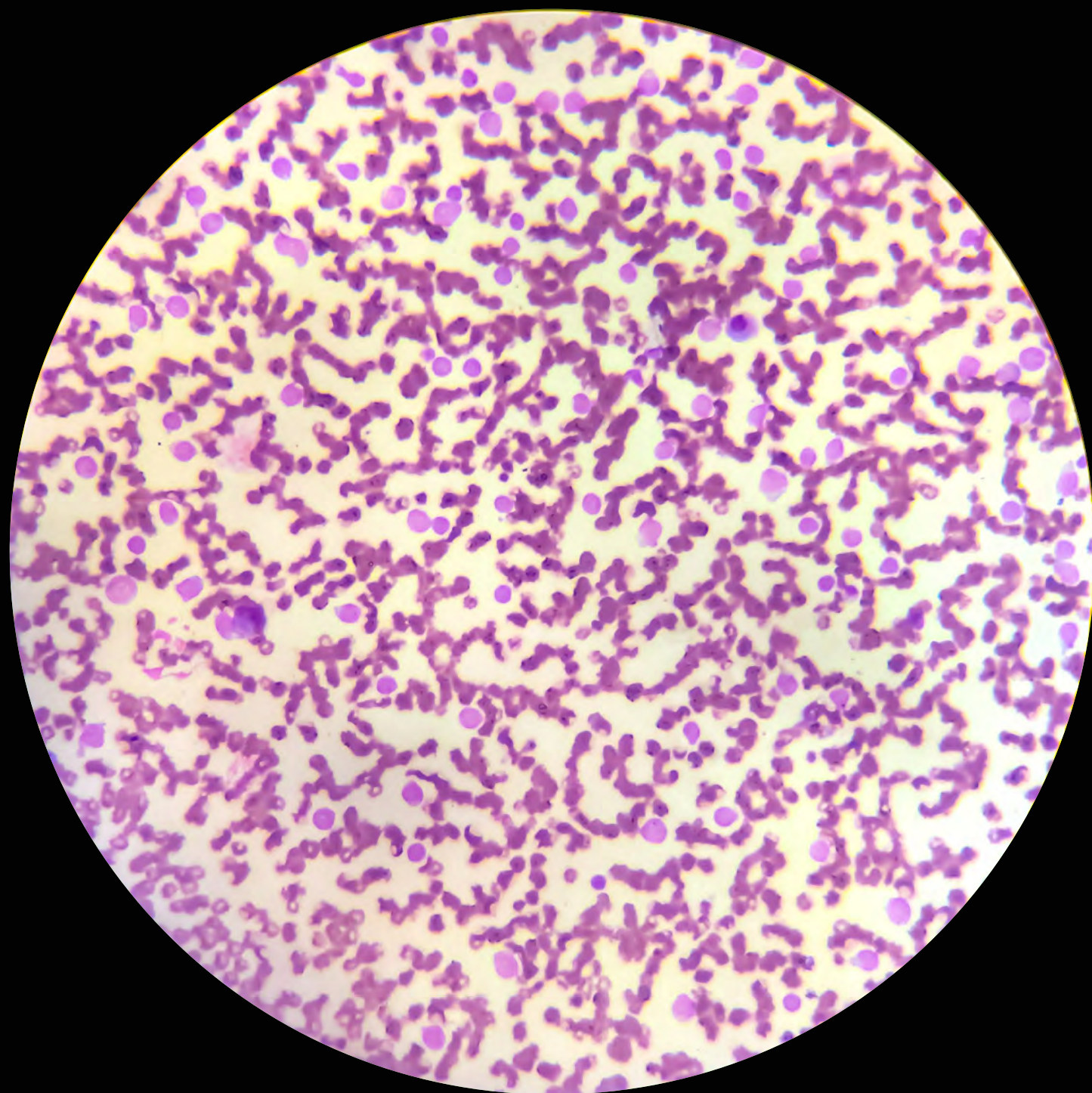


“Our goal is helping smaller companies realise their ideas.”



We meet Rob Nelissen, director of operations at Organon, shortly before he is about to leave for the Women’s Health conference in Boston. “I want to foster economic opportunities for Dutch innovative startups in the US, and vice versa.”

