











# L@b Brief | January 2025

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## **COMMENT**

### **Horizon Europe yields dividends | Now get the funding right**



Hello Everyone

**NORMALLY, THE** bulletin detailing what Government ministers have been up to is one of the duller items in my inbox. However, this month it brought some good news: three visits to universities have taken place since the start of the year. The Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology visited University College London. Minister Feryal Clark toured Cambridge, and there was also a visit to the UK Atomic Energy Authority.

Could this be a sign that Government has recognised the value of our research community?

This increased interaction with universities gives hope that ministers will adopt a more comprehensive approach to supporting our world-class research sector because during these visits, ministers would have certainly heard about the damaging impact uncertainty over university funding is having on recruitment and the quality of research produced. Some money is starting to move. In December, the Medical Research Council awarded £50 million to each of the first two Centres of Research Excellence and funding from Innovate UK has also been on the rise. Meanwhile, positive developments regarding Horizon Europe certainly offer a path forward.

1 January marked one year since the UK formally joined Horizon Europe, the EU's flagship research funding programme, along with its Earth observation programme, Copernicus. Horizon Europe has a €95.5 billion (£81 billion) budget for 2021-2027.

Wendy Brown, University of Sussex, who chairs a group of UK university chemistry department leaders, has praised the deeper international collaborations made possible by Horizon membership. "It's an opportunity for formal partnerships with our European colleagues. Having EU funding is prestigious and reflects well within the community. UK researchers leading these projects is very important," she says.

In July 2024, the UK was the top beneficiary of the most recent round of European Research Council (ERC) grants, securing 15% of the total awarded. UK researchers also excelled in securing grants from the ERC pot of €1.5 million to help early-career researchers launch their projects. In September, data showed that the UK had submitted the highest number of proposals for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral fellowships in 2024.

While gaining access to Horizon Europe has been a success, Wendy Brown highlights issues stemming from Brexit. One problem is that PhD students joining Horizon-funded projects will pay domestic tuition fees at European institutions, but face much higher international fees if they choose to carry out their research in the UK.

"The immigration issues caused by Brexit are still a challenge, especially for PhD students, who are now treated as overseas students here," she explains. "Before we left the EU, they were treated the same as UK PhD students, which made things easier."

Still much more to do I fear!

*Jacqueline*

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## UK News

# Be inspired GAMBICA's Lab Industry Conference

IN THE rush of day-to-day tasks, it's easy to get caught up in the urgent. But what about the important? The GAMBICA conference offers you the chance to step away from the office, recharge, and focus on your strategy for success in 2025.

This isn't just another event – it's a powerful opportunity to gain insights that will shape your future. You'll hear from expert speakers offering up-to-date economic, political, and sales forecasts, giving you a clear view of what's ahead. Top academics will inspire you with new perspectives, helping you spot fresh opportunities for products and markets. And you'll hear directly from key customers, sharing ideas with peers across the industry who face many of the same challenges, even if their products differ from yours.

Beyond the technical updates, this year we're focusing on your personal growth. With a dedicated session on sales across Europe, you'll learn how to fine-tune your communication style to different audiences. Two expert trainers in laboratory sales will show you how to avoid business blunders and connect with your clients on a deeper level.

We know your time is precious, which is why this year's conference on 11 March is designed to help you streamline and optimise your approach – standardising what you can, and adapting where you must.

If you're serious about growth in 2025, this is a day you can't afford to miss.

So, if you're ready to transform your approach, energise your strategy, and position yourself for success, join us at the Barnsdale Hotel, Rutland Water. This is your moment to be part of a bright future. **Book your place [here](#) and start your journey towards 2025.**

### SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

 <b>Prof Coppens</b> UCL	 <b>Anand Menon</b> UK in a changing Europe	 <b>Lee Hopley</b> UK Finance	 <b>Joshua Chapman</b> SLS
 <b>Dr Han Wu</b> UCL	 <b>Chris Neasham</b> Sterling Pharma Solutions	 <b>Lisa Blackburn</b> NWUPC	 <b>Tony Withers</b> Grant
 <b>Stephen Pygott</b> Eppendorf	 <b>Jayne Green</b> George James Ltd	 <b>Christian Walter</b> George James Ltd & Toolpoint	 <b>Steve Brambley</b> GAMBICA

We have a few places still available to join the conference dinner the night before and to stay over at our cosy venue, the Barnsdale. If you would like to meet senior GAMBICA members socially before the conference, you should book your place immediately! Look forward to seeing you there!

