

Global trends and emerging opportunities in The Hague

Webinar transcript – June 17



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Laurens Kok: Hello and welcome from The Hague. Thank you for making the time to join this webinar. I'm Laurence Kok, Head of Foreign Investment at The Hague Business Agency. Together with me today is Saskia Bruines, Deputy Mayor of The Hague for economic affairs, international fairs and municipal services, as well as Henk Kool, the Chairman of the Economic Board of The Hague.

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Laurens Kok: Today we have a great international audience of over one hundred people. So welcome, everyone. In the next half an hour, we'll present to you the emerging business opportunities in the city of The Hague. We talk about global trends and how they impact local business environment and developments here in The Hague. Henk will share with us some success stories that we believe are interesting for this audience. So looking at the program of today, we'll start with the Deputy Mayor Bruines to elaborate on the city strategy that is recently published in the economic vision in 2030. After that, Henk will continue with his take on the economic developments in The Hague and also present some of the work and the projects that the economic board is involved in. And myself, I will end with some global economic trends and outlooks for cross-border investment and opportunities. So for now, your microphones are muted during the presentation, but you can submit your questions for the Q&A box below. We've reserved about half an hour to answer all your questions at the end of this webinar. The recording of today's webinar will be available and shared with you via links in emails and can also be found later at our website: businessagency.thehague.com. Of course, very welcome to reach out to one of our business advisors. After this webinar, ask more questions and support whatever you need. Also, we kindly asked you to give feedback about the quality of this webinar during the duration of this webinar. We will launch a quick poll that will be running during the webinar to generate your feedback.

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Laurens Kok: So thanks again for attending. And let me now hand over to Saskia .

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Saskia Bruines: Again, welcome to everyone. As a Deputy Mayor for economic affairs in The Hague, I welcome you on behalf of the city. And I'd like to tell you something about The Hague economics and then economic policy. I must say that especially in this economically difficult time, it is important for The Hague and for the region of South Holland who continue to build on the strength of our propositions. The Hague is working on innovations for a safe and better, just world based on an international profile as the city of peace and justice.

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Saskia Bruines: We have a very special city location by the sea and facilities in terms of recreation and leisure. It makes The Hague a pleasant place to live and also internationally attractive.

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Saskia Bruines: And a third find is that The Hague is the political capital of the Netherlands.

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Saskia Bruines: The mix of the governmental institutions, knowledge institutions, international NGOs and companies gives The Hague a distinct and a very international identity. We live in a region that has big corporations together, and our economic approach is not the isolation, but it's part of a larger strategy focused on facilitating sustainable economic growth in the region of the South Holland.

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This region currently represents nearly a quarter of the Dutch economy. The COVID crisis challenges conventional economic systems in many sectors that traditionally have been very important in terms of providing jobs and economic growth have been hit very hard.

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Saskia Bruines: As part of a joint effort between the cities of South Holland, we want to invest economically. Economies of growth tied to social challenges of our time.

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Saskia Bruines: Rapid developments in, for instance, energy transition, digitalization and the needs for a more circular economy that provides opportunities for our region. Also thus technological innovation.

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Saskia Bruines: The region is taking action. We have a human capital agenda with stimulating, innovative and sustainable ecosystems. We facilitate partnerships between knowledge institutions, universities, enterprises and investing in sectors of growth that have loads of potential for the future and thus for now. For instance, AI, cyber security, quantum bioscience.

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Saskia Bruines: The Hague as an international city of peace and justice. We actively welcome international companies to expand their business to our city. And we actively help entrepreneurs to expand the businesses abroad, like soft landing program we do in Germany.

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Saskia Bruines: The Hague International Centre assists international companies and employees are coming toward Holland who are coming to The Hague with practicalities relating to working and living in assets. You have a wonderful book. I have it here. It's made for old people coming to The Hague, the love information about how things work here and how we can help you building up a living and a company in here.

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Saskia Bruines: And we do invest in environments and campus environments that appeal to entrepreneurs from all over the world.

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Saskia Bruines: So we want to bring together and strengthen the enablers in the IT tech security sector, the creative industry, finance and also knowledge institutions.