“SOMETIMES, INNOVATION IS ABOUT MAKING SMALL IMPROVEMENTS IN EXISTING PROCESSES.”

Organon has been a MSD spin-off since 2021. “The pharmaceutical industry in Oss contains over a hundred years of experience. We use that experience on a global scale to support the ideas of new generations: young companies and start-ups that lack the capacity or expertise to realise their ideas on their own. Many wild and good ideas originate at universities. But in the pharmaceutical industry projects are extensive and costly. There is a lot of documentation involved, governments want you to prove your concept. Sometimes this involves documenting the side effects and risks to thousands of patients. For that, larger companies can bring in their expertise and experience. Organon wants to play that role – especially when it comes to women’s health.”

Competitive advantages to Dutch pharma companies

In the region of Oss, Nijmegen and Boxmeer, Rob works with various partners on the Pharma Delta collaboration. “When it comes to the development of therapies, we are hardly competitors within this region, as there are so many different diseases. A startup at NovioTech Campus working on epilepsy is totally different to a contraception production company in Oss. This creates the atmosphere to meet each other and openly share non-confidential information. Of course, everything relating to new products, patients and sales strategies will require careful handling, but there are many other areas where there can be mutual advantageous support.”

Players in the region need each other to strengthen the pharmaceutical industry, Rob emphasises: “Pharma companies face global competition. But not all competitors adhere to the rules that we have established in the Netherlands or in Europe. For example, we have set the bar pretty high when it comes to sustainability, human resources policies and

creating an inclusive and safe work environment. This means that as a company, you incur more costs here than in some other parts of the world. So to remain competitive you must be innovative and collaborate.”

Bits of innovation

Does this always involve comprehensive processes or major changes? Not necessarily, says Rob. “Sometimes it’s about making small improvements to existing processes, without altering the manufacturing process itself. It’s our own employees who often conceive of these kinds of innovations. They know the chains and processes we’re dealing with and have a good idea how to handle or improve them. It is crucial always to share with your employees why we are doing something and what that means for patients. This energises and instils pride in employees, fostering creativity. A company must be open to this.”

But how do you foster innovation and entrepreneurship within your company? “Give people room for their ideas, from early drug discovery to production and packaging. Make sure to understand the core problem and provide your team with the resources to implement a possible solution. And it doesn’t end there: our problem may be experienced by other companies, departments or colleagues. Organon has something to offer in this regard, but we can also learn a lot from fellow companies in the region. That’s what we need Pharma Delta for.”

Pharma Delta: A Lasting Impact on the Healthcare Industry

Where did it all start? “Larger organisations face challenges in their approach to human capital: how do we keep attracting, training and developing the best employees? Smaller organisations on the other hand, focus on funding continuity. Delving deeper into these two directions, we look at what connects us

and where we can share non-confidential matters. This demands mutual trust and acting as a team at a higher level than your own company. And for every joint effort at some point we will decide: do we structurally continue with this?”

“Pharma Delta allows us to tackle things that one organisation alone might not be able to cope with, being either too small or too large – or might not want to out of cost-effectiveness. Pharma Delta acts as a network organisation: it’s a safe environment and a meeting place. That is easier within a region because of the personal connections you have here. We encounter each other and get to know one another. This fosters trust and loyalty, creating many opportunities to mutually put solutions into effect.”

Women’s health

Ultimately, Pharma Delta is all about the patients. “Everyone knows someone who is ill and needs medication or treatment: your grandmother, your brother, your aunt, maybe even yourself. It’s very close to home. Therefore it’s not very hard to recognise the importance of the availability and quality of medicines – and the development of new medicines to improve the quality of life.”

Organon especially focuses on areas where there is a lack of attention to women’s health. “We focus on global access to contraception and fertility drugs, where we have a lot of expertise. We drive innovation and collaboration for diseases that women are not yet optimally diagnosed and treated for. Organon cannot do this alone, but would like to narrow that gap, not only with its knowledge, but also by offering our global production and distribution capabilities to new collaborations. Pharma Delta benefits on human capital and shared facilities will help Organon to deliver on its women’s health mission.”