

Cultivating International Growth

Driving Horticultural Innovation and Expansion

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Samantha Balasuriya, Director, Botanicoir Limited



Botanicoir Limited

Botanicoir is a leading manufacturer of calcium-enriched coir substrate products, with expertise in creating specific mixes for the horticultural industry. Collaborating closely with local agronomists and leading soft fruit and salad crop growers, the company creates optimal solutions to meet stringent EC, pH and volume standards. With a sales and marketing office in the UK and its own production facilities in Sri Lanka and India, Botanicoir guarantees a consistent supply and traceability of high-quality products. As a result of pioneering research alongside German engineers, Botanicoir now holds the distinction of being the first coir producer to mechanically dry material, enabling uninterrupted year-round supply regardless of weather conditions. The business is also the first to introduce compressed buffered grow bags into the UK soft fruit market.



The challenge

Since the business was founded in 2005, the family-run enterprise has expanded its reach across 72 countries, including Australia, the USA, Mexico, Morocco, Spain, and China. With a team that started with three core founders, Botanicoir now boasts a workforce of 600 employees and owns production units in Sri Lanka and India, facilitating robust R&D, traceability, and quality control.

Samantha Balasuriya, Director of Botanicoir Limited, picks up the story: "Although we have our own plantations, these aren't sufficient to meet rising product demand. Hence, our supply chain comprises additional plantations to provide the volume

of coconut husks we need. The limited credit availability in Sri Lanka means that we have to pay all our suppliers up front, including the bag manufacturers. In the UK, growers also face several tough challenges, ranging from weather dependency to the necessity of extending longer credit periods to accommodate their customers' needs."

The business's previous long-standing finance provider had strict limitations on exports and debtor concentrations, severely impacting Botanicoir's funding availability. Despite the company's profitable growth, this stance remained unchanged and unreviewed.

Investec's solution

The Director of Botanicoir continued: "Recognising the need to bridge the working capital gap, we contacted our finance broker. Right from the outset, we instructed them to find a bank that would work with us, offer timely responses, and offer us help in times of need - all without excessive red tape. They introduced us to Investec, who ticked all the boxes. In addition, what clinched it for us was the discovery that our bank's former relationship manager had joined Investec, someone we've always held in high regard."

The team at Investec Capital Solutions took time to understand Botanicoir's growth aspirations. Following a deeper analysis of the underlying counterparties and international risk profile, they were able to structure a working capital facility utilising Intelligent Cash Flow technology across multiple currencies, opening up significant additional funding.

Samantha Balasuriya added: "Choosing Investec is a departure from the typical experience of going to a large bank. They invested the time and care to understand our business. Trust, transparency, innovation and partnership are the heart of everything that we do and we feel that we are working with individuals



at Investec who share the same mindset. Investec's team is always open to discussing ideas, even making exceptions to accommodate invoices for well-established customers in specific regions that fall outside their usual criteria."

Outcome

The outcome is clear: Botanicoir now enjoys enhanced funding certainty and is positioned to pursue its objectives with confidence. As the company sets its sights on expansion, Investec's supportive partnership stands as a foundation for its global ambitions.

Summing up, Samantha Balasuriya emphasises: "Investec's distinctive individual approach to service really stands out. Having reliable contacts we can count on brings us peace of mind, particularly as we look to extend our geographical reach. At present, we're concentrating on Asia Pacific and North American markets. Recognising the significance of the Asian market, our next move is to establish a stronger presence there. This step aligns perfectly with our strategic vision of sustained growth through expanding our global footprint."



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