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29 December 2011

UKTI helps Cambridge firm discover how to boost exports

Discovering a new drug and turning it into a safe product that works is a difficult and very expensive process costing hundreds of millions of pounds, but one Cambridgeshire firm is helping to find the cure, with assistance from UK Trade & Investment (UKTI).

Most of the cash spent in the drug discovery process goes on creating and testing compounds that fail. Optibrium, based on the Cambridge Research Park, has come up with some special software to address these issues.

‘Stardrop™’ has been on the market since 2005 but the company, which was founded as a spin-out in 2009, have focused on Europe, USA and Japan due to historic relationships.

Now, with help from UKTI’s Life Sciences Specialist Trade Advisor Claire Lachlan, the company have made in-roads into Singapore, China and India, all huge developing markets.

Exploring these markets was an experiment which has paid off. But an experiment they would not have undertaken if not for UKTI’s support through its Gateway to Global Growth programme. As company chief executive Matt Segall explains:

“When we started speaking to UKTI they really helped and encouraged us to look at other areas of Asia, and with their market research, on the ground support and financial backing we were able to explore the markets, meet people face-to-face and gain new leads.

“We have been impressed with the results so-far. In Singapore we have been working with industry and academic groups, secured a licence to pilot the product and the feedback has been really positive so far. I was impressed by the amazing infrastructure in Singapore and the level of general investment and it made me realise there are huge long term opportunities.

“In China we have secured some fantastic leads, particularly in Shanghai, which is at the forefront of the pharmaceutical industry in China.

“We are now looking to progress further leads in India and have made plans to work with academic groups to offer joint educational workshops”

Claire Lachlan, Life Sciences Specialist Trade Advisor for UK Trade & Investment in the East of England, said:

“Optibrium has done brilliantly to get his product off the ground in Singapore and China; markets which are traditionally difficult to break into. But this is a highly innovative product with high growth potential and with support from UKTI to help Optibrium get its foot in the door it’s now in a fantastic position to exploit these markets.

“Exporting isn’t always easy and can take a degree of patience, which you need to secure any new orders whether in the UK or overseas. We are here to take away the risk by giving your business the support and assistance to get you the leads you need.”

[ENDS]

Notes to Editor:

1. UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) is the Government department that helps UK-based companies succeed in the global economy. We also help overseas companies bring their high quality investment to the UK’s economy – acknowledged as Europe’s best place from which to succeed in global business. UKTI offers expertise and contacts through its extensive network of specialists in the UK, and in British embassies and other diplomatic offices around the world. We provide companies with the tools they require to be competitive on the world stage. For more information on UKTI, visit www.ukti.gov.uk or telephone +44 (0)20 7215 8000.

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COI NEWS & PR EAST 01223 370782.**

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