

Sector Consortia Case Studies

South East Health Technologies Alliance (SEHTA)

Health Technologies Sector.

The mission of SEHTA is to catalyse innovation and international competitiveness in South East England's health technologies sectors - improve health and increase wealth. It will do this by leadership, influence, facilitation and signposting.

APA Parafricta Ltd

Parafricta is a young company pioneering low friction technologies. Its products are designed to overcome issues primarily in the healthcare and civil engineering communities. Its CEO, George Sampson was introduced to SEHTA when he was looking for assistance and support in taking the fabric to market.

SEHTA has worked with APA Parafricta Ltd to improve its business. It has developed a revolutionary new fabric that has a friction coefficient close to that of ice yet the strength of steel. Parafricta Fabric has already been hailed as a technological break through, with Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children using the fabric for those suffering with Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB), a crippling skin disease highlighted in Channel 4's programme The Boy Whose Skin Fell Off. The Parafricta fabric is made into garments and bedclothes that protect sensitive skin and chronic wound dressings. Parafricta Fabric is also displayed in the Science Museum's 'Challenge of Materials' gallery and is a 'fabric of the future'.

All activity outlined below has been funded or sponsored by the South East Health Technologies Alliance.

Parafricta has received support from:

- Surrey Enterprise Hub
- Finance South East
- Coast Communications

Surrey Enterprise Hub

The Surrey Enterprise Hub has been working with Parafricta for over a year. During this time George Sampson has attended

workshops and seminars hosted by the Hub on preparing your business for sale, digital marketing, recruitment, patent protection and contracts.

The Hub has also undertaken an initial review of Parafricta's business plan and helped identify potential sources of funding for the firm prior to referring to Finance South East and the SEHTA funded Biotechnology Finance Advisory Service (BFAS) programme for further assistance. The Hub, together with Finance South East, has helped Parafricta secure money through the Catalyst Fund.

Outcomes

Parafricta has progressed through the BFAS programme and secured investment via the Catalyst Fund. The firm is also in discussion with a number of potential investors.

The digital marketing clinic and recruitment seminar have proven to be particularly helpful in the delivery of a new e-commerce website for the firm and in the recruitment of a sales manager.

Finance South East

Finance South East, through the SEHTA funded BFAS programme, has provided the following support to Parafricta:

The Light Touch programme included discussions on funding strategy and commercial strategy, routes to market and revenue generation.

In-depth Programme included presentations to the South East Capital Alliance (SECA), the business angel network and at the Thames Valley Innovation conference and a BFAS grant to assist Parafricta in ongoing fund finding.

Outcomes

The signposting to the EB charity DeBRA has resulted in the products being used on sick children at Great Ormond Street hospital and to a significant number of orders and a sales pipeline.

Parafricta has also received BFAS funding to help ready the firm for investment.

Coast Communications

Coast Communications has advised Parafricta under the SEHTA PR and Communications Programme on a media launch strategy for its product range.

Outcome

Parafricta's products have been profiled in the Daily Mail in December 2006 as one of the 'greatest inventions of 2006'.

As a result of this article Parafricta received a substantial number of orders and enquiries from potential partners wishing to sell the fabric overseas.

"It has been good to be able to speak with freely available experts in various fields to test our approach and to act as a sounding board to our ideas."

"Our association with SEHTA has been extremely beneficial. Membership of SEHTA has been looked upon very favourably by the investment community."

All support and advice outlined above has been funded and sponsored by SEHTA. SEHTA is a company limited by guarantee and wholly owned by its members. It is funded in part by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA).

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