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Saskia Bruines: Third, I'd like to stress that The Hague is a fast growing city and we want to invest in an economy of growth to be more resilient to economic hardship and to be ready for future transitions. Especially talking about energy transition and digitalisation. So, this is our recently approved economic vision for 2030. It's setting out the economic policy and goals for the upcoming decade in order to secure long term employment opportunities and a good business climate. As already said, The Hague is a strong governmental presence.

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Saskia Bruines: And in order to build a sustainable economy, it's important to diversify our economy.

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Saskia Bruines: And this is a cornerstone of our current economic strategy. The importance of broadening the economy and creating jobs for the future and to achieve this broad economy prosperity. The municipality is working on four strategic goals. First, make the city more attractive with leisure tourism ability city branding.

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Saskia Bruines: Second, make the economic structure more resilient. And we do this by security delta working on a safe world. Our Impact City program, working on a better world. And our legal and policy capital, working on a just world.

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Saskia Bruines: And a third creating an attractive environment in the city for companies to reside. We're building a new central innovation district, a coming decade.

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Saskia Bruines: We're working and living at a sea campus development. And the force, we provide entrepreneurs with international growth opportunities. The programs on the internationalization. And we're working on attracting talent. Another thing I like to mention is that we provide and entrepreneurs with growth opportunities by attractive business climate like housing, market, personnel, capital. We're supporting entrepreneurs in the transition of the future, such as the digital and energy transition. And we'd like to facilitate the connection of many prominent international companies, international organizations and NGOs. This is what we do as a city. And last but not least, we focus on skills and talent. We'd like to attract and retain talent, for example, through the roadmap, next economy, skills and matching approach, greater coordination between professional education and industries and the more social entrepreneurship is important to have broad skilled and talented people.

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Saskia Bruines: So this is, in short, what I like to tell you about the economic strategy. But I can tell you some maybe some examples. We have a program on impact city. The Hague city for entrepreneurs who want to build a better world.

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Saskia Bruines: Doing business and doing good at the same time. And that suits very much to the international city of peace and justice. We offer a wide range of possibilities to startups and scale ups with impact.

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Saskia Bruines: So does this in an example. I have some more, but I think I'll leave it here for now. Thank you Laurens.

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Laurens Kok: Thanks, Soska. Very intriguing what you do, you just shared. Personally, I'm very in favor of the Startup Investments Program where you really see all this come together.

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Laurens Kok: City acting as a launching customer to have startups and the scale ups to tackle problems of the city. So that's something in which The Hague is one of the first to adapt. And you now see it has been adapted by the local government, as well as some of the departments of the central government. So, congrats to that and happy to see that the new program is already on the way. Henk, so hearing Saskia, do you have anything to add to that?

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Henk Kool: Well, what I'd like to underline, because I was born in The Hague, I lived all my life in The Hague now for 65 years. And I will probably die in The Hague. And I'd like to tell the whole world that it is indeed a fantastic city. It is not only a very compact city. So you can go by bicycle to the beach, 11 kilometres of beach, but you can go by bicycle when you have to go to your work and you can go by bicycle to your shopping mall. So it's such a fantastic city. I'd like to underline the words from Saskia.

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Saskia Bruines: Well, thank you. And there's a lot to say to that because I did not mention our arts and culture. In a sense, you have a lot of nice museums and theater, also international theatre, English spoken theatre, and that's why people like it very much.

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Saskia Bruines: People from The Hague, but also to people from all experts and people from internationals who live here.

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Henk Kool: Yes. If I'm allowed to make one more typical Dutch remark. That's normally when people spoke about the Netherlands, about Holland, they think about Amsterdam. Well, let me tell you this secret. Amsterdam is much more expensive than The Hague and The Hague is much more beautiful, so than you thinking about businesses in the Netherlands. Think about The Hague.

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Laurens Kok: Thanks for that. On top of that, let's not forget that an economic strategy of reaching two for the next 10 years is really something special. I think it's resilience also because we work on a better, safer and more just world. And looking at what's happening in the world, that is definitely how we are well positioned to be part of that as the international city of peace and justice. So thanks, Saskia for your insights. I now want to move over to Hank to get him to tell us a bit more about his role in the economic board. But let's not forget for the attendees to raise your questions in the Q&A box below or there's already some questions coming in. But always happy to receive more. So Henk, please tell us a bit more about your work at the economic board and the recent thriving projects that you raised with your fellow board members. Thank you.

