

Critical Commitment

Engineering company, Critical Software Technologies Ltd, is enjoying continued support from UK Trade & Investment and has recently expanded its operations in the UK with a new office in the South West



Critical

FAST FACTS

Company: Critical Software Technologies Ltd

Country: UK

Industry: Software Engineering

Website www.critical-software.co.uk

Critical Software Technologies provides system solutions for complex and highly critical applications in the fields of avionics, space, defence and energy. Established in 1998 in Portugal, the parent group, Critical SGPS, today has several offices in Portugal, as well as subsidiary companies in the US, the UK, Romania, Brazil, and Mozambique.

Critical first considered expanding into the UK in 2004, appointing a local consultancy company to assess the possibilities and help set about establishing a UK subsidiary. As this was happening, Critical was awarded the first of what has proven to be a continuing line of contracts with UK aircraft company Westland Helicopters, which is now AgustaWestland and part of the Italian group Finmeccanica.

“When Critical looked to extend its reach into northern Europe and North America, the UK was seen as the obvious choice,” says Dr Simon Kampa, Managing Director of Critical Software Technologies in the UK. “Apart from having the largest market for Avionics outside the US,

products developed in the UK still have a real kudos thanks to the country’s long history of being at the forefront of technical innovation and high quality manufacture. As soon as the first Westland contract was secured, the risks inherent in opening an overseas subsidiary were greatly reduced.”

Commissioning an OMIS

During 2004 and 2005, UK Trade & Investment’s team in Portugal was actively watching the aerospace and other markets, and contacted Critical with an offer of support, which was warmly welcomed. In 2006, the company commissioned an Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS), to look at the potential market for its solutions in the UK aerospace, defence, transport and energy sectors.

UK Trade & Investment’s report helped Critical to focus on the aerospace market first of all, as this was the most accessible and at the time the most buoyant of the available options. Leads from the report are still being used to shape the company’s implementation of the next phase of its expansion strategy, which involves winning more business in the energy market, particularly renewable energy, in which the UK is a world leader.

“We realised that if we were going to make the most of the potential market in the UK, we would need a physical presence,” says Simon. “UK Trade & Investment worked with us to find suitable locations and introduced us to the team at South East England Development Agency (SEEDA). We eventually settled on an office in Southampton.”

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“Southern Hampshire really appealed, with its excellent transport routes, and its proximity not only to the main London airports but also its own rapidly growing international airport. We immediately had access to the aerospace industries centred around Farnborough, and space companies such as EADS Astrium in Portsmouth.”

The future

Today, Critical has two offices in the UK, the main one in Southampton and the more recent in Yeovil, in the South West. The company has a £20 million annual revenue target in the next five to six years, with sales coming from increased business both in the UK and abroad, typically into Northern Europe and North America.

Indeed, Critical is already exporting from the UK, and has had support from UK Trade & Investment to do this. The company also plans to expand in the UK, both through organic growth and acquisitions that will allow it to enter new application areas such as renewable energy.

“UK Trade & Investment continues to be really helpful as we grow our UK business,” says Simon. “They are incredibly supportive and proactive. For example, even after our initial OMIS report was complete the UK Trade & Investment team would spend time with us and try to identify new ways to support us and our business needs, offering advice on tax issues in the UK, and new markets that we are considering. I feel that they genuinely want to help our business grow.”

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The UK - Europe's leading investment destination

The UK is an attractive springboard for companies who want to grow their global business. The World Bank ranked the UK as No 1 in Europe for “Ease of Doing Business” against a range of indicators.

The UK is also No 1 in Europe at attracting inward investment, with four times more European HQs than any other country. UK Trade & Investment's worldwide network offers help and support to a diverse range of businesses spanning many sectors.

Setting up your company in the UK

Deciding where to locate your international business is one of the biggest decisions you'll make and can be daunting. UK Trade & Investment helps businesses coming to the UK with every aspect of setting up their new operations.

As the UK Government's inward investment agency, it's our job to know the UK's strengths and where investment opportunities exist.

This means we can help your company to do all the research you need to make an informed decision, and then get up and running as quickly as possible.

UK Trade & Investment can help you to:

- Do your research
- Build key contacts
- Choose your location
- Set up your new office
- Grow your business internationally

For further information please visit www.ukti.gov.uk



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