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Moderator questions in Bold, Respondents in Regular text.

KEY: Unable to decipher = (inaudible + timecode), **Phonetic spelling** (ph) + timecode), **Missed word** = (mw + timecode), **Talking over each other** = (talking over each other + timecode).

Moderator: So, just a reminder, please, put your questions in the chat box if you have any. If we don't get round to your question in the next fifteen minutes or we're unable to answer it, we're more than happy to pick that up with you offline. So, maybe just to kick off, Martijn. So, thank you very much for joining us this morning. We've got a question for, for you through. Just mentioning the Netherlands, as such, an impressive market and from your presentation, obviously, digitally very advanced. Do you see any gaps in the, kind of, digital sector or the security offer at the moment, I suppose, where Northern Irish companies could come in and fill that gap if they have a particular offer there. So, I suppose the question there is around any particular opportunities or gaps for Northern Irish companies to explore?

Martijn Van Hoogenhuijze: Yes, good morning. Thank you, Amy, for the opportunity to present our case, let's say. I think there are many opportunities. It, it, it-, the market is relatively mature, but if your product is good, if your solution or service is, is, is something new or something, perhaps a bit more cost efficient, I'm definitely sure that there is market for you. The financial district, as said in the presentation, is the most mature, so going after them, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's a strong sector. They need to be protected worldwide. Same anywhere. Same in Belfast, of course, but that's something that you can always explore. I think right now the OT is also something that there's a relative small amount of companies that are actually focusing on the operational technology-, the security of the operational technology. More and more is being connected to the internet everywhere, also in the Netherlands. Maybe even more in the Netherlands what I hear at least, than, for instance in Germany. I think we're a little bit more daring in that sense, a bit risk averse. So, maybe the operational technology could be a field where you could benefit from and I think the SMEs. I think everybody's waking up to (inaudible 02.12) good, affordable, care-free solutions for the SMEs. I think people are going to love you because it's still a little bit challenging sometimes as an entrepreneur to know everything about everything. So, you got to, you got to be a tax expert. You got to be an HR expert. You have to be a security expert. Everything comes down to you as an owner, basically, so if you can find a way to take care of the problems that they experience, I think that's also sweet spot.

So, yes, that's probably the same in Northern Ireland in that sense, but those are the sweet spots that I can figure out right now. There's a special one that maybe that's not so much in Northern Ireland, that's the horticulture.

Moderator: Yes.

Martijn Van Hoogenhuijze: Because we have a much-, we have a vast area of green houses in the Netherlands not too far from The Hague in Rotterdam. A little bit in between, if you will. I think it's about 4000 hectares in one municipality and another 2500 in the other, and that's something that's a little bit unique, but then again, it's basically factories that produce plants, so maybe that could also be OT, but yes, those are the things that I can think of.

Moderator: Yes, I would agree with you. I think financial services, perhaps banking in particular, are extremely advanced but within even that vertical, maybe the insurance sectors want to go after, kind of, a bit, maybe further behind on the banking in terms of having their innovation teams in place and they're very much waking up to, sort of, new technologies, such as-, well you're hearing a lot about ESG, AI, security and they're really looking at that. So, I think, even within financial services, there maybe, you know, nuances or differences there as well, and, you know, even things like, we've discussed the ports, you know, obviously, the port of Rotterdam and Antwerp, they would be very advanced to have a lot of their own in-house teams, so there may be opportunities there, but actually, there may even be opportunities-, more opportunities with the, kind of, smaller ports or the tier twos. So, like you say, maybe with SMEs or, sort of, looking further down the chains there might even be more opportunities to explore there in the various verticals.

Martijn Van Hoogenhuijze: Yes, I agree. Yes.

Moderator: Yes, maybe just, kind of, moving on from that, there was a question around specifically selling to the petro-chemicals industry or approaching oil companies within the ports. So, any kind of tips on how to sell or approach petro-chemicals or oil, and I suppose, just the general ports?

Martijn Van Hoogenhuijze: Yes. What you could maybe do is there, there are clubs for everything, right. So, there's a, a society or association of this. There's a foundation of that. There is a group of people who are interested in so. So, if, if you-, if you, kind of start mapping out your clientele and see which groups they belong to, that's always the strategy that I advise to the companies that we assist into the Dutch market and we can open up a door here or there. We always try to get them closer to the fire, if you will. At Innovation Quarter there is-, it's, it's, it's, it's a thin line, let's say, where our services end and where the actual business development stops because we are being paid by the tax payers. Sometimes it's a competition of the companies that are coming in, that we are bringing in, if you will. We have to be a little bit careful about how far our services can go, plus our expertise is limited in that sense, so we advise companies to get a bit closer to the fire, as we say in Dutch. So, for instance, in Rotterdam, you have an initiative called, Ferm. It's a term that basically means strong or resilient. F, E, R, M, and a Ferm initiative, it's the geographical, economical complex of the port and they do a lot of knowledge sharing. They do a lot of Ferm cafes where they-, all digital in these days, of course, where they come together and they talk about subjects that concern the entire port, and there, the (inaudible 06.10) or the IT people are sometimes of the smaller Fermes, the sea level people, they come together and they discuss the cyber security of these companies. So, that could be something that you want to join if you're targeting them. Let's say, you set up in the Netherlands and you get to the table. You go to those meetings once they will

be physical again.

