Park *is much more than just a property development project*.

### *The PMC brings together expertise from all over the Netherlands.*

It is of course brilliant that an institute like the PMC has been created. And for a Science Park where lots of oncology research is already done, the arrival of this institute is an absolute breakthrough. However it is also a large and complex project: the PMC will add another 700 jobs to the growth of 4,000 jobs already planned and added to that, a stream of patients and visitors. People who work at the PMC will often come from other parts of the country and will not all move to the immediate area. Without proper planning and organisation, the PMC may put a large onus on the transport system. In order to absorb this properly, new plans have to be made in the field of organisational change (e.g. the opening of outpatients' departments outside of rush hours), in the field of *regional development and designated use* (ranging from the development of overnight accommodations in or near the PMC to seeking solutions for housing plans of the surrounding municipalities) and the promotion of sustainable transport. For the USP, the advent of the PMC is a huge incentive *to do more things and to do those things faster*.

### *The PMC is establishing itself in a Science Park that has to adapt its planning for this.*

In itself it is nothing new for a hospital to establish itself in the USP. What is unique about the PMC is that it is built onto the existing Wilhelmina Children's Hospital and therefore will share many important (and costly) facilities such as operating theatres, which not only creates a major hospital but also a large research centre. Within a radius of 100 meters

there are also the famous Hubrecht Institute, the University Medical Centre, Danone Research and the University of Utrecht.

However, there was a huge problem with this plan: it was not sanctioned. After decades of lack of clarity, a new zoning plan was made in 2009 that facilitated the above mentioned building programme, but also laid down that the USP should in no way expand in the direction of the surrounding estates. That plan is fixed until 2019. In the media it had already become known that the PMC wanted to set up with us and then a fraught political debate threatened to occur that would only have losers if it were not to end well. At that time, as a Science Park organisation, we perhaps learned the most important thing that you are able to in this role: *carrying out discussions that officially never took place*. Partly thanks to a lot of work behind the scenes, at exactly the right moment a motion was adopted in municipal council wherein the advent of the PMC to Utrecht was unanimously welcomed.

#### *The PMC makes use of all facilities and expertise*

An essential aspect of a Science Park is that knowledge and facilities are shared. That the PMC does this with the medical institutions such as the Wilhelmina Children's Hospital, the Hubrecht Laboratory and the University Medical Centre is obvious. What's unique is that the PMC has entered into other collaborations.

- The PMC will use the Botanical Garden and the neighbouring estate as a "garden" and outdoor space.
- The building has been made optimally sustainable through cooperation with the Utrecht Sustainability Institute, situated in the USP, which is under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Jacqueline Cramer.
- The Utrecht School of the Arts is helping with the lay out and furnishing of the building.
- Experiences in the construction of the (BREEAM excellent rated) Danone Research building will be included in the construction of the PMC.

#### Concluding Comment

A Science Park is more than just a property development project or a university campus. The PMC and the USP belong together because of their shared mission: improving health and quality of life for humans, animals and environment, now and in the future.

Our Science Park organisation is not an acquisition or area development club. It is perhaps more *the lubricant of society*. Sometimes very visible and sometimes quite invisible: from a "grand opening" to "a conversation that officially never took place," it's all in there. And that makes it fascinating and valuable.