## FULL CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Tuesday 11th March 2025 | Venue: The Barnsdale Hall Hotel, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 8AH

<b>Lab customers: their requirements - our future</b>	
08.30 / 09.00	Conference registration and refreshments
<b>SESSION ONE: FORECASTS FOR THE COMING YEAR</b>	
09.00	<b>Welcome:</b> Jenny O’Connell, Chair, GAMBICA Lab Tech Board
09.05	<b>Political forecast: The UK in Europe under the new government:</b> Anand Menon
09.30	<b>Economic forecast:</b> Lee Hopley, Director, Economic insight and research, UK Finance
09.50	<b>The future of lab sales:</b> Joshua Chapman, SLS
10.10	<b>Update for GAMBICA Members:</b> Steve Brambley, GAMBICA
10.25	Refreshments
<b>SESSION TWO: HOW THE LAB IS CHANGING</b>	
11.00	<b>Nature-inspired engineering – the way of the future:</b> Prof Marc-Olivier Coppens, UCL
11.30	<b>Innovation in bio-based systems; challenges, future and funding</b> Jenny Readman UK-Centre for Process Innovation
11.50	<b>Formulating biology; challenges for lab suppliers in the growth of biochemistry:</b> David Calvert, iFormulate
12.10	<b>How continuous training drives instrument performance and maximizes ROI for suppliers - <i>Unlocking value by partnering with lab technicians and researchers through training:</i></b> Dr Han Wu, UCL
12.30	Q and A panel session
13.00	Lunch
<b>SESSION THREE: WHAT CUSTOMERS WANT</b>	
14.15	<b>What pharmaceutical clients want from their suppliers –</b> Chris Neasham, Associate Director – Sterling Pharma Solutions
14.40	<b>How university purchasing is changing, sustainability requirements and the pipeline of tenders:</b> Lisa Blackburn NWUPC
15.05	<b>Carbon metrics for chillers and biotech products - how we are going about it:</b> Tony Withers, Grant and Stephen Pygott, Eppendorf
15.25	Refreshments
<b>SESSION FOUR: INCREASING SALES</b>	
15.45 – 16.15	<b>Sales – what’s working right now – in the UK and in Europe</b> Jayne Green and Christian Walter from George James Ltd
16.15 - 16.20	Results of business sentiment survey and close

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## **NWUPC commits to only applying requirement for PI Insurance when absolutely necessary**

GAMBICA MEMBERS have regularly briefed Universities' Purchasing Teams that Professional Indemnity (PI) insurance is unnecessary for purchasing goods unless professional guidance is provided. Despite this, PI insurance requirements persist in tenders for university laboratories, even when no advice is sought or offered.

In December, a group of GAMBICA members again highlighted to North Western Universities Purchasing Consortium (NWUPC) that requiring PI insurance is common practice for universities, even where purchases are standard boxed products or consumables. One member in particular noted the exorbitant cost of such cover - £1 million coverage could cost her company £40,000.

David Yates, NWUPC's sustainable relationships manager, investigated the issue and has now formally responded that at NWUPC, PI insurance will only be requested when agreements involve providing advice that customers rely on, particularly in product design, possibly sharing intellectual property. "In lab contexts, PI is only included in agreements involving design services or professional advice on equipment. For suppliers offering off-the-shelf products, PI insurance is not necessary."

Yates advised suppliers to clarify PI relevance if necessary, during the tender clarification period, emphasising that post-deadline amendments are challenging unless the authority agrees beforehand on the lack of necessity, respecting their justification for PI requests.