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Henk Kool: Thank you. First of all, good morning to everyone. Good morning, World. Or perhaps I have to say good afternoon. Because I understand that a lot of viewers are joining us today out of China. So also, ni hao. I would like to thank Business Agency, of course, for the opportunity to say something here today. Economic Board is very happy to be here.

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Henk Kool: The economic board is an advisory body to the city council and consists of only active CEOs of large and small companies or institutions in The Hague. For example, the director of Shell, the oil company Shell, is on our board. But also the dean of Leiden University, the world famous University of Leiden, who has also have offices in The Hague. But another example, the director of Kiss It, an employment agency, especially for women in IT, Jose van Dalen is her name. She's just joined in the boards as well. The boards actually do three things in The Hague. We provide solicited and unsolicited advice to the city council. And of course, you understand giving unsolicited advice is, of course, the most fun. We have just written an extensive advice on how the municipality can get the best and fastest out of the car owner crisis, at least how the economy can get back on its feet as quick as possible. I will come back to that later. The second task we have, is to act as an ambassador for the municipality of The Hague. We participate in webinars like this and sometimes hold pitches for bringing in conferences or attracting foreign companies to The Hague. Our third task is actually our most important one, I have to say. We help to get projects off the ground that would otherwise not be there. And I like to give you two examples of this. First of all, Programmania is an experience center of our primary schools students and secondary area students come into contact with programming and engineering in order to make ICT talent flourish. Because we noticed that in the mainstream education, too little attention was paid to the engineering and programming of computers and IT and most of the students are playing with their phone every minute, but they don't know how it works. They don't know how it's manufactured. They don't know nothing about it. And we think that's not good. We started or we're going to start Programmania like to teach the students and give them more enthusiastic thoughts about what's in IT, because it's a problem because all the jobs in the future will be related to IT So we see in the future a lot of jobs in IT secretary. We have to train our people to do that. Regular education trains for jobs that will no longer exist. We have to change that and that's the reason we start with Programmania and we hope we will grow and generate interest in IT and programming and engineering among the students.

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Henk Kool: We hope to start this program fairly soon. Another project, the second project I want to mention is Cyberwerf, also nice projects. Cyberwerf is a project in which students of secondary vocational education help small and medium sized enterprises to become more resilient to cybercrime.

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Henk Kool: You know what it is like. Everyone thinks it won't happen to him until it happens. And then it's too late. So students will take a look inside to companies under supervision. Write report with tips and advice. And the company can then seek professional help based on the report. A successful project that started on a business park. And we are now rolling it out all over the city. So it's very nice. And a lot of response from the businesses who are willing to participate in this project. So that's for what's the economic board is doing. We do a lot more. We do also a lot of surveys.

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Henk Kool: Yes, I'm so sorry. It is early in the morning for me in the Netherlands, you know. But now I like to elaborate a little bit more on the Corona crisis, or rather what we have advised to do to get out of the economic crisis as quickly and as decently as possible.

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Henk Kool: Well, in the first place, we have wandered where we want to end up. So we drew an ideal picture, put a dot on the horizon where we want to work towards. And the central question is, how do we want to get out of this crisis? As The Hague in the future? What will be what will the city look like in 10 years? Which visit do we want to go to the city and which visit we prefer not? In which sectors are we strong? And where do we want to develop further? How do we strengthen ourselves profile as an international city of peace and justice? Saskia mentioned that already so that we can get the right results. What measures can we already implement, accelerated or not, for this? And we believe that's the key message today. We believe technology is the key to success for the board. It is paramount that further digitisation and focus on technology is essential to be a better city, especially if the 1.5 meter economy lasts for a long time. In some areas may become the new standards. I don't hope so. But when you look at it, it is possible. Technology can provide a lot of support for a variety of challenges. Use the data available to respond specifically to recovery and look at smart solutions that are already used elsewhere. Technology is already being used in various places in which it mainly concerns in combination with artificial intelligence. I will give you a few examples. For instance, visitors and users control to map how many people use certain buildings, but also to check that visitors are virus free. And then you have to think smart here. Entrance gates that can measure various things. The number of visitors, the temperature or visitors or control of staff, ID cards and the gates can either be Dutch free or expanded with disinfected gel dispensers. So, there are all kinds of technology possible that also create new challenges.

