

PRESS RELEASE

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Maastricht University and Demcon are joining forces for ReGEN Biomedical

Tissue factory receives impetus for technology development and upscaling

Technology developer and producer Demcon has become a technology partner and co-shareholder of ReGEN Biomedical, which emerged from Maastricht University. In Maastricht, ReGEN Biomedical develops technology for growing biological tissues for regenerative medicine and pharmaceutical screening. The company is part of the RegMed XB pilot factory; the national infrastructure that covers the entire chain of development and production of stem cells, mini-organs, tissues and smart (bio)materials. This pilot factory is being set up by the Dutch-Flemish public-private partnership RegMed XB with funding from the Dutch National Growth Fund. The participation by Demcon gives an impetus to technology development and scaling up to industrial production of tissues. This brings applications in pharmaceutical research and the medical clinic closer and contributes to the realization of the national pilot factory.

Regenerative medicine focuses on preventing or curing diseases and other conditions by regenerating cells, tissues and entire organs. Regenerative medicine is about to take the step towards large-scale clinical application with stem cell therapy and tissue technology. The Netherlands is responding to this with RegMed XB, the public-private partnership of leading regenerative medicine clusters in the Netherlands and Flanders. RegMed XB pilot factory is funded in part by the National Growth Fund, through which the government is allocating €20 billion between 2021 and 2025 for initiatives aimed at fostering long-term economic growth and addressing significant challenges facing the country, including improvements in healthcare, agriculture, and education.

The Netherlands forerunner in regenerative medicine

RegMed XB strengthens the international pioneering position of the Netherlands in the field of regenerative medicine. An essential infrastructure has been established for a new manufacturing industry in this area; the RegMed XB pilot plant for regenerative medicine. It supports companies and research institutions in developing and valorizing new therapies and production technology and services. The pilot factory covers the value chain for regenerative medicine, from biomaterials and stem cells to tissues, and comprises five pilot lines at four locations: Eindhoven, Leiden, Utrecht and Maastricht.

Pilot line for tissue production in Maastricht

ReGEN Biomedical is the part of the RegMed XB pilot factory in Maastricht. The initiative is a spin-off from the research group of university professor Clemens van Blitterswijk. He is considered the founder of tissue engineering in Europe and a leading international researcher in the field of tissue repair. ReGEN Biomedical focuses on growing large quantities of functional microtissues as building blocks for clinical application in macrotissues and ultimately organs. A production line was set up for this purpose on the Brightlands Maastricht Health Campus last year, made possible in part by funding from the Dutch National Growth Fund. This line was officially put into use in September.

Technology partner for scaling up

The next step is the participation of technology developer and producer Demcon as a technology partner and co-shareholder. Demcon wants to contribute to scaling up production technology and further growth of the field of regenerative medicine. ReGEN Biomedical, Maastricht University and Demcon signed their official collaboration agreement on January 17. Together they join forces for the

development of tissue production. The experience they gain will serve as input for developing advanced and efficient tissue production technology on an industrial scale.

Important step for ReGEN Biomedical

Prof. Marianne van der Steen, co-founder and CEO of ReGEN Biomedical: “This is an important step for ReGEN Biomedical and therefore also for the national pilot factory of which we are part. Demcon is an important partner for our success. In addition to the financial investment, Demcon will provide us with the engineering expertise to build large-scale production lines faster and better. The future of healthcare is curing chronic diseases through regenerative medicine solutions; with our company we make this affordable for all patients. With this investment we contribute to a better future for patients.”

Major contribution to Brightlands ecosystem

Murk Peutz, CEO of Brightlands Life Sciences Ventures: “The rapidly increasing demand for regenerative medical applications requires new production methods for cells and tissues. These methods are developed by combining the technological knowledge of Demcon and the biological expertise of Maastricht University. This is a major contribution to the Brightlands ecosystem.”

Participation Demcon milestone in public-private partnership

Dennis Schipper, CEO of Demcon: “Our participation in ReGEN Biomedical is a milestone in public-private partnership in the field of regenerative medicine. We are now at the beginning of the industrialization of tissue production for medical applications that hold great promise for patients. With Demcon we want to develop technological solutions with which we can make a social impact. We started out in high-tech mechatronics and have now been active in life sciences & health for more than ten years. It is therefore no coincidence that a few years ago we opened a branch in Maastricht, where we mainly carry out medical-technological projects. Now, with ReGEN Biomedical in Maastricht, we are taking the next step in the field of regenerative medicine, where we are already active with Scinus Cell Expansion.”

Bioreactor technology

Michiel Jannink, Vice President of Demcon life sciences & health and CEO of Scinus Cell Expansion: “Scinus supplies equipment for growing stem cells in clinically relevant numbers. It has developed a bioreactor technology for this that is more reproducible, cheaper and less labor-intensive than current technology. Scinus’ bioreactor technology can be used to scale up the culture of stem cells for the production of microtissues. Scinus’ systems can grow different types of stem cells, which then differentiate into different tissue types. Scinus also works intensively with the Innovation Center for Advanced Therapies (ICAT), the pilot line in Utrecht for the development of regenerative treatments.”

New phase of the enterprise

The opening of the pilot line and Demcon’s participation herald the next phase in the growth of ReGEN Biomedical, according to Schipper. “It is now about continuing the technology development, drawing up and following a product roadmap and commercializing the products and production technology. With Demcon, we contribute our broad experience with the marketing of medical technology and in particular the development of bioreactor technology. We have a lot of expertise in medical product development and have the necessary knowledge for drawing up production protocols and ensuring quality according to GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices, ed.). The current ReGEN Biomedical team has taken a fantastic first step in setting up the pilot line; together we are now entering the next phase of the company’s growth. This initiative started with an investment from the National Growth Fund, now it is up to ReGEN Biomedical and all partners to create value for healthcare.”

About ReGEN Biomedical

ReGEN Biomedical in Maastricht focuses on automating the production of biological tissues for regenerative medicine and pharmaceutical screening. The company emerged from Maastricht University (UM) as a spin-off from the group of university professor Clemens van Blitterswijk, an internationally leading researcher in the field of tissue repair. ReGEN Biomedical develops advanced production facilities for its own use and for third parties. These facilities are part of the national pilot factory that is being set up by the Dutch-Flemish public-private partnership RegMed XB. Demcon has recently become a technology partner and shareholder of ReGEN Biomedical. The company has received funding from the National Growth Fund and the European REACT-EU program in close collaboration with RegMed XB.

About Maastricht University

Maastricht University (UM) is *the* European university in the Netherlands and has almost 22,000 students and almost 5,000 employees. The university is young at heart, interdisciplinary and strongly socially committed. In its short existence, the university has built up a solid reputation, partly due to the high quality of research and education and the connection between science and regional, European and global challenges. UM is considered one of the best young universities in the world.

About Demcon

Demcon (1,000+ employees) develops, produces, and supplies technology and innovative products. The Demcon group has locations in Best, Enschede, Delft, Groningen, Leiden, Maastricht (the Netherlands), Münster (Germany), Tokyo (Japan) en Singapore. The company was born out of the founders' passion for combining creativity and technical skills aimed at solving complex issues of a technological and social nature. In addition to developing technical solutions, Demcon is committed to stimulating entrepreneurship, and investing in talent and education.

Note for the editor (not for publication)

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See also www.regenbiomedical.com, www.maastrichtuniversity.nl en www.demcon.com.