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## **GAMBICA lobbies government on export support**

GAMBICA HAS responded to the Government's trade strategy consultation, emphasising critical areas where immediate action is needed to support UK exporters. Our focus is on securing cash support to enable companies to explore new markets effectively, and on eliminating administrative hurdles such as export license delays and post-Brexit trade challenges.

To drive export growth, we emphasised the urgent need to:

- Address persistent Brexit-related challenges;
- Maintain regulatory alignment;
- Resolve delays in issuing export licenses; and
- Provide substantial financial backing for exporters.

GAMBICA has proposed a funding request of £10-20 million to revive the successful Tradeshaw Access Programme. With a proven return on investment of £40 for every pound spent, this initiative has garnered support from UK Export Partners, an exporters' lobby group founded by Tim Collins of GAMBICA.

Recognising the strategic importance of exports to the UK economy, GAMBICA proposed the establishment of an independent body akin to the Office for Budget Responsibility, dedicated to overseeing and optimising export strategies for long-term growth.

GAMBICA also believes improvements are necessary to the Department for Business and Trade's role in providing non-financial support. Grant administration for overseas exhibitions has often been inadequate, disadvantaging new exhibitors and those needing

timely support decisions. We advocate for targeted financial assistance programs managed by trade associations, ensuring sector-specific expertise and efficient allocation of resources.

Additionally, urgent action is needed to streamline the issuing of export licenses, preventing significant unnecessary losses of export opportunities.

Looking ahead, our priorities include reviewing the Trade and Cooperation Agreement to enhance trade facilitation with the EU, ensuring regulatory alignment, and fostering flexible rules of origin to bolster the attractiveness of UK exports globally.

We invite Members to engage with us on shaping the Government's export strategy. GAMBICA and UK Export Partners are committed to advocating these critical issues throughout 2025.

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## **Tax confessions invited**

HM REVENUE and Customs (HMRC) has introduced a new specialist Research and Development (R&D) disclosure facility for businesses to correct their tax filings promptly. This service is aimed at companies that have mistakenly claimed excessive R&D tax relief, beyond the standard correction period of 12 months from the filing deadline.

The facility applies specifically to cases involving careless errors or mistakes despite taking reasonable care, excluding deliberate overclaims or instances where losses have been overstated without additional corporate tax due. Companies in such situations are advised to contact HMRC directly to discuss their circumstances.

To use the facility, companies must calculate any additional tax or credits owed, including interest and penalties, and prepare revised corporation tax computations for submission alongside their disclosure. Upon submission, HMRC commits to responding within 15 days with a payment reference number for settling any liabilities, and within 30 days to the disclosure itself, either accepting the offer, requesting more information, or rejecting it.

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## **HSE inspection of lab safety cabinets to be stepped up**

THE HEALTH and Safety Executive says there is increasing evidence to suggest that some sectors using microbiological safety cabinets (MBSCs) and other laboratory-based LEV systems do not fully understand their TExT duties under Regulation 9(2) of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) (as amended).

While testing to the relevant standard (for example, BS EN 12469: 2000) is encouraged, this does not fulfil all the requirements of Regulation 9(2) of COSHH, which has additional information and testing requirements.

You can find information about what a suitable record should contain in paragraph 186 of the associated COSHH Approved Code of Practice.

HSE's publication Controlling airborne contaminants at work: a guide to LEV contains further advice on how to conduct TExT of LEV systems.

To ensure workers are protected in the workplace, HSE will be tightening its enforcement expectations when visiting sites using LEV in laboratory activities over the next few months.

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## New grants available for science & technology, biotech and biological sciences

A £9 million fund is available to support proof of concept for research commercialisation in biotech, medical, and scientific fields, facilitating spinouts, social ventures, licensing, or other pathways. Applicants must be based at UK research organisations but do not need pre-existing UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funding.

Projects can receive up to £250,000 for 12 months (minimum £100,000 for 6 months), with UKRI funding 80% of full economic costs (FEC). The deadline to express intention to submit is March 3, 2025, 4:00pm (UK time). The full funding opportunity opens on March 12, 2025.

