

## **BUSINESS REPORT**

### **BioScience Brands looks to chart healthy growth in Africa**

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BioScience Brands, South Africa's only listed health and wellness firm, is exploring business opportunities in other parts of Africa. The company hoped to start exporting its products in the next financial year, chief executive Mike Allan said this week. The focus would initially be in sub-Saharan Africa, Allan said. The company was finding the right agents in the region. "We have had inquires from Asia as well, particularly Singapore, but our focus is Africa," he said. "For the past year we have concentrated on reorganising and restructuring the business. We have been making sure we are on every shelf in South Africa. We are still not everywhere, but we are getting there." BioScience products are available at 2 000 outlets, including pharmacies, health shops and supermarkets. Herbology is one of its well-known brands.

Allan came on board 15 months ago when the current shareholders took over Wellco, which had been suspended by the JSE. The renamed company relisted five months ago and will report its first full-year results after June. "It's been a year of upheaval but the restructuring is complete. It's not the easiest of times to operate in and it is still going to get worse," said Allan. "We have started to see foot traffic dropping at retail (outlets) and that impacts our business. But people are becoming more health conscious." The local health and wellness industry is valued at R4 billion. The Department of Health has published draft legislation to regulate the sector, particularly the claims that companies make for their products and the suggested dosages.

This legislation would "clean up the industry", Allan said. "It will level the playing fields and it will ensure that consumers have confidence in our industry. There will always be fly-by-night people who give us all a bad name." BioScience employs 43 permanent staff and 60 contractors on a temporary basis, including promoters. The majority shareholder is empowerment partner Thebe Medicare, with a stake of just over 20 percent.