

SG Healthcare Success Story

A company from northern Spain specialized in sports medicine, ABANZA, will land in USA with the Enterprise Europe Network support

Born/Established in 2014, ABANZA is a SME from Navarra, Spain, specialized in Arthroscopy Sports Medicine market, currently focused on the ACL injury. Thanks to the EEN, they have attended different international events to showcase their technology, ending with the selection to receive funding under the INNOWWIDE programme.

Setting the scenario

Everyday thousands of people around the world suffer from sports injuries. In this sense, Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) injury is highly prevalent in the general population. Taking into account worldwide data, the average ratio of ACL injuries is around 1/1,000 injuries per year, with 0.75/1,000 undergoing ACL reconstructions in developed countries. Focusing in **Europe**, **the average ratio of ACL injuries increases up to 400,000 ruptures per year**. These ratios are progressively increasing due to social changes and are noticeably higher in women due to non-modifiable (anatomical, hormonal) risk factors.

After ACL reconstruction surgery, **up to 30% of patients require a second surgical intervention** and more than **75% of patients develop osteoarthritis** in the medium-long term.

ABANZA is a company **specialized in Arthroscopy Sports Medicine market, currently focused on the ACL injury**. ABANZA designs novel medical devices and surgical instruments, with the mission of improving via innovation the state-of-the-art results of existing devices, providing

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surgeons the tools to guarantee a **more effective rehabilitation** and consequently improving patients 'quality of life.



The client journey works

ABANZA is a company that participates actively in EEN activities. In 2018 they were selected to **travel to Brussels together with a delegation of 30 other Spanish SMEs** for the company mission Europa+Cerca to meet the European Commission, cluster and associations. In October 2018, ABANZA participated in the **B2B of the IV Meetings of Bio-Health Industry**, which objective was to promote cross-border collaboration projects between companies and researchers from public and private entities of the health sector of three Euroregion territories (Nouvelle-Aquitaine, Navarre and Basque Country). And in 2019 they participated in **B2B Healthcare Brokerage Event in MEDICA TRADE FAIR**. They have also been **advised on Regulatory strategy for the CE marking and EIC Accelerator** funding.

In April 2019 they attended the **first seminar organized on funding programmes at EEN Navarra (EEN UNAV)**. There, ABANZA expressed interest in the call INNOWWIDE.

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The INNOWWIDE call intends to bring European highly innovative SMEs to the forefront of international markets by opening two calls that will allow them to conduct Viability Assessment Projects (VAPs) in cooperation with local stakeholders. It will, then, create the conditions to increase the uptake of European innovative solutions in markets outside of Europe. The INNOWWIDE financial support rate is fixed at 70% of eligible costs with a fixed grant of 60,000€ for each assessment project.

EEN UNAV advised ABANZA on the assistance and **facilitated the review of the proposal with specialists**. They applied to the call, but this first time they were not beneficiaries. The following year they contacted the Spanish node again to improve their proposal and present it again in the next call. EEN UNAV assisted them in **improving the proposal**, as well as advising them on the best possible partners to contact.

As Juan Abascal, CEO and co-founder of ABANZA says, *“we were introduced to this programme thanks to a **training organised by the Enterprise Europe Network of the University of Navarra**, from which we received advice on the best strategy for presenting the project.”*

ABANZA applied on date to the second call of INNOWWIDE with “INNOWWIDE WASHERCAP SOFT TISSUE FIXATION SYSTEM” project. On August 2020 they obtained the confirmation that they were selected in the programme for funding their project.

Helping ABANZA in their growth strategy

ABANZA overall objective is to **improve the results obtained on the market** with current procedures and devices, providing surgeons innovative surgical instruments and devices to ensure **a more effective rehabilitation** and thus achieve a positive impact on patients' lives.

During 2021, the company plans to start a **multicenter clinical trial** in collaboration with several hospitals in Spain. The company seeks to achieve market entry and internationalization of the WasherCap project, a specific device for Soft-Tissue fixation for ACL reconstruction equally effective for men, women and children.

ABANZA, thanks to this trajectory, expects to face **new innovative projects with real social impact**, allowing to position the company as reference in the sector of Sports Medicine.

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"We participate actively in EEN activities since 2018. With the help of Enterprise Europe Network, we have been beneficiaries of a Viability Assessment Project (VAP) in USA under the INNOWWIDE call", Juan told us when talking about the services received by the EEN.

If you want to listen to Juan talking about their project and collaboration with EEN Navarra, [you can watch the video here.](#)