Don't forget, you may be able to access potential partners via the GAMBICA universities group.

For more information, click [here](#).

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## RESEARCH Update

### PFAS clean up across Europe to cost £84 billion a year



THE COST of cleaning up PFAS pollution could reach more than £1.6tn across the UK and Europe over a 20-year period, an annual bill of £84bn, according to the *Forever Lobbying Project*, a group of 46 journalists and 18 experts from 16 countries.

PFAS have been linked to infertility, cancers, immune and hormone disruption, and other illnesses and have been detected in drinking water and surface waters

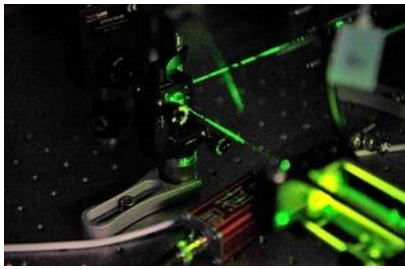
across the UK. Hotspots of contamination include landfills, airports, military sites and sewage outfalls and sites where large amounts of firefighting foams have been used. The Drinking Water Inspectorate has found 199 examples where untreated drinking water exceeded maximum guidance levels, and a further 255,610 samples at levels where measures should be taken to reduce PFAS.

Current remediation of PFAS-contaminated samples is predominantly through high temperature incineration, which is very expensive. The Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) is calling for public protections from toxic PFAS to be enshrined in the recent water special measures bill, which is now at the committee stage.

The Environment Agency has identified more than 10,000 'high-risk sites' contaminated with PFAS which include:

- Angus firefighting foam plant and training centre, North Yorkshire
- AGC Chemicals manufacturing plant site, Lancashire
- Former RAF base, Duxford, Cambridgeshire
- Fire Service College, Cotswolds
- RAF bases nationwide
- Heathrow airport, Middlesex
- Sewage treatment plants, nationwide
- Stowey quarry landfill, Somerset.

## Top secret lab develops atomic clock using quantum technology



A CUTTING-EDGE atomic clock developed at The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), based at Porton Down is set to enhance intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities by reducing reliance on GPS. Quantum clocks not only improve timekeeping precision but also hold promise for enhancing GPS accuracy, benefiting satellite communication and aircraft navigation.

Future advancements aim to shrink the technology for mass production, enabling its deployment in military vehicles and aircraft.

The trial involved collaboration with partners including Infleqtion, Aquark Technologies, HCD Research, and Imperial College London, alongside DSTL's own quantum lab.

With over £28 million invested by MOD through DSTL, the UK aims to lead in quantum R&D, prioritising defence and security needs.

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## LABORATORY Construction Update

### Sheffield University to get new laboratory



A NEW University of Sheffield teaching laboratory building has been approved by planners.

A five-storey teaching laboratory building will provide 7,862 sqm of floorspace and will offer two 300-person laboratories, known as superlabs, as well as a fume cupboard lab, an anatomy lab, a tissue-culture lab, teaching and study spaces, a reception, an external loading dock, a 'pocket park', and parking.

### Azelis upgrades technical capabilities at UK labs

AZELIS, A leading service provider in the specialty chemicals and food ingredients industry has announced the reopening of four application and formulation laboratories in the UK, dedicated to the personal care and other sectors.

Charles Hawley, MD of Azelis UK and Ireland has announced that the upgrade of Azelis' labs will include equipment for application simulation, testing and processing equipment for formulation and development of the food and nutraceutical markets as well as cycle testing and improved prototyping capabilities.

### Wales to get new 'Transition from Carbon' research facility

CONSTRUCTION HAS begun on a new £20m industrial research facility in Port Talbot, Neath. The project, called the South Wales Industrial Transition from Carbon Hub (SWITCH), is a partnership between Neath Port Talbot Council and Swansea University.

