

COTI CHOCOLATES GAINS ACCESS TO U.S. MARKET BY ATTAINING FDA LABELLING REVIEW

COTi Chocolate Manufacturers is a Port Elizabeth- based chocolate manufacturer that has produced the sugar-free peanut butter chocolate. The company employs 40 staff and has been in operation for 15 years, staying resilient even during the COVID-19 pandemic by amongst other innovations, seizing the opportunity to move into online sales and into the United States (U.S.) market. COTi developed the Peanut Butter Zero chocolate bar within its wide chocolate product range, to meet the growing global demand for healthier snacks.

PEANUT BUTTER^{MAX}



The FDA regulates the way foods are grown, harvested and processed, ensuring compliance with its standards, across the food and beverage, medical devices, drugs, cosmetics, and electronics industries. The FDA has specific requirements of how packaging should be labeled, before it can be admitted into U.S. territory.

“Operating in the fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) space and in our case chocolate confectionery, to enter a sophisticated market such as the United States was a challenge that required complete conformance with FDA labeling rules and guidelines and funding to attain that. To achieve this, we got expert third party advice from the United States, and laboratory analysis of our products to meet the FDA nutritional requirements. Thanks to the USAID TradeHub, we were able to access support funds and connections to achieve this. We now have the product available for sale in the United States, and the opportunity to sell into the biggest chocolate market in the world” said Chris. The USAID TradeHub covered 60 percent of the exporter’s labeling review costs, done by U.S.-based Registrar Corp. This allowed for the Peanut Butter Zero bar to be listed on Amazon.com, through the facilitation of Albert Scott LLC’s e-commerce management services, a USAID TradeHub partner.

The USAID Southern Africa Trade and Investment Hub (USAID TradeHub) supports Southern African companies by engaging with partners across the region to increase sustainable economic growth, global export competitiveness, trade, and access to the U.S. market.



“As a small business, we have had to be innovative...we developed Peanut Butter Zero, because of the global trend to eat healthier” said Managing Director Chris Parkin, during an interview with Cape Talk Radio. The company developed the product in 2018 and exported the first of this range to a U.S. subsidiary in Nashville, Tennessee on November 16, 2020.

COTi’s ability to now export to the United States is a success for the company and an inspiration to other Southern African entrepreneurs. To export to the United States, COTi was required to secure Food and Drug Administration (FDA)- compliant labeling.

HOW COTI
CHOCOLATES
GAINED ACCESS TO
THE U.S. MARKET



PROCESS SNAPSHOT

Required Food and Drug Administration (FDA) compliant labeling