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Henk Kool: Technical technological development is set to expense even more in the coming period. It is imperative that we go along with this as a city and prefer to anticipate certain themes. The Hague has a strong IT tech cluster with the presentation in a number of areas that are important for the city and supports and strengthens our urban profile. In particular, it is, for example, the security cluster. We do have nice security cluster, called The Hague Security Delta. Saskia already mentioned Impact City. We have a very strong oil and gas cluster if they are very busy on the moment with all kinds of energy transitions. And of course, The Hague is also famous for their telecom cluster. In all these sectors, we are strong as a city. Let's use it, especially now. We also have a large knowledge cluster when it comes to our artificial intelligence, and they recommend it to the city that we make extra use of this knowledge and to use it to work on the economy in the future. And the The Hague can also take the lead. This is about the blended society in which digital and physical forms of contact are combined turn into, for example, as a city, we could organize conferences for 30000 people, which was not imaginable before, but now is because we can do thousands physical visitors receiving and 28.000 digital and we can combine these things. And I think the The Hague has to do that because we have a good name already in organizing big events and big Congresses. So, for instance, we had the big congress with with all the world leaders together in The Hague, in the World Forum congress hall. Another advice is closely related to what I just said goes about employment. The Hague needs an active policy when it comes to guiding you from work to work in those sectors in which we can accept growth in the coming years. And that is health care. We think construction. ICT, I mentioned that already, advice and education. At the same time, you can also take a look at what businesses can organize among themselves. What I mean is that, can employers who have to let employees go, because this is over, bring them in contact with employers who are looking for workers?

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Henk Kool: And when you do that, I mean, when you do it in a good way and you guide it a little bit. This can prevent people from moving on to benefits. And that's, of course, much better. Well, finally, it's remains essential. I think that the municipality communicates the lines of communication to all sectors and organizations in the city fully open and when mutual communications fails or does not get in the way, then the municipality, I think, has to take a leading role and intervene. And in all kinds of situations, between tenants and landlords, between employees and employers, between visitors and providers, over fences and attractions and between users or facilities and their providers. Much of the frustration, I think, and stress among residents and it's all over the world the same, is caused by lack of clarity and certainty and the lack of feasible solutions and perspective. And I think an active attitude of the municipality is crucial in this. As an example, all entrepreneurs and especially small entrepreneurs face on the moment unprecedented, complex and urgency challenges to deal with the current situation. And then we think of marketing, security, rooting issues and so on. On the other hand, there are many large companies, ministries and agencies in The Hague established who do have this knowledge in-house. So corporates can help local entrepreneurs with knowledge and advice. I think the municipality of The Hague, and they are doing it already, can help with creation and linking these people and these companies together.

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Henk Kool: So Laurens, this is what I have to say.

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Laurens Kok: Thanks Henk and let's hope the Corona crisis will be over soon. We have to see if we can start.

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Henk Kool: We like to start to rebuild our economy because that's quite necessary, because the crisis hits the economy not only in the and not only in the Netherlands. It's the whole world. And we have to work hard to restore our position. Well, thank you very much.

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Laurens Kok: Thanks Henk for your insights and very true what you say here. We have to see how the epidemic emerges globally. As an international city, we rely on our international connections. But I think we are in a good position because we have such a entrepreneurial government and that the dialogue between the businesses and the city is well sustained. Also, by the means of the economic border. Saskia, listening to Henk, it also relates to what you have told. Any insights on what Henk just shared with us?

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Saskia Bruines: Yes, thank you, Henk. Yes, I agree with Henk. He puts some real the Hague issues into perspective and also the role of the economic board, which we very much appreciate.

About the measures on the on the COVID-19, we are very glad with our national government who put some especially financial measures for entrepreneurs. A lot of billions euros are put into this. So, certainly. It helps a lot of people to survive at the moment. But we do have to prepare in the future.

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Saskia Bruines: I think that there might be some loss of the economy who will get smaller and there will other parts who can explore. We have to have very good data on this and a good analysis on this.

