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Innovative British Company Takes Skin-Testing to the World

Company Name: Biox Systems Ltd

Biox Systems Ltd is an R&D spin-out company of London South Bank University (LSBU) that has successfully trebled sales of its innovative skin-testing technology in an impressive three years.

The company's AquaFlux200 probe is a portable, relatively low-cost, non-invasive device that measures the Transepidermal Water Loss (TEWL) of skin for pharmaceutical and dermatological applications.

Previous devices for such measurements needed elaborate and costly climate-controlled laboratories. Buyers are the leading companies in the worldwide pharmaceutical and cosmetic markets and include key companies such as L'Oréal, Unilever, and Procter & Gamble. Annual sales have jumped from £60,000 to £180,000, with export business developing in France and the USA.



The AquaFlux 200 probe

Biox chairman and AquaFlux inventor Research Professor Bob Imhof approached UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) in July 2007, on the advice of South Bank University's Research Office, to enquire about UKTI services in relation to marketing the company's technology more effectively overseas.

After consulting London International Trade Adviser Ian Paterson, the company joined the UKTI Passport to Export Scheme of tailored advice and support for new and inexperienced exporters. With Ian's assistance, Biox produced a detailed diagnostic of the company, and this resulted in an export action plan. The plan included UKTI funding and services, with expert advice on trading in the USA, where the company was already active, and advice from a sector specialist at the British Embassy in Tokyo. The company subsequently attended two UK-based seminars sponsored by UKTI, "Making it Happen in the USA", and "Taking Technology to Japan", in September 2007.

Following this advice, Professor Imhof took the decision to focus initially on "local" European markets through active selling, before approaching Japan and the USA. Biox Systems has subsequently made excellent progress in Europe, in particular in the French market, where the company is now conducting business in French and has gained a number of "difficult" orders, including one via a competitive tendering process in French!

Of the help the company had from UKTI, Professor Imhof said: "Our London International Trade Adviser, Ian Paterson, was brilliant and utterly determined to get some commercial sense into our heads. He

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quickly identified sales and marketing as weaknesses. Taking advantage of his 30 years of international sales experience in technology, we developed plans to define the company's global prospects, qualify the opportunities open to us, build distribution platforms and formulate pricing proposal policies.

"Under the Passport to Export scheme, consultancy was provided by Mike West of beStrategic towards developing the business's commercial sales plan. This gave us a new perspective on crucial areas such as active selling, how to approach different export regions, and pricing."

Ian Paterson commented: "I was particularly enthused to help Biox, since they are a spin-off from my old university at South Bank and virtually around the corner from our offices at London Bridge. Biox typifies the strength of innovation available from London's universities, and UKTI complements this with the commercial resources to exploit their high growth potential."

For more information, visit www.biox.biz.

More information about the range of services available through UK Trade & Investment:

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