

# MADE FOR BUSINESS

SureScreen Scientifics Ltd  
Case Study



**SureScreen Scientifics is an independent family-run business specialising in forensic analysis, covering a wide range of different activities dependent on client need.**

Prior to the business' engagement with Invest to Grow, it was developing a new area of work around DNA analysis. This particularly focused upon environmental and ecological screening, for example to identify the presence of Great Crested Newts prior to the commencement of a building project. Traditional methods to identify such species include setting traps. Instead, SureScreen is able to carry out a DNA sweep for the species using a sample of water. This is much more accurate, ecologically friendly and cost effective.

Some of the R&D around the DNA work was already taking place within SureScreen's main building, involving collaboration with the University of Derby. Recognising the potential market opportunities related to the new DNA work, SureScreen was keen to increase its capacity in this area.

The nature of the DNA work means it should be carried out within a specific self-contained area with specialist fit-for-purpose facilities. SureScreen therefore identified a separate building alongside its existing main facility. The business had already purchased this building but it required considerable renovation before ultimately being fitted out with the relevant equipment.

Keen to avoid missing out on emerging market

"Invest to Grow funding led to a significant increase in both our sales and profitability over the first year, with both increasing by double-figure percentages."

**David Campbell  
Business Manager,  
SureScreen**

opportunities, SureScreen applied to the Invest to Grow programme. This ultimately led to funding of £68,430 from the programme, agreed in June 2015, which formed part of an overall project costing £228,100.

The Invest to Grow funding was therefore used to fit out the new facility, installing the appropriate equipment for the DNA work to take place. It also involved purchasing some of the equipment.

The Invest to Grow funding enabled SureScreen Scientifics to develop and fit-out a new lab facility specifically for its DNA-focused work. This meant the business could immediately provide enhanced services to its customers, increasing the capacity and breadth of its market offer.

Whilst the initial work was focused around screening for Great Crested Newts, SureScreen has subsequently been able to expand its



provision beyond this. It now undertakes DNA testing for a series of other species, including bats and crayfish. This further expansion occurred due to the availability of the new facility and the subsequent additional business it created, which provided a springboard for SureScreen to reinvest in further DNA expertise.

**"We are working with a lot of companies that we did not work with previously. The project has enabled us to diversify our offer."**

The new facility has led to eight new jobs; it is expected that at least another two jobs will be created over the next 12 months. SureScreen has continued to work with the University of Derby, with two PhD students working on DNA research in the new lab in collaboration with the University (these are in addition to the eight jobs referred to above). The business is open to further joint working.

**"We would be keen to consider employing graduates and post-graduates from the University of Derby moving forward."**

Engagement with Invest to Grow has enabled SureScreen to undertake more innovation and research; this is due to the new equipment, which has enabled the business to explore new areas of activity. The project has also created enhanced skills among SureScreen's workforce, both through new staff, and also through existing staff having access to specialist equipment.

David Campbell commented on the importance of Invest to Grow in ensuring the new facility was completed and subsequent benefits occurred.

**"Invest to Grow has provided a great opportunity to access investment capital, which has propelled us forward in a way we would not have been able to do organically."**

Since the initial Invest to Grow funding, SureScreen Diagnostics Limited (a separate part of the group), has applied for Invest to Grow funding in relation to a vitamin testing project which requires specific equipment and facilities.