The facility, designed to aid in decarbonising the metal and steel industry, will include workshops, welding zones, mechanical testing areas, laboratories, offices, and breakout spaces. SWITCH aims to establish a collaborative network among academia, industry, and government to accelerate the region's transition to net zero.



## Restructure of UK National Nuclear Laboratory planned



THE UK's Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) has undertaken a strategic review to identify how the National Nuclear Laboratory (NNL) can take forward

programmes of national significance given the country's renewed nuclear ambition.

Now to be known as the United Kingdom National Nuclear Laboratory (UKNNL) the laboratory will be the lead civil fission laboratory with a decade-long programme designed to underpin the regeneration of the UK's nuclear sector.

UKNNL will carry out research on the safe operation of nuclear plants domestically and internationally, deliver practical nuclear research and enable decommissioning programmes as well as provide expertise and facilities to be a platform for the private sector to accelerate the deployment of technology to market.

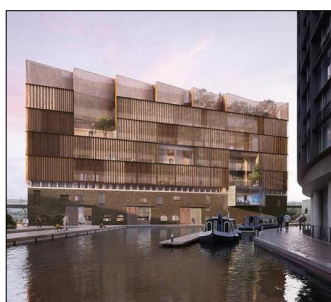
## \$52m fusion joint venture funded by US and UK

A \$52 million upgrade to the ST40 fusion facility in Oxfordshire will move global fusion research forward through a collaboration led by British company Tokamak Energy and the U.S. Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). The initiative, part of the US-UK LEAPS partnership, is funded jointly by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the UK Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), and Tokamak Energy.

The ST40 facility houses one of the world's most advanced tokamak machines, which achieved plasma temperatures over six times hotter than the sun in 2022. The upgrade will focus on developing advanced technologies, such as lithium coatings pioneered by DOE's Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory, aimed at enhancing plasma confinement. ORNL will contribute expertise in pellet fueling systems to support efficient plasma generation.

Warrick Matthews, CEO of Tokamak Energy, commented, "Our high-field spherical tokamak ST40 has delivered impressive results in recent years. We are excited to embark on ST40's new mission through this robust public-private partnership, which will drive progress in fusion science and technology for spherical tokamaks and the wider industry, with the shared goal of achieving fusion power."

## Paddington laboratory scheme to provide space for research into antimicrobial resistance



A NEW medical research building is planned for St Mary's Hospital in Paddington.

The seven-storey scheme is part of the wider Fleming Initiative, established jointly by Imperial College Healthcare and Imperial College London to find solutions to antimicrobial resistance at a global scale.

The next phase of the project will involve detailed design development, public consultations and the submission of a planning application to Westminster Council.

The building, which is envisaged as a key part of the Paddington life sciences cluster, will be integrated into a planned future redevelopment of the wider St Mary's Hospital campus, a project which is part of the government's New Hospital Programme pipeline.

The building is scheduled to open in 2028 to mark the 100th anniversary of Fleming's discovery of penicillin at the hospital.

## **Scotland to house the UK's Oligonucleotide Manufacturing Innovation Centre**

CONSTRUCTION HAS begun on the Centre for Process Innovation's £20m Oligonucleotide Manufacturing Innovation Centre of Excellence in Glasgow and is expected to be completed this year. Oligonucleotides, short DNA or RNA strands, target disease drivers, potentially treating conditions from cancers to Alzheimer's. This centre will position the UK at the forefront of their development and manufacture, with a focus on sustainable processes and clinical support.

Supported by the UK and Scottish Governments via funding from the Office for Life Sciences and Scottish Enterprise, the centre aims to boost economic growth and collaboration. It will create high-skilled jobs and foster an innovative medicines manufacturing hub in Scotland, adjacent to CPI's Medicines Manufacturing Innovation Centre at the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District Scotland (AMIDS).

To develop the workforce, the Industry Skills Accelerator, a partnership among CPI, Cogent Skills, and the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, will deliver training. This initiative, in collaboration with RESILIENCE, the UK Medicines Manufacturing Skills Centre of Excellence, aims to address skills gaps and maintain UK leadership in oligonucleotide therapeutics.

