



Patricell, Netherlands

With almost a decade of expertise in the distribution of hardware, consumables and human cell culture systems throughout Europe, in 1996 the time was right for Danish biotech company, Cytotech ApS, to consider a UK base. The result was the formation of Patricell Ltd, based in BioCity, Nottingham.

Founded in Copenhagen in 1989, Cytotech initially specialised in the distribution of small-scale instrumentation, high-tech fermentors, cell reactors and incubator shakers for pharmaceutical companies and universities.

Cytotech had identified a gap in the European market for human cell lines, for which there was no local source except biopsies obtained from hospitals. The company struck a deal with leading cell supplier Clonetics and brought the company's products to mainland Europe. Cytotech also acts as the distributor of human cell systems for Cascade Biologies within a number of European countries.

The business was growing successfully but its base in Denmark was beginning to hold their progress back, as Managing Director of Cytotech ApS Patrick Munch-Fals explains:

“Significant changes in the biotech climate in Denmark led us to undertake a strategic review of the business. Increased running costs, an unattractive economic climate, record levels of tax and difficulties in recruiting qualified employees all acted as a spur.”

“Also, with smaller biotech companies merging and larger companies moving their research abroad, or finding lower-cost bases the company needed to find new areas for growth and development.”

Responding to market demand, Cytotech ApS set up Patricell Ltd as a subsidiary to supply UK customers.

“When it comes to assisting established or start-up companies, the UK is second to none,” says Patrick. The British Embassy in Copenhagen provided information about the various regions in the UK, including their biotech clusters, science parks, communication infrastructures and the quality of life. Initially, Patricell Ltd had a small temporary office in Oxford, conveniently close to some existing UK customers. However the frequent commute between Oxford and Denmark meant a more permanent solution was required.

London was considered for the new offices but although the infrastructure was excellent, the cost of office space in the capital was too high. Following a recommendation from a business colleague who had been through a similar process,

Patricell Ltd was put into contact with the England's East Midlands' International Investment team.

They acted as a central contact, carrying out detailed property searches to find the perfect location and researching labour market statistics including cost, availability and skills required.



"The team was enormously inspiring and helpful" explains Patrick Munch-Fals. "Without hesitation the wheels were set in motion to organise the move from Denmark and initiate business objectives."

Infrastructure was important but equally crucial was location. Nottingham is located just half an hour from East Midlands airport, offering quick access to Europe. It is also located close to both Manchester and Birmingham airport. Conveniently, London is also less than two hours commute by train.

"England's East Midlands acts not only as a central point from a distribution and marketing perspective, its growth potential in the biotech sector makes it a strong alternative compared to more traditional locations like Oxford, Cambridge and London" explains Patrick Munch-Fals.

Patricell Ltd was able to make a speedy and confident decision to locate in BioCity, Nottingham, the UK's largest bioscience innovation and incubation centre which aims to become the largest in Europe and home to a new nano- and microtechnology fabrication facility.

BioCity was always going to be a strong candidate for Patricell Ltd's UK base, along with office and laboratory space, it also provides extensive business support and conference facilities for investors. Within a month of Patricell Ltd locating at BioCity, a local office manager was employed with strong knowledge and experience of the UK market place.

"We are confident that with the close co-operation between universities and companies here in the region and the contacts, knowledge and professionalism of the team, finding qualified and dedicated staff now and in the future will pose no problem. We also have a dedicated International Business Support Co-ordinator from the England's East Midlands Team working with us; so we know that we can tap into their resources and knowledge any time."

A further benefit of BioCity is the supporting organisations that it links with, such as Medilink, who are the specialist support organisation with a membership base. Medilink provide added value opportunities and information services to the BioScience and Healthcare sector, particularly the regions' SME companies.

Together with Medilink, England's East Midlands and UK Trade & Investment, Patricell Ltd has recently participated in regional exhibitions at the Biotech Forum in Stockholm and Copenhagen. *"It was a great opportunity for Patricell to get acquainted with this export market, new customers and colleagues,"* says Patrick.

"With our base at BioCity Nottingham we believe we are now in the ideal position to take on and deal with the opportunities of the UK healthcare market and to ensure our European expansion is a resounding success."

For more case studies from England's East Midlands visit

www.Englandseastmidlands.com