I think that's where you will meet the interesting people. So, that's always a tip to find out how they are organised. They also share information from the national cyber security centre, top down, if you will. So, if there is, I don't know, (inaudible 06.43) they'll push you down the line, let's say. So, the companies that are involved in Ferm they get a notice, so it brings a little bit-, and it's not just sharing of information. So, those are the things that you can, probably, best target, in order to start expanding your network, or maybe the-, there's also a lot of clubs concerning all the oil and petro-chemical companies. Like, in the Hague, there is a couple of, I think it's called, IRO, or something. I'd have to look into it. If the gentleman or lady in contact would like to know more, feel free to send me a text or something, but you could also, maybe, benefit from seeing what those meetings are and seeing if you could get a-, get a presentation slot, maybe in one of their entrepreneurial get-togethers, you know, stuff like that. So, for instance, also, at the Security Delta (inaudible 07.36). They do it on topics, and sometimes we're able to push our foreign clients to speak on behalf of the community and it's not so much about, 'Hi, I'm with-', let's say, Engocha (ph 07.48). I can do this, this and this for you. So, please buy my products or services.' It's more about sharing the knowledge and saying, 'What we see-, what we have seen-, the future is-', how can you mitigate it. Maybe a round table. Maybe a-, maybe, I don't know, have a panel where people are, are giving their thoughts on the subject.

So, there are many ways to find the right people and we can definitely assist in guiding you a little bit towards the right direction, and there is, of course, always the cold calling and the old fashioned networking and that sometimes, surprisingly, works as well. Sometimes you get a direct answer. If you're talking about culture, sometimes people say, 'Sorry I don't have time for you,' but that is what it is, but it's also a way to go forward.

Moderator: Yes, and we do find the Dutch are fairly open and direct, so when approaching them, even cold, you usually do get a response or you're more likely to get a response, maybe, from a Dutchman than, maybe, from another country, but it's quite interesting to say, to use platforms to share knowledge and expertise rather than going in with a hard sell as well. So, you know, there are different-, maybe different approaches to use. So that's really helpful, and obviously, don't forget about Invest NI support. So if you're looking at particular verticals, you know, we do have, also-, we can also contact ports and certain companies on your behalf as well through our trade support, so obviously, happy to look at that as well for you. Maybe one for you, Emilien, just to pick up a question around the approach to the three Benelux markets. Can this be done simultaneously, or should the markets be approached separately, and are there any key difference that should be noted between Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg?

Emilien Thorin: Yes, yes okay. Yes, I mean, it can be tricky for sure, so I mean, I don't think there's any, obviously, good universal response for that question. It will depend on what is your strategy, what is your company's product or service etc., but personally, I don't know if you agree, but I would tend to think that

it can be complex to approach all the three markets at the same time. So, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, obviously, you have the languages differences. You have regulations differences. The tendering process can be different, so if you are to approach all of this at the same time, might be tricky. Also, the maturity of the markets are not always the same, depending on your product or service, so you might need to adapt. So, I would say, if we compare with the three countries, so, the Netherlands, we talked about it a lot today, so it's an obviously good choice, first step if you're coming from the UK, from Northern Ireland, you want to have your first step into the mainland Europe market. Netherlands is close, culturally. They speak good English, etc. We discussed this today. So, I think it's-, it's a good-, a good test market for that reason. Belgium is a bit different, but it's also a good test bed, a good test market because it's so complex in a small space. You have so many differences inside this-, the country of Belgium in terms of languages etc., that it can be a nice way to test your product or your service before launching it into the rest of Europe, and Luxembourg, so we talked a little bit less, but it's also a nice test market. It's really small, but it can be-, if you have a small company, maybe it's nice to start in Luxembourg and then you can see if you can scale it up to the rest of Europe afterwards and you can go there with, I would say, products or services that are really high value. It's-, it would be a good market for this (inaudible 11.28).