Frank Millar, CEO of CPI, emphasised, "This centre showcases the UK's leadership in advancing manufacturing and healthcare innovation. By investing in future manufacturing technologies, we enhance UK competitiveness globally, attract investment, and create high-skilled jobs locally."

## **UK health agency, helps Caribbean Public Health Agency to probe antibiotics resistance**



THE CARIBBEAN Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) have joined forces to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Led by Dr. Lisa Indar, acting interim executive director at CARPHA, the CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory in Port of Spain, is undergoing upgrades to enhance its surveillance capabilities. The Fleming Fund UKHSA/ CARPHA project, launched this

month, aims to revamp Carpha's AMR program and integrate drug-resistant testing across its labs in Trinidad, Jamaica, and St Lucia.

Dr. Indar emphasised the importance of global health cooperation and partnerships, highlighting collaborations with UKHSA and PAHO (Pan American Health Organization). The £2.25 million Fleming Fund, administered by UKHSA, supports this initiative to strengthen AMR surveillance in the Caribbean. The project targets full lab integration and data collection by the end of the year, with complete lab outfitting expected within two years.

## Liberia to get new national clinical diagnostic and treatment lab

PRESIDENT JOSEPH Nyuma Boakai, Sr has broken ground for the construction of a state-of-the-art National Clinical Diagnostic and Treatment Laboratory near the EBK Military Barracks in Margibi County, Liberia.

The initiative, a collaboration between the Liberian Government and the People's Republic of China, represents a significant milestone in Liberia's healthcare development. Sponsored by the Chinese Government and implemented by China Aid Liberia, this facility aims to strengthen the nation's diagnostic and treatment capabilities, addressing long-standing gaps in the healthcare sector. Prospects for the UK lab industry look limited.

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## GAMBICA Events

**BOARD GAP ANALYSIS IN PREPARATION FOR ACQUISITION – FINDING YOUR PLACE | ONLINE | 11 FEBRUARY 2025 | 10.30 - 11.30**

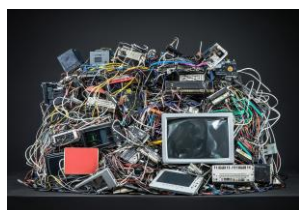


WITH INCREASING acquisition activity in the laboratory industry, many more people are thinking about how to prepare themselves and their company for external scrutiny. Demonstrating that you have the skills to take your company to the next level requires careful analysis of your current skills set and what is required to

take the company further. From a company point of view, those preparing to seek investment need to analyse their c-suite and non-execs to make sure that they have the range of experience and aptitudes required. In this webinar Andrew Moore of tech sector executive recruitment firm Bailey Fisher will explain how directors should undertake the necessary skills gap analysis, and how individual staff members can review their own progress and identify the means to progress their careers as their company develops.

To register for your place, click [here](#).

**AFTER SALES GROUP MEETING – THE WEEE REGS + DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR SERVICE TEAMS | ONLINE | 18 FEBRUARY 2025 | 10.30 - 12.00**



OUR FIRST After Sales Group meeting of 2025 will be an exchange of information on how we are all dealing with components we take out of equipment during servicing and maintenance. Robbie Caskey and Jim Armitage of B2B Compliance will explain the requirements the WEEE Regulations place on service managers and will offer advice on how to dispose of waste components efficiently.

Then we will have Sharon Palmer, on digital transformation in the service team, who will share examples of how digital technology is changing the supplier-customer interface, moving away from web-based (sometimes phone) and multi-technology approaches to one that users, customers, engineers, technical support and managers can access from anywhere.

Specific before and after examples will focus on:

- Applications support – improving the experience.
- Speeding first time fix rates.
- Accessing training and certification.
- More efficient upgrading and upselling.

Digital change is happening across all industries because it provides significant business value. Sharon will summarise with an overview of what is happening in ours. Sharon Palmer is an experienced Analytical Instruments leader having worked for over 20 years for PerkinElmer in product management, strategy and the technology\marketing interface. Most recently she has been helping lab instrument suppliers define and accelerate new digital connectivity to grow after sales revenues and enhance the customers' post-sales experiences.

