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Blueprint for The Hague as an international Secure Haven

As recently as 31 March, The Hague was the centre of international attention when it hosted the conference on the future of Afghanistan. Home to many international organisations, the city can lay claim to such prestigious titles as 'legal capital of the world' and 'city of peace and justice'. The municipal government now plans to expand on that standing, thereby boosting the city's profile, while also jumpstarting the local economy. But creating a secure, attractive and sustainable hosting location goes beyond building a fenced-in zone or a terrain loaded with surveillance cameras and sensors.



'Secure Haven is a major research project that should result in a blueprint for The Hague as a truly international city. That blueprint will thoroughly explore the matter from four particular vantage points. In terms of the legal aspects, we will take a good look at what it means to be an international zone. What kinds of institutions will be housed there? What will their rights be? What rules need to be established or upheld? What kinds of dilemmas might present themselves? What about the trade-off between security and privacy?'

'The blueprint will also consider technological aspects, in terms of technological innovation. How can you achieve a certain level of freedom, without too many barriers? An omnipresent camera climate is far from desirable, so we are looking for new, more inventive, solutions. A third aspect to be covered is that of the cost-benefit analysis. Investing in security is worthwhile. You can earn money, too, if you establish economic positions in the international zone. But you still need to strike a balance. How much are you willing to invest? What is reasonable?'

GREATER HOSPITALITY

'The fourth vantage point is actually the most important: how can we make the international zone a pleasant place to live and work? The area will be an integral part of the city. In fact, the international zone will have residential neighbourhoods in and around it. So it behoves us to think about how we can ensure that the residents of the zone and the companies and international institutions operating there are well informed and have trust in it. We are developing a methodology for this. But how do you quantify such things?'

'Our basic premise is that The Hague wants to maximise its hospitality towards international institutions. Sure, you can wait to take action every time some institution wants to set up shop here, deciding anew on the security measures you need to take each time. Or you can do it all in reverse – by projecting ahead about ten years. This is actually crucial, because how you handle security provisions is almost an acquisition incentive.'

'We're working on an International Zone master plan, with TNO and Campus The Hague as the main draws. Capgemini is very actively involved. The study's results will be incorporated into the municipality of The Hague's plans. And what we end up with will be a truly unique product. Nowhere else has the theme of security, as combined with quality of life, the economy and

legal boundary conditions, been so well thought-out.'

THE NEWEST DEVELOPMENTS

'The international zone is a fairly spacious strip in The Hague. It runs roughly from the Peace Palace past the World Forum Convention Center to the Alexanderkazerne (armed forces barracks), where the International Tribunal will be housed starting in 2014. Within the boundaries of this "banana" are located some of the world's most important international institutions: OPCW (Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons), Europol and the European justice organisation Eurojust, to name a few. Everything is close together, which is extremely energising.'

'We have made a great deal of progress. By this summer we should be at the delivery stage: two years on. At this point, we haven't started talking about installing cameras and sensors. That's more related to the blueprint, in which we sketch the newest developments, while also seeking a very measured balance. When all is said and done, people outside the project should be saying, "Those guys and gals in The Hague really put a lot of thought into this, together with the experts. They did a good job. If we do choose to locate here, we can trust in their strategy".'

UNEXPECTED ECONOMIC EFFECTS

'I thought it clicked extremely well between the municipality of The Hague and TNO. I didn't necessarily expect that – or certainly didn't think it was a given. Going into it, I imagined the researchers would be smart but not necessarily people who would be so focused outward. The TNO people I met were all very creative; that creates a great deal of synergy. I've also noticed that they really identify with the municipality as a client. I see the researchers structure things very clearly: that's part of the nature of the work, of course, but it's still nice to see.'

'We're busy creating a knowledge network here with one another. That could, as yet, have some unexpected economic effects. We're on the right track; that's how it feels. Not that we've found the perfect solution, but the direction we're headed in is the right one. This role – well, it's more of a whole production – suits The Hague! If we can do a good job of establishing this knowledge network on the topic of security, it looks as if the Hague region will become the obvious choice as an excellent location for security companies. We already have a lot to offer and there are big opportunities for expansion.'



The TNO expertise

Robin de Haas, project leader

'Secure Haven is being partially funded through a programme under the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs called 'Pieken in de Delta' (Peaks in the Delta). As far as TNO is concerned, the programme has accomplished its goal, which was to promote collaboration among businesses, government agencies and research institutions. We started working on the blueprint for The Hague as a pleasant, international Secure Haven in May 2007, together with the municipality of The Hague, the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Haaglanden regional police force, the Dutch Ministry of the Interior, Campus The Hague and Capgemini. For the Secure Haven project, we developed knowledge that can later be used to create a more secure living and working environment with economic impact. This is exactly the kind of commission TNO people like to tackle.'

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The client

The civil service department of the municipality of The Hague has many responsibilities, including advising the municipal council, coordinating policy, promoting and preserving the municipality's uniform identity in external affairs, implementing plans and monitoring them, and formulating parameters. Secure Haven provides a future glimpse of The Hague in 2020. The project provides for secure, attractive and sustainable living conditions, thereby also establishing an attractive business climate for international organisations and corporations.

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