Date: 16 December 2021
Subject: Response to evaluation report Hubrecht Institute

Dear board of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences,

The Hubrecht Institute for Developmental Biology and Stem Cell Research was evaluated in September 2021 by an international evaluation committee. We are very pleased with the outcome of the positive evaluation and very grateful to the committee who provided valuable recommendations. We fully endorse these recommendations and will implement these in the near future. Below we address these recommendations in more detail:

Recommendation 1: Optimization of the interactions between the Institute and the UMCU researchers working in the Annex building, ideally by a role for Hubrecht management in the UMCU planning process for locating groups in the Annex.

We will continue stimulating interactions between the Hubrecht Institute and the UMCU researchers working on the 4th and 5th floor of our building. For example, we will organize joint seminars to inform the Hubrecht and UMCU groups on technologies and research directions that are complementary to both research communities. Additionally, we will explore with the UMCU board, if the Hubrecht Institute can be involved in the recruitment of new UMCU groups to our building. This would be beneficial for both parties.

Recommendation 2: Providing more opportunities for trainees (graduate students, postdoctoral fellows) to participate in conferences outside of the Institute, and other aspects of career development.

We agree it is very important for our trainees to be exposed to conferences outside the institute. We will discuss the importance of conferences for trainees with the staff and we will discuss this with the graduate student and post-doc committees to determine a formal plan to increase attendance of conferences by our trainees.
Recommendation 3: Awareness of work-stress related problems within the group of scientists, the group leaders in particular.

As mentioned by our SAB, we agree that work-stress related problems are a broader issue in research careers. We already have started to implement annual meetings between our PhD students and an external trustee with the goal to detect work-stress related problems at an early stage. In the future we will expand this program to include post-doctoral researchers and group leaders.

Recommendation 4: Recruit and retain senior female group leaders, to balance the gender distribution among all ranks.

We fully agree with this recommendation and are constantly searching proactively for female candidates both at the junior and senior level. The search for a new institute director will be another excellent opportunity to recruit a female director to the Hubrecht board.

Recommendation 5: Involve the Scientific Advisory Board in scouting for talent, in searches for new group leaders and in recruiting a new director.

This is an excellent suggestion and we are very excited that our Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) agrees with this recommendation and is willing to be involved in attracting new talent to the Hubrecht Institute including searching for a new institute director.

Recommendation 6: Come to a transparent and consensus policy on open-access publication and adoption of DORA principles.

We will implement a transparent program on open-access publications and the adoption of DORA principles. We will discuss the DORA principles with the staff during a retreat to raise awareness and to come to a consensus policy regarding these principles. Moreover, we will discuss the value of open-access publication with the staff again and make sure everyone is aware that the board strongly supports open-access publications and that the Hubrecht has covered the extra cost of open-access publications for years already and will continue to do so, if need be.

In conclusion, we thank the committee for the thorough evaluation.

Sincerely,

The board of the Hubrecht Institute,

Prof. dr. ir. Alexander van Oudenaarden
Director

Prof. dr. Jeroen den Hertog
Managing director