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FREE RESOURCE · EDITION 2027

Your GCC expansion guide. What to take into account.

How the market really works, what to check and where it usually goes wrong. For healthcare, MedTech and HealthTech leaders planning the Gulf.

6	18	6	8
areas	questions	common mistakes	pages

- Where do I start?
- Who really decides?
- Do I need a local entity?
- Is this distributor interested or just polite?
- Who owns follow-up once I fly home?

WHERE ARE YOU TODAY? START AT THE AREA THAT MATCHES.

01 Where to play — p. 2
Start here if: We are deciding where to start.

02 Who decides — p. 3
Start here if: We are not sure who really buys.

03 Your message — p. 4
Start here if: We are preparing our message and materials.

04 Registration and set-up — p. 5
Start here if: We are working out registration and set-up.

05 Distributors and partners — p. 6
Start here if: We are meeting distributors and buyers.

06 Presence and follow-up — p. 7
Start here if: We have contacts, but progress is slow.

Free. Practical. Without the hype.

The UAE is the entry point. The GCC is the horizon.

AREA I OF VI

Where to play

01

Six countries, one region. Start with one.

HOW IT REALLY WORKS

The GCC is six markets with different budgets, buying rules and speeds. The UAE is the usual entry point and the GCC is the horizon: you learn in one place, then build from there.

What to take into account

- ✓ One country and one customer segment first: public hospitals, private groups, specialty clinics or home care.
- ✓ One channel first: a distributor, a partner or direct sales.
- ✓ How your product fits each segment, not how big the region looks on paper.
- ✓ What you will leave out for now, and who agrees to it.

Ask yourself

- → **Which one country and which one segment come first?**
- → **What would make you add a second country?**
- → **Does leadership agree to leave the rest out?**

WHERE IT USUALLY GOES WRONG

Trying to cover six countries at once. Effort spreads thin and nothing gets enough follow-up.

The UAE is the entry point. The GCC is the horizon.

AREA II OF VI

Who decides

02

The person who loves your product is rarely the person who buys it.

HOW IT REALLY WORKS

In a hospital, the clinical user, the department head, procurement and leadership each play a different role. A distributor or importer often holds the access, and payers and regulators shape what is possible. Who decides changes with the type of centre.

What to take into account

- ✓ Four roles to map: who uses, who influences, who gatekeeps and who decides.
- ✓ Clinical champions carry weight with their peers and with management.
- ✓ Distributors and importers often hold the access to the buyer.
- ✓ Each profile cares about something different: outcomes, price, margin or compliance.

Ask yourself

- → **For your product, who decides, who influences and who can block?**
- → **Have you spoken with all three types of stakeholder, not only distributors?**
- → **What does each one need to see before saying yes?**

WHERE IT USUALLY GOES WRONG

Talking to one friendly contact and assuming the whole organisation agrees.

Market size tells you the opportunity exists. Buyers tell you whether it is yours.

AREA III OF VI

Your message

03

A good pitch at home is not yet a good pitch in the Gulf.

HOW IT REALLY WORKS

Local buyers have not seen your home-market results and do not know your reference customers. Each stakeholder needs a different reason to care, so one brochure for everyone rarely works.

What to take into account

- ✓ One message per stakeholder: clinician, buyer and distributor.
- ✓ Evidence that matters to local clinicians, not only your home-market data.
- ✓ Materials rewritten for local buyers, not just translated.
- ✓ A price structure that leaves room for a distributor's margin.

Ask yourself

- → **What is the single reason each stakeholder should care?**
- → **Which evidence do you show first?**
- → **Which home-market materials must be rewritten?**

WHERE IT USUALLY GOES WRONG

The home-market pitch is reused unchanged.

A home-market pitch, translated, is still a home-market pitch.

AREA IV OF VI

Registration and set-up

04

Know the path before you make a promise.