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Saskia Bruines: Especially and I think where we have to keep to is the 1.5m systems, when we're told to social distance. Especially the cafes and restaurants and entertainment and congresses will be facing a hard time. At the same time, we see some entrepreneurs and some companies in tech or some parts of the retail or the health care are very important to grow.

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Saskia Bruines: What we really want to do is that we want to provide opportunities for job changing for people. If this is necessary, we have to cooperate and to work together with education partners to get more across sectoral working or creating jobs for the future or flexible workshops, because we don't want to get people in unemployment for a longer time. So this is one of the big challenges for the next, uh, next year and what it's going to do with our our economy and also the international environment. I can not tell yet. It is difficult. Yes, I saw some questions on the Q&A. But what what are we going to do with the international intercontinental visitors?

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Saskia Bruines: Well, it is. I don't know. Everyone is welcome here. Of course, they always have been. But it depends on what's going to happen with travelling. If people asked if it's possible to travel a lot. Well, so we have to try to prepare on all different scenarios. And this is what we're doing.

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Laurens Kok: Yes, it definitely is. I see that the central government is well equipped to tackle the hurdles of the corona crisis. But let's not forget also what the municipality does, especially with the arrangements for the self-employed, the Dutch arrangement. It's very helpful and it will remain till September 1st. I'm confident that it will help a lot of especially the smaller and medium sized enterprises.

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Saskia Bruines: What will happen after that, we don't know. And there comes an end to this age of the of the national government. And hopefully we get to more normal situations after September. I hope so that we don't have come in another lockdown or whatsoever. That's the worst scenario. And the best scenario is that we get back to normal. At the same time, I think some things has changed already. People are thinking more about that. Some things are changing as I see enough people think about how they want to live and move on to live together. Maybe. What I don't know exactly is how that will influence the economy and the choices we have to make. But it's interesting to you to follow this way.

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Laurens Kok: Well, thanks. So maybe that I can use now some time to elaborate on the international perspective, because we are in the international city of peace and justice and also as the Netherlands we offer. We have very international open economy. More than 80% of our GDP relies on trade and its exports. Part of it is re-export goods that are already coming in. But I am certain that also investments and knowledge from abroad will contribute to the recovery of the Dutch economy. But as we are talking to the international community and The Hague, as well as to our projects, we have seen a massive impact in the last months.

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We did a survey and 80 percent of the respondents confirmed that a significant net of negative friends and that financial impact is expected. 28 percent expects to lose at least half of the revenue this year, and over 50 percent expressed financial impact to become critical for that for their activity in next four, six months. So, I'm happy to see that we, as the business agency, together with the innovative quarter, as well as invest in all the network and the city, are able to get in contact with all of those entrepreneurs and companies to see where their needs are and how we can open up the the old measurements taken by the central government and the local government for those companies. For example, that those are which I already mentioned or the reimbursement of some of the taxes were added. Real estate tax can be extended if you reach out to the local tax of 40. But together with all this shows that the Netherlands is well-positioned and providing unprecedented support to the companies and entrepreneurs, helping them to recover.

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Laurens Kok: But if we look to the recovering phase, which is approaching in the coming months and will take a while to be on the level we were used to. My advice is to start preparing in the business development now. And there are opportunities. Also because looking at the global economic state, as well as the political reaction to the pandemic. And we see more protectionism taking place. It was already the case before the pandemic kicked in. But my view is that this will accelerate in reaction to this crisis and that then we are lucky that the Netherlands has an open economy. That of course measurements are taking place, especially when it comes to M&A investments. There will be more greater government involvement in that regard and screening procedures will be in place. But, yeah. So it's now equally important to get in touch with local advisers to assist companies that are interested in growth in The Hague and in the Netherlands to be helped by us or our partners.

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Laurens Kok: I would strongly advise to reach out and take great precautions for this coming phase. Moving over to the Netherlands as a whole. Yesterday, the IMD, the renowned Swiss business school that for the last three decades already publishes the World Competitiveness Index, faced the Netherlands a couple of steps in this ranking. Last year, we were six. And now we are fourth positioned. Only after Singapore, Denmark and Swiss. So, I'm happy to see that investment and living climate in the Netherlands and the open economy is recognized globally.