Martijn Van Hoogenhuijze: Emilien, I think I agree with you. I think what you sometimes see, even in the Netherlands, if you're from all the way up North and you try to sell something all the way down South, you look a little bit weird, and, 'Where are you from? You're from the North?', you know, it's-, it's, it's-, I think if you go to Belgium as a Dutchman with the Dutch erectness and big mouth that we sometimes have, if you will, it might be a little bit more challenging (inaudible 11.54). What would you say between Luxembourg and Belgium, because in my opinion, I could see a gentleman from Belgium being able-, if he's French native speaking, I could see him target both markets. What do you think?

Emilien Thorin: Yes, yes. I think it's possible. As you say, maybe more as a French native speaker. That's also another way I didn't say, but it's another way to divide those markets if you wanted to look at Dutch speaking markets on one side and French speaking markets on the other side, and then, you can divide Belgium into two and maybe treat Flanders with Netherlands, even though it's different, and then, straight to (inaudible 12.24) and Brussels with Luxembourg and have a, maybe, French speaking market together with France, maybe, if that's your ambition afterwards. But yes, Luxembourg is, I would say, French is important for Luxembourg, French language, more than German, and English obviously is a language of business there, but everything, like all the lows, let's say the mediums, most of them are in French, so quite important (inaudible 12.49).

Moderator: Yes. Thank you, and maybe just a final question because I see we're coming up to the end of our fifteen minutes. So, in terms of applying for public tender, so across the Benelux, but let's look at Netherlands, can a foreign country apply for a public tender in the Netherlands? So, for example, for a contract with the police, or armed forces, or the ports, or cities, the municipalities, or do you need to have a local presence, and do you have any tips for any companies who would be looking at doing public tenders?

Emilien Thorin: Yes, I think, some of the tenders are, let's say, (inaudible 13.30) nationally, so are

national-,

Moderator: Yes.

Martijn Van Hoogenhuijze: Tenders, and sometimes they would request the national companies, but most of them are European, so in that sense, coming from Northern Ireland right now, I would say it might help to have an entity also in the Euro zone, and there's also a couple of international ones, and I looked it up prior to this webinar a little bit and there is Tenderned (ph 13.57) but it's kind of hard to-, it's kind of-, all kinds of tenders you can think of are based there. So, I don't know, if the government wants to create a new sidewalk, it's there, right. So, you might get lost in the amount of tenders. If you subscribe to the Security Delta's newsletter and you ask someone of your firm, or yourself, you take a little bit of discipline to read it, there are most of the calls for presentations, calls for, for, for, for, for whatever, all the tenders that are out there, they most likely add them because the foundation of the Security Delta's about fifteen people. Everyday, they are working on securing the world and securing a future and making the Netherlands a bit more stronger economically in the field of security, and tenders, they love them. So, they always put them in their newsletters, and such. So, that might be the easiest way to subscribe and see if there's any call for-, call for this or that. I looked it up on their website, and if you Google it, you can always find a lot of them. SBEARD (ph 14.57), IMAC (ph 14.58). I don't know, there are so many abbreviations, I sometimes don't even know what they are, but there's a lot of money being pushed towards the community and if you are smart and you know a little bit of how to play the game, I'd say, you can most likely benefit from one or two subsidy streams.

It's also a little bit what Engocha did, I think, with-, strategy-wise. They hired (inaudible 15.19) the former NATO general and highly connected. A good guy. He knows his way around the Netherlands and he's also someone that picks up on these tender kind of things and he says, 'Hey guys, we should go after this one. Forget about this one. Too complicated. This is the one we're going for,' you know, so they hired a seasoned (inaudible 15.41) on the ground, if you will to actually have a strong presence in a network and hear what they need to-, want to hear. So, those are the two strategies I would go for. Subscribe to the newsletter of Security Delta. I think the address is www.securitydelta.nl. If it doesn't work, send me a text, I'll end you the right link. That's one, and two, see if you can-, if you're serious about a market, I was always-, I would always try to get a person within that market in one way or another to collaborate with him. Either hire in, set something up or get a sales rep or BD, like a business developer, or something, someone who knows the market a bit more from the inside because it's, it's-, you can't beat that local knowledge in that sense. There's a lot online, but sometimes you have to hear it. So, those are the two tips I have for you there.

Moderator: Yes, that's really helpful, and I think, in terms of market knowledge, attending events and, you know, getting involved in those networks is really helpful to meet the right people. So, I think that brings us to the end of this morning's Q and A session and the webinar, so thank you very much Martijn for your time this morning and for all the really information and tips you've shared with us. As I've said, this is very much, we would say, a start, or an introduction to the

market, so we would be delighted to work with you to explore the Benelux markets further, so please do not hesitate to reach out. So, thank you very much. Bye.

Martijn Van Hoogenhuijze: Thank you.

Emilien Thorin: Thank you.