

Speech Ir L. de Vries, president and CEO of Royal Ten Cate concerning launch TPRC

Occasion : Launch of the Thermoplastic Composite Research Center
Place : De Grolsch Veste Enschede
Date : Friday 12 June 2009, between 2.00 pm and 3.00 pm

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the celebrations of Royal Ten Cate's three-hundredth anniversary in 2004, a number of customers and other relations of TenCate, including several scientists, got together and they discussed what it is that makes the region of Twente so unique. The conclusion they arrived at was that our region has numerous connections with materials. And that's how the term 'Materials Valley' came into being.

Today, with the founding of the Thermoplastic Composites Research Center in Enschede, we can add yet another piece of the puzzle to that vision of 'Materials Valley'. So, step by step, this region is being put on the international map.

Fibre-reinforced composites stem from the production-based combination of textile technology and chemistry. The result is our product TenCate Cetex®. This material can be easily processed industrially to produce for example moulded parts for wing panels and the interior parts of aircraft. The role of composites in the aviation industry is increasing steadily.

TenCate laid the foundation for this innovative technology in the 1990s. In addition to space and aerospace, there are now also other areas of application, such as those for offshore operations in times of dwindling oil supplies. And yet there is far more potential.

Thermoplastic composite offers a world of possibilities and of solutions. It is clear to me that thermoplastic composites can change the world. The material is light and strong; it helps to conserve energy, to increase sustainability, and it contributes to a reduction in CO2. This material even plays a part in reducing aircraft noise.

Thermoplastic composite is at the start of an economic chain. TenCate has thrived as a result of open innovation. This has been the driving force behind our continuous growth over the past ten years. Entering into the TPRC partnership is in line with that development.

Collaboration based on open innovation will enable us together to build a research institute of stature. This will ensure that the motto of TPRC: "Developing a world of composites", will become a reality.

Our industry is a knowledge-intensive sector and thus of great economic value, not just regionally and nationally but internationally too. Material science owns the future. There's no denying it. And TenCate intends to play a role of importance here.

Thank you for your attention and I wish TPRC a productive future!