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Laurens Kok: So, again, we're looking at the Netherlands and ecosystems in The Hague. Some of them were already mentioned by Henk and Saskia. New energy, impact economy, legal finance, tech. I see great opportunities. Civil servants, as well as a team of the businesses are well connected and making a connection is key to starting off the process of growth business opening office in The Hague. And we are ready to help you through the economic process. So that's what I want to share from the business agency point of view and looking at the time, I want to move over to answering some questions. Questions are already coming in. Maybe I'll start with the first question for the vice mayor. You already said something about it, but talking about the campus developments you mentioned, there is a question from Simon Murphy. Putting it live now. If there is room in this campus developments for NGOs especially, I guess there is, but maybe you can elaborate on that a bit.

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Saskia Bruines: We have a lot of NGOs who work together on the field of peace and justice and also humanities. And we're working on a new place for them. There was a question of Rutger. I think that to find a new place for people who are now in. And it will be more in the future to cooperate and to work together and to work and to use each other's knowledge and innovative perspectives in the new fields of work or solutions in whatever field for society and as a whole. International NGOs are very important for us.

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Saskia Bruines: We have heard a lot of them working together in what we call the humanity hub. And well, they are also looking for new space because they are growing too fast. So this is this is growing as it is between humanity, but a lot of tech. And they are also in it and what binds it together is to find solutions for new questions for a better world, for disasters in other countries for solutions against whatever you can think of or everywhere in the world.

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Saskia Bruines: People who are very good in tech, can find people who work on humanity. And there are important new insights on that. So we really cooperate and support building new communities, building campuses, building hubs for facilitating this or working together.

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Laurens Kok: Thanks, Oscar. Hank, question for you. Are the projects of the economic board or what are the criteria to maybe submit ideas for a project?

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Henk Kool: Well, that's difficult to say because there are plenty of ideas. But what we do, everyone is able to come over to the boards when they have a good idea for a project. And when it is helping to stimulate the economy in The Hague, we will look at it. Mostly what we do is: we start in survey on the idea and see if there is really need for it. And then when that's the case, we also try to find some finance to to explore the idea. Then we put it away, because we don't like to keep all the projects with the economic boards. We are just a small group, but we would like to find and host for such a project and who is able to to bring the project to further. So that's, everyone is welcome. Then we look very carefully and we will do a survey and we asked some advice on that if it is really helping the economy of The Hague for us.

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Laurens Kok: Thanks, Henk. And I guess the contact details are included on the website of the economic board. So whenever you have an idea, please reach out to the economic board and Henk.

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Laurens Kok: Next question, maybe a question for me, for my Jonathan Garcia. As local connector, he is keen to help and connect to the business agency community. Thanks, Jonathan. I must admit that we rely for tech on on the thriving communities that are already here. This is the IT tech building next to the laan van NOI station. Very thriving community and for a startup it is also part of that with their accelerated program. So, I would advise you to to connect to them and come to the meetings virtually nowadays. And we will be happy to see you there as well as at the YESDelft community. Thanks again to the Deputy Mayor that the YESDelft opened an office in The Hague as well to focus on blockchain and IOT for one thing and AI.

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This community is thriving and be part of that. And of course, when it comes to international expansion, as well as helping international entrepreneurs, we are there to help. Maybe another question for miss Bruines. Clearly underlines the importance of the good cultural supply in the city for a living climate. And by that, that means also the investment climate. So a question by Simon Murphy, talking about the academy that he is part of. So, what does the city do to support the cultural programming in the in the city moving forward? Saskia, please.

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Saskia Bruines: There's the city of The Hague as the system. It's like the national system of supporting the cultural, well, the theatres and musea and musicians. Therefore, we have subsidies for four years. We just had a new round of every veteran committee who advises us and brings us an advice on how to spend all those millions we put in our cultural affairs every year.

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Saskia Bruines: We are building a very big new venue for opera, for music, for ballet. Also, the Hague Conservatory is an international one. The Royal Conservatory of The Hague is one of the best conservatories in the world. This building, which is next to my office, will be finished next year. So I think that's a very important contribution to the cultural life in our city.

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Laurens Kok: Thanks, Saskia. Question to Henk. Also being part of the Dutch Friendship Association Netherlands, China , there is a question raised asking for the three main reasons for why this is such a sustainable city for Chinese companies.

