

# Role & Importance of Creative Hubs for the Netherlands

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Dutch  
Creative  
Residency  
Network



Dutch Creative Residency Network is a major player in the Dutch start-up movement and helps to develop the country's enterprise culture. It is a unique network without parallel in Europe. Established in 2010 it connects 33 creative hubs in 18 cities in 11 provinces, housing 4.000 companies with collectively nearly 10000 employees. Mostly housed in emblematic older industrial buildings that have been refashioned for the new economy they remind us of the great urbanist Jane Jacobs famous saying that 'new ideas need old buildings'. Their impact has been substantial spreading their regenerative effects deep into their surrounding neighbourhoods.

The creative hubs in the network play a catalytic role by helping to catapult the Netherlands towards the new economy. A majority of the companies are within the creative industry sectors from media to design in its various forms and they have created many of the new apps and innovations within digital culture. The co-ordinators of the DCR network play an active role in highlighting the need for creativity in the economy and the creative industry's role within that. DCR acts as an advocate, as broker to create understanding of the value and dynamics of this innovation driven economy. DCR organizes support for these companies to grow, it encourages crossovers, it assists its hubs to exchange innovative ideas and best practices, it boosts the potential of companies by helping them to scale up, it stimulates alliances with other sectors, universities and governmental bodies and it acts as a mentor.

Examples include its help in clustering the games sector, the Dutch Game Garden, which now operate in three locations. Strijp-S in Eindhoven kickstarted the first incubator in the Netherlands that is owned by a collective of startup's and partners. And there are many other, innovative examples to be found at [www.dcrnetwork.nl](http://www.dcrnetwork.nl)

## 10 Reasons why creative hubs & freezones are important

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1. Accelerators of opportunities, where small and medium-sized companies become visible, attract new business and create smart alliances.
2. Great places to work, for events and to share facilities. They are trendsetters in novel ways of working in the new economy.
3. Places where a diversity of micro start-ups and more established SMEs breeds creativity and develop amongst themselves through incubation initiatives and growth programmes. This can lead to product, service and social innovations as well as create jobs.
4. Meeting places for new and old boys networks from different sectors, encouraging crossovers, cross-fertilization and inter-disciplinary working.
5. Gateways for transactions and exchange. They act as a one-stop shop to hundreds of companies and are convenient, visible and accessible. Being clustered they are attractive both to the businesses located in them and for bigger companies outside. Synergies are thus easier to develop.
6. Hosting an innovative, vibrant, tolerant and experimental culture, with an open and positively critical attitude to the emerging dynamics of society and economy. They are seeding grounds and escalators to develop talent, thereby boosting a culture of start-up's and fastgrowing 'gazelles'
7. Adding value economically, culturally, socially and sustainably. They are crucial to urban regeneration and the identity of cities and regions.
8. Contributing to the life-long learning agenda and create new educational environments, offering inspiring internships and research projects.
9. Are emblematic for the new economy and attractive in their physical presence, style, outlook, management ethos, focus and overall appeal.
10. Centres of excellence. They have been around for 1-20 years and have scientifically proven their worth in delivering growth, jobs and innovation.

DCR seeks support to strengthen its role and that of the Dutch start-up system in order to:

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- Help scale up company activities
- Organize mentoring programmes so companies can stabilize and benefit from ladders of opportunity
- Promote the system of creative hubs as a central part of the start-up eco-system