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SPEZIAL



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HIGH-TECH-BIOTOPE LEIPZIG

This Saxon city in the heart of Europe is home to a unique life science and tech cluster with global appeal and huge innovative potential.

by **André Hofmann, Geschäftsführer biosaxony Management GmbH, Leipzig**

Leipzig is smart and vibrant. Nowhere is this more evident than in the continuous growth of its life science and tech park at the BioCity Campus (BCC) Leipzig. For young companies, this forward-looking city in Saxony offers plenty of space, ample support, and limitless networking potential. It has been twenty years since BIO CITY LEIPZIG debuted as a centrally-located technology center and incubator. Now this group of buildings has grown into an entire urban neighborhood in which businesses, research institutions and innovators seamlessly collaborate with one another.

A STRONG LIFE SCIENCE CLUSTER

The cluster members are globally renowned: Prof. Dr. Svante Pääbo, recently awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine, conducts research at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (MPI-EVA). But work done at the Fraunhofer Institute for Cell Therapy and

Immunology (IZI) and the University of Leipzig is also internationally recognized. More than 40 companies have chosen to settle at the BCC Leipzig where they are active in the fields of white and red biotechnology, bio-pharmaceuticals, cell and gene therapy, and diagnostics, to name just a few. "We have achieved a measure of cluster activity that is comparable to the level of development in the United States or in Asia," is how Prof. Dr. Dr. Ulrike Köhl of IZI describes the standard of the cluster.

BUILDING BOOM IS MAKING ROOM

These success stories are having an impact: For example, the municipal business park developer LGH is already realizing its third project on the BCC in Leipzig. A laboratory, office and co-working complex is being built on the foundation of the old exhibition hall 12, which will offer 10,000m² of space for new biotech companies from 2026 onwards. At the

entrance to the campus with the famous double M of the Leipzig Trade Fair, the developer OFB is also building two new laboratory buildings, including for one of the cluster's fastest-growing tenants, c-LEcta GmbH. Founded in 2004, the white biotechnology company specializes in manufacturing enzymes and is currently headquartered in the BioCube incubator building. Soon c-LEcta will move to the new BioSquare whose more than 10,000 m² of rental area will offer the company much-needed space. Due to high demand, OFB is already planning the second construction phase.

MULTI-USE SPACES...

In addition, two buildings have already been planned by the developer Vollack, who is also creating state-of-the-art workspaces for life science companies and has applied for planning permission for approx. 8,600m² of new space. These two buildings - which have been christened CityLab Leipzig - will initially be used by the WIG2 Business Group. It adds another piece of the puzzle to the BCC Leipzig to complete it - health economics - and will be offering support by, for example, consulting on the eligibility for reimbursement of medical products. The development of the BCC in Leipzig is flanked by classic office buildings in which industry-related government agencies, such as the German Federal Environmental Agency, have set up operations. These new buildings are also attractive for complementary com-



The BCC Leipzig – in the foreground MPI-EVA, BIO CITY, BioCube and Fraunhofer IZI

panies like the Swiss Akkodis Group AG which supports life science companies in their digital transformation, among other things.

...SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS

Directly adjacent to the BCC Leipzig, a new planning area with 60,000 m² of existing and 275,000m² of new floor space for laboratories, offices and commercial areas is being created on the western site of the Old Trade Fair. This is also where more settlement potential is to be developed, including by opening up to the knowledge-based economy, particularly in cross-clustering with the ICT sector. On a total of 38 construction sites, space will be created for new buildings and extensions as required. Sustainability remains a core value during the entire process: Energy efficiency is a must for all buildings, and green roofs will enable the storage and delayed release of collected rainwater.

HANDS-ON ATTITUDE

But as important as buildings are, they are no substitute for the driving force of any innovation: people. Together with the University of Leipzig, the city's economic development agencies were willing, from the very beginning, to create favorable conditions for companies in the long term. Together with the industry association biosaxony, they support new branches of industry while having a straightforward, hands-on attitude. They not only offer support when it comes to issues such as medical device regulation according to MDR and IVDR, as well as reimbursement in the German healthcare system and its implementation. They also help with investor outreach, personnel placement and technical aspects, e.g. with lab technology or a modern 3D printer for medical applications in the Co-Working Lab. And every year, the accelerator MEDICAL FORGE helps eight companies from Germany and abroad navigate Germany's innovation landscape.

VIBRANT ECOSYSTEM

Leipzig is noteworthy because it is home to what economists call the innovation

biotope or ecosystem of a particular industry: a large number of other companies in the biotechnology and healthcare sectors, plus a great many highly qualified employees. Today, 2,633 companies with a total of 47,287 employees work in this sector in the Saxon metropolis. In addition, 28 percent of the city's population has a college or university degree. Especially for young companies, which often work with many global partners, the city's prime accessibility via Leipzig Airport with its 24-hour cargo flight permit is one of the reasons for choosing Leipzig from among Europe's numerous other options.

In addition to Leipzig's infrastructure, there are also the so-called 'soft location factors'. But these count for a lot when it comes to attracting top talent – and are often the final deciding factor when companies choose a location. The city is considered one of the most family-friendly in Germany. It attracts visitors with first-class cultural institutions like the Gewandhaus Orchestra and also offers recreational opportunities with its nearby lakes which can easily be

reached by bike. It seems that this mix of business support, talent acquisition and urban quality of life is working: Since 2005, the city's population has grown by 28 percent, to its current number of more than 625,000.

FROM A VISION TO A REALITY

At the BCC all companies benefit from these conditions, which rarely converge: a large pool of highly qualified researchers and entrepreneurs in one space, room for growth – and the feeling of being integrated into an urban community, even at work. After all, Leipzig is a city of short distances, and the well-developed local transport system conveniently links the BCC to the city center. So, with the current development phase of the life science and tech ecosystem, what was still considered an ambitious goal 20 years ago is now coming to fruition: That Leipzig and Saxony not only establish themselves as an emerging market with their life science and tech park in Europe – but also assert themselves in a highly competitive international arena.



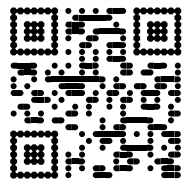
Detail of the winning design for the expansion of the BCC Leipzig by another 36 hectares.



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