To register for the event please click [here](#).

### **NEW PRODUCTS? – SECURING THE VALUE OF YOUR IP | ONLINE | 25 FEBRUARY 2025 | 10.30 - 12.00**



WITH THE tightening of markets over the last year, many companies are looking to produce new products to address new niches of the market. New products are the life blood of any lab company; this webinar will help you to make sure you protect them appropriately, while opening the door to additional funding. Gavin Cullen and Paul Chapman from leading patent lawyers, Marks and Clerk, will take you through the process of applying for a patent. They will advise on the jurisdictions you should think about covering and will explain the costs you should expect to pay.

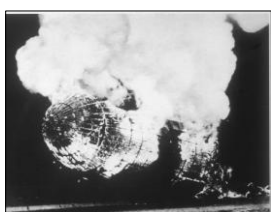
With so much income to be gained from filing patents - this webinar will help you make sure you don't miss out. To register to attend, please click [here](#).

### **PATENT BOX – ARE YOU GETTING THE TAX BREAKS YOU DESERVE? | ONLINE | 18 MARCH 2025 | 10.30 - 12.00**



THE PATENT Box regime offers a significant tax reduction for UK businesses investing in R&D and protecting the IP generated, yet remains a lesser-known and underutilised tax incentive. In this webinar, ForrestBrown's Patent Box expert will explore everything from eligibility to example calculations, taking on popular misconceptions about the relief along the way. Our speaker will be Angela Banerjee, associate director at ForrestBrown who has more than a decade of experience with Big Four and specialist R&D firms, expertise in UK Patent Box, and in working with businesses to commercialise IP. To register to attend, please click [here](#).

### **PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE FOR LAB COMPANIES | ONLINE | 25 MARCH 2025 | 10.30 - 11.30**



ALTHOUGH NORTH Western Universities Purchasing Consortium have recently acknowledged that PI insurance should only be requested where the relevant agreement/contract would include the provision of advice upon which the customer is relying, other purchasing consortia continue to routinely request such cover for all those bidding to be included on frameworks - whether or not they are providing advice. Members have struggled to find reasonably priced PI cover, or indeed in some cases, to find PI cover at all.

In this webinar, Kate Rhodes from broker, Alan Boswell Group will set out some innovative alternatives that they can offer for companies in this position. The webinar will last an hour in total and there will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions.

Kate heads up the Technology & Life Science division for Alan Boswell Group and has over 20 years' experience in this sector. She works with a range of companies from pre-revenue/start up's through to established global organisations. Kate and her team look at pragmatic and bespoke solutions for their clients needs.

To register to attend, please click [here](#).

**SELLING THROUGH DISTRIBUTORS – SHARED COST TRAINING | GAMBICA OFFICES, LONDON  
| 28<sup>TH</sup> AND 29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025 | 09.00 - 17.00**



WE ARE delighted to be able to offer GAMBICA members specialist training in selling through and managing channel partners. This training has been specifically developed for the lab industry by trainers with huge experience in our industry, Sharon Eaton of BioChannel Partners and Steve Vaughan of George James. This training normally costs £3600 per person, but it is available through GAMBICA as shared cost training which could cost

as little as £750pp if 12 people register.

**THE TRAINING CONTENT IS AS FOLLOWS:**

<p><b>DAY 1</b></p> <p><b>Module 1: Channel partner skill development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role model channel partner manager</li> <li>• Developing personal goals</li> <li>• Prioritising a focused workload</li> <li>• Managing v Leading skills</li> <li>• Communication &amp; listening skills</li> </ul> <p><b>Module 2: Channel partner management planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business plan development</li> <li>• Current situation audit &amp; gap analysis</li> <li>• Defining best partner profile for optimal coverage</li> <li>• Channel partner recruitment process</li> <li>• Planning and managing growth</li> </ul>	<p><b>