

Portugal



Department for
International Trade



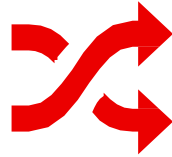
Portugal – Key facts



**10.3
million**
Population



**Open
Economy**
Used to
Imports



€13.8 Bn
Bilateral Trade
Worth
(2019)



**New
Technologies**
Early adopter



Key Facts

- ✓ Member of the EU since 1986. Stable democratic partner, with long-standing close connection with the UK.
- ✓ English widely spoken and accepted as business language.
- ✓ Entry route to other Portuguese speaking markets.
- ✓ Same time zone as UK (GMT)< easily accessible – regular flights to Lisbon/Oporto.
- ✓ Investment in clusters, hubs, incubators and accelerators, often associated with local universities, to foster technology advancements.

Life Sciences and Healthcare in Portugal



Life Sciences in Portugal

A significant number of Portuguese Biotech and Medtech companies result from university-lead projects that successfully develop devices and products with applications that meet a specific need in the market and prove to be viable for commercialisation / market placement. Some are also acquired by larger companies following proof-of-concept.



UK expertise in Life Sciences is highly regarded in Portugal and there are many links with British companies, universities, and R&D institutions. It is also common to find PhDs who have studied in the UK and are now running their businesses in Portugal, for example, in sectors such as Biotechnology.

Portuguese companies seek commercial and technological partnerships that are both cost effective and innovative, and can support their activity in the internal market as well as with exports.

Life Sciences in Portugal

The Life Sciences sector, considering the **Pharmaceutical Industry**, **Biotechnology** and **Medical Devices (Biomedical Industry)**, plays a very important role in Portugal's economy. It has evolved significantly over the past decades, fuelled by large investments in **Research & Development** made by both the public and private sectors— which has increased the country's competitiveness on the global market.



Within the Life Sciences industry, a major role is played by the **Pharmaceutical sector**. Nevertheless, in recent years **Biotechnology** has also known an unprecedented growth, resulting in more spin-off companies emerging from national universities' research projects than ever before.

Healthcare in Portugal

Healthcare services are still primarily provided by the public sector, although the private industry has been growing steadily over the past few years, with the number of private hospitals surpassing the public sector ones (119 out of 241, including 1 managed under a PPP model) – in addition to an extensive network of private clinics.

In part, this is due to the **health insurance market's rapid growth** – currently covering +3.15 million people.

Typically, most distributors operate both in the public and private healthcare segments. Although at a different pace, both have continued to invest in innovative and cost effective solutions.

While the Portuguese Government has continued to implement restructuring measures aimed at the sustainability of its NHS and the private sector players continue to expand their offer, **opportunities exist for suppliers of innovative cost efficient solutions** in areas such as:

- *Personalised medicine*
- *Chronic disease management*
- *Assisted living technologies*
- *Remote monitoring sensors*
- *AI and analytics for health*
- *New diagnosis solutions*
- *Healthy Ageing solutions*
- *Clinical Trials development*

Digital Health in Portugal

Over the last years, the Portuguese NHS has developed and adopted several digital tools for Healthcare providers, infrastructure and resources management as well as to facilitate overall access by citizens.

Telehealth has been present in Portugal since the 1990's, with telemedicine services being used by the Portuguese NHS since 2006 and becoming more prevalent in the last decade – especially since March 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions that demanded and fostered the use of telephone and online/video consultations whenever possible.

In 2016, the Portuguese Ministry of Health, created the [Portuguese National Centre of Telehealth \(CNTS\)](#)

Examples of Portugal's digital healthcare transition include:

- [SNS24](#) (online site and app) - providing an array of clinical and administrative services to the population, including triage/symptoms assessment, telecare for the elderly, general healthcare information, referrals, booking of point-of-care tests in pharmacies/home and access to COVID certificates.
- Online [Citizen Area](#) that allows people to access their electronic health records, book appointments with a GP and access their vaccination card (this currently has 2+ million users).
- [MySNS](#) – allows citizens to access and share important personal information regarding their health; access health institutions (Hospitals, Primary Health Care and Pharmacies); evaluate NHS services; link up to the SNS 24 Contact Centre and receive notifications.
- **Electronic Medical Prescriptions** ([PEM-Prescrição Electrónica Médica](#)) are now the standard in Portugal – available to doctors online and via a mobile app. E-prescriptions under the NHS are sent to patients over text message, email or printed at the point-of-care.
- [CEC Mobile](#) - Public health procurement app, allows for the consultation of procedures and relevant information for institutions/ suppliers.

Preparing to Export & Doing Business in Portugal



Preparing to Export & Doing Business

- ✓ **In most cases doing business in Portugal requires local representation in the form of an agent or distributor.** Portuguese companies seek commercial and technological partnerships that are both cost effective and innovative, and can support their activity in the internal market as well as with exports.
- ✓ **Personal relationships are quite important**, requiring an investment of time and personal contact (regular visits to the market are recommended). **Product training** for the agent's workforce is equally essential.
- ✓ In Portugal **it is mandatory that both the distributors and the medicines, healthcare products/devices are registered with INFARMED** (National Authority of Medicines and Health Products) to access the market.
- ✓ **The Portuguese NHS and other Government-funded organisations resort to public procurement processes** to equip public hospitals, clinics and other healthcare and primary care facilities (with very few exceptions). International tender notices may be accessed in English language via [Tenders Electronic Daily](#) (TED).
- ✓ **Terms of Payment** - in some B2B and B2G segments credit is an important feature in the market (many companies work on 90-120 days basis, even longer) – this is something you should discuss with potential partners and agree on in advance.

Sector Events

- **Portugal eHealth Summit** | an annual event organised by the [Portuguese Health Ministry Shared Services](#) (SPMS), whose remit is to “centralise, optimise and rationalise” the procurement of goods and services within the Portuguese NHS.
- The main players within the Life Sciences and Healthcare sectors also tend to take part in major international exhibitions, such as [MEDICA](#), [Arab Health](#) and [CPhI](#) events – a few as exhibitors and the vast majority as visitors.
- **Midlands Engine Life Sciences Trade Mission to Spain & Portugal (Q1 2023)** – The Portugal initiative will focus on **Drug Discovery, Clinical Trials and Pharma**, under an “Access to Innovation in Healthcare” umbrella.

Thank you!

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