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Henk Kool: Yes, well, I can talk for hours about that. But to be brief, I think that the city of The Hague has a long history in good contacts with China in general, but also with the Chinese community in the Netherlands, especially in The Hague. For instance, every year we organize the national New Year's event in the city hall of The Hague. Now we do it already for for a 17 or 18 years. So the relationship between China and the Hague is long term, very friendly, very good. And we do have a lot of big Chinese companies in the city of The Hague as well. I think altogether, perhaps 40 smaller and bigger companies out of China in the Netherlands. HuaWei, for instance, is also located in The Hague. And that makes other Chinese companies easier like to come over to The Hague, because there's a nice Chinese environment. We do also have a very nice Chinatown in the heart of the city. So, we are ready to receive Chinese businesses. And of course, at the moment, it is quite difficult because the coronavirus. It stopped travelling to China and to the Netherlands. One of my friends really left for China just last week, and then he had to go for two weeks in quarantine in a hotel. So that's not workable, of course. So we have to wait to things improve. I'm sure The Hague is ready to receive a lot of companies in the city of The Hague.

00:49:55

Laurens Kok: Thanks, Henk. For companies, as well as tourists from Asia, is very important to recover from the crisis. Much is dependant on our position as a city by the sea. Especially with the summer coming up with many attractions there. And Saskia, I noticed that you recently published an article about the new measurements taking on the North Boulevar. So, my take is that this is a very thriving and interesting development. Maybe to end this webinar, can you tell us a little bit more about the plans there?

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00:50:44

Saskia Bruines: Because we are a city of peace and justice, but we are also a city of innovation and technological innovations, such as it does something about this. In the Northern part of Scheveningen, a beach village, we have a kind of living lab, as we call it, for smart city solutions. And we are working there on different kinds of people who live there. But companies can also exploit and try out their ideas of what has to do with Smart City, because, for instance, we do have a small robots. There is there's been developed tool to find small pieces in a sandy environment. And now we use it to to pick up cigarettes, peukjes. Of course, this solution is being developed also to be used in in different environments to find whatsoever. So we use this for different solutions and as a kind of living a lamp. And when it works, we can if we can spread it further on. And we worked together with this, with Delft University, with the province of South-Holland. But also with the city of Rotterdam and on a neighborhood with all new things we discover, we will share with others if it's all that must be open access. And very good attention for privacy and justice and an open source. That is kind of very important for us.

00:52:38

Laurens Kok: But it is a great project and I'd love to see it emerge. And we will definitely use it as a one of the biggest cases to promote internationally. So I'm very happy with such initiative. And really, you know, puts us in the forefront, again. In the meanwhile, for the audience. Before we move to the last question, let's to draw attention to the poll. Please give your feedback on the quality of this webinar so we can adapt for the next ones. Yeah, maybe some final remarks by Mr. Kool on behalf of the economic board.

00:53:21

Henk Kool: I can say something, because I saw it in one of the questions. I saw, well it was not the question, but will this crisis mean the end of entrepreneurship? And I have to say, no. Because also this crisis creates new opportunities. For instance, this webinar, I'm sure that for one year ago it was not doable and no one had the idea to do so. So this is one new inventive, one new method and one new entrepreneurship to do so.

00:54:09

Henk Kool: So, no, the crisis is terrible, of course, and we are losing lots of jobs and a lot of people will get unemployed, but we will overcome, because mankind always overcome and we will find new ways to live together and to make these rules a little bit better. So that's, I think, my last words.

00:54:36

Laurens Kok: Well, thank you, Henk. And they are looking at the time, there are still some questions left, but we will answer them later via email. So with that, I'd like to thank Deputy Mayor Bruines for the time and contribution as well as Henk, chairman of the economic board. Thanks a lot to the audience. I hope that was time well spent.

00:55:04

Laurens Kok: You will receive the recording of this webinar via email and we really appreciate your feedback to us. In the meantime, please visit our website, businessagency.thehague.com or follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter. With any questions in regard to growing your business in The Hague, reach out to one of the business advisors in a team of the Business Agency. I look forward to the next webinar. Thanks again panellists and audience for your time today.

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