

News story: Essex healthcare firm to double overseas exports

BioSure, an Essex healthcare company that manufactured the first home testing HIV kit is expected to more than double its exporting sales in the next year as it expands in South Africa.

BioSure's kits require the user to simply prick their finger for a small drop of blood, which is then placed in the device. The process detects specific antibodies in the blood sample and produces an extremely accurate result in just fifteen minutes. The company, which was founded in 2011, originally supplied its product to hospitals and doctors across the United Kingdom, and in 2015 started selling its kits directly to individuals.

BioSure completed its first international order last year, seeing its products sold in over 500 pharmacies in South Africa. Demand for its products in the region has grown month-on-month since, and combined with other markets, exporting accounts for 40% of the firm's sales. This figure is set to grow to 90% in the next year as the business expand into new markets including Kenya and Brazil.

The business has worked closely with specialist trade advisers at the Department for International Trade (DIT) ahead of securing its first South African contract. DIT has also provided international market research and put BioSure in touch with distributors and potential buyers in East Africa and South America.

Brigette Bard, Founder of BioSure, said:

Our self-testing HIV kits are the first step in helping people get diagnosed and support the United Nations' ambitious pledge to help end the HIV / AIDS epidemic. Its pledge aims that by 2020, 90% of all people diagnosed with HIV will receive treatment.

Exporting our kits was always part of our business plan – a goal we achieved last year with our first contract in South Africa where the virus is most prevalent. Since then, we've gone from strength to strength and now plan to establish our products in South America for the first time, as well as make inroads in East and West Africa.

When exporting to different international markets, it's vital to ensure the regulatory and tax landscapes have been thoroughly researched. As a healthcare business, all our products go through rigorous testing to comply with that specific country's regulation. Expert organisations like DIT can help navigate this process. If we can do it, so can many other local firms.

Alan Pain, Head of Exports for DIT East of England, said:

International expansion was always a great option for BioSure and we're proud to have supported its venture in South Africa and beyond. Exporting is a multifaceted process, particularly for healthcare brands, so thorough research is vital.

Firms should ensure they have processes in place to deal with language barriers, as well as differing tax and regulatory landscapes. While exporting can sometimes seem daunting for firms, particularly those with limited resources, they shouldn't feel like they have to go through the process alone.

We have more than 30 international trade advisers located across the East of England to support ambitious businesses looking to tap into the emerging opportunities overseas. The support is out there, and I'd urge anyone who is interested to get in touch.

[Firms looking for support should visit great.gov.uk](https://www.great.gov.uk) which has around 1,000 live export opportunities currently listed and includes general information on exporting and events.