



Teijin's inspiration

Without its base in Amsterdam, Teijin would have missed some interesting opportunities for innovation. Yoshihiro Ichii, President of Teijin Holdings Netherlands, is convinced of that.

The holding company, for example, is actively involved in the production of biomethanol as a representative of the parent company in Japan. Some Dutch venture companies including Econcern, a pioneer in developing sustainable energy solutions, agreed to invite Teijin last year, with a plan to work with Teijin and a regional development agency to revitalise an existing methanol plant in Delfzijl and develop it into a sustainable production centre for the alternative fuel. The plans are now so advanced that BioMethanol Chemie estimates that product deliveries can begin in the spring of next year. The added value for Teijin in this joint venture is considerable. In addition to

a capital injection, a great deal of knowledge will be gained streamlining the complex production and distribution processes.

Another consequence of its Dutch presence is Teijin's new interest in algae culture. Long regarded as an unavoidable evil, the huge potential of algae has been 'discovered,' thanks to new scientific insights in the Netherlands. For example, the minuscule water plant is filled with healthy fats, amino acids and sugars, and these properties can be controlled relatively easily through breeding techniques.

Algae could become a natural source for nutraceuticals, even a natural alternative for many oil products. This is an interesting prospect for Teijin, which is active in the production of synthetic fibers, plastics and pharmaceuticals. "This is why we have a strategic part-

nership with AquaPhyto, a Dutch venture company that leads the industry in the study of algae," says Yoshihiro Ichii. "We're helping them to expand their breeding site at Zeewolde, near Almere. In return, we get access to unique knowledge through co-operative research with them."

TAKEOVER BENEFITS

When the Teijin Group first opened its Dutch office, it was looking to expand the company's global market prominence in aramid fibres, by taking over the Dutch company, Accordis. A former subsidiary of Akzo Nobel, Accordis was already a leading producer of these ultra-strong and versatile synthetic fibres, and with Twaron it possessed a strong international brand name.

Thanks to the 2001 acquisition, Teijin Aramid, with its headquarter in Arnhem, now accounts for half of all global

- For several years, Teijin has sponsored the Gelders Orchestra based in Arnhem.
- One of its conductors is Kenichiro Kobayashi from Japan.
- Teijin is sponsoring a Japanese tour of the orchestra in March 2009, as part of the festivities celebrating 400 years of economic and cultural relations between the Netherlands and Japan.
- Teijin is also actively supporting the renovation of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam by developing and supplying the composite material for construction of the revolutionary floating roof of the museum foyer.

production of aramid fibres. Just as important, however, is the acquisition of a base in continental Europe. Teijin now has two hyper-modern production facilities of aramid fiber in the Netherlands (in Emmen and Delfzijl), and has added a distribution and sales centre of polycarbonate resin in Venlo, Limburg. In the seven years since its arrival, the company has become a major employer in the Dutch plastics sector, and also one of the largest non-Dutch investors in the industry. Up to now, over €1 billion has been spent on rationalising and expanding production facilities, with the result that Dutch production has been multiplied by 2.5 times.

So that the Tokyo head office could keep a grip on the fast-growing European operations, Teijin chose early on for a holding company under Dutch law. "Even with modern communications, you still need an on-the-spot representative to keep in touch with the market," says Ichii. "In addition, issues such as internal and external auditing, tax planning, and marketing and PR are tightly controlled and coordinated under a uniform standard. We direct the financing of different activi-

ties. Of course, we can rely on the expertise and funding sources of our parent group, but we still have a relatively large amount of responsibility. Furthermore, we are not solely responsible for the Dutch operation, but also for Teijin DuPont Film, a UK and Luxembourg-based joint venture, and carbon fiber manufacturing company in Germany."

INTERESTING INVESTMENT CLIMATE

"The Netherlands - and specifically the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area - has a lot of advantages for us," continues Ichii. "Not only because the focus of our business is concentrated here, but also because of its attractive investment climate. Tax conditions for companies are favourable, and there are tax treaties with all our major trading partners. In addition, there are daily direct flights from Amsterdam Airport Schiphol to Tokyo and Osaka, and you can get to practically any European destination and back in a single day. Another advantage is the network of business service providers, which are used to working for foreign clients, and which have a good knowledge of Dutch and European laws and regulations."

As a resident of Amstelveen, Ichii (just like his wife) sometimes has the feeling that he hasn't left Japan: there's a large Japanese community in the area, with lots of shops, restaurants and activities (in his spare time, he even sings in a Japanese choir). In addition to these abundant social opportunities, the company has also benefitted from lots of unforeseen professional ones. In recent years, Ichii's office has been busy identifying new business opportunities for Teijin, based on Dutch innovation in such areas as bio-fuel and algae farming. "In terms of developing sustainable solutions for products and processes, the Netherlands is very inspiring for us," says Ichii. "Moreover, when it comes to doing business, the Dutch are always keen to reach a consensus - and in that way, the Dutch and the Japanese are not so very different."

TEIJIN
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN JAPAN
ESTABLISHED IN THE AMSTERDAM
METROPOLITAN AREA SINCE 2001
EMPLOYEES 7
INDUSTRY CHEMISTRY
ACTIVITY EUROPE HEADQUARTER