HOW IT REALLY WORKS

Each market has an authority that registers products and importers. Some companies sell through a partner who holds the registration. Others set up a local entity with the licences it needs. Both take time, and approvals are never guaranteed.

What to take into account

- ✓ Which authority registers your product in your first market, and what it requires.
- ✓ Technical documentation that is complete and up to date.
- ✓ A partner holding the registration, or your own local entity.
- ✓ If you need an entity: the right licence and location, free zone or mainland.
- ✓ Licensing and event costs are paid by the company.

Ask yourself

- → **Do you know the registration path and its timeline?**
- → **Who holds the registration, you or a partner?**
- → **What will you not promise a buyer until the path is confirmed?**

WHERE IT USUALLY GOES WRONG

Commercial conversations start before the registration path and timeline are known.

Confirm the path with the competent authority and a qualified regulatory specialist. Regulatory approvals are never guaranteed.

Registration comes before the commercial promise.

AREA V OF VI

Distributors and partners

05

Polite is the default answer. Real interest has a date.

HOW IT REALLY WORKS

A distributor can open the right doors, but warm meetings are not the same as intent. Interest shows in what they ask and what they propose, not in how pleasant the conversation felt.

What to take into account

- ✓ What a distributor needs: margin, exclusivity terms, support and a pipeline worth their time.
- ✓ Real interest: they ask about registration and price structure, introduce a second decision-maker and propose a next step with a date.
- ✓ Polite interest: "send me the brochure", "let's stay in touch", one single contact and no date.
- ✓ Who opens each door: your network, an event or a local partner.

Ask yourself

- → **Which organisations get a first conversation, and why them?**
- → **What do you offer a distributor beyond price?**
- → **How will you tell real interest from politeness?**

WHERE IT USUALLY GOES WRONG

Polite interest is mistaken for real intent.

Polite interest sends you a brochure request. Real interest sends you a date.

AREA VI OF VI

06

Presence and follow-up

Contacts are not relationships until someone follows up.

HOW IT REALLY WORKS

Trips and trade shows open conversations. Consistent follow-up between visits is what moves them forward. Four ways to be present, honestly compared: the right one depends on your product, your margin and your resources.

What to take into account

- ✓ Occasional visits and remote follow-up. Low commitment, rarely turns into progress alone.
- ✓ One distributor. Medium commitment, you depend on one party's priorities.
- ✓ Own regional team and entity. High commitment, you carry the cost before traction.
- ✓ Local team under senior direction. Medium commitment, needs a clear scope: you keep pricing and final decisions.

Ask yourself

- → **Who owns follow-up in the Gulf every single week?**
- → **What is the rule after every meeting, and who checks it?**
- → **At what point would your own regional team make sense?**

WHERE IT USUALLY GOES WRONG

Fly in, fly out, silence. Follow-ups go quiet once the plane takes off.

Fly in. Meet people. Fly out. In the Gulf, presence is what compounds.

AREAS I TO VI

Is it on your radar?

One question per area. Tick where you are. Start with the ones that are not clear yet.

AREA	YOUR FIRST QUESTION	CLEAR	PARTLY	NOT YET
01 Where to play	Which one country and which one segment come first?	☐	☐	☐
02 Who decides	For your product, who decides, who influences and who can block?	☐	☐	☐
03 Your message	What is the single reason each stakeholder should care?	☐	☐	☐
04 Registration	Do you know the registration path and its timeline?	☐	☐	☐
05 Distributors	Which organisations get a first conversation, and why them?	☐	☐	☐
06 Follow-up	Who owns follow-up in the Gulf every single week?	☐	☐	☐

Directional guide. Every product, market and company starts from a different point.

If the Gulf is on your 2027 plan, tell me where your conversations stall.

BOOK 30 MINUTES

I'm based in Dubai and my team is on the ground.

Directional information, as of November 2026. Regulations change: confirm with the relevant authority. Nothing here guarantees sales, contracts or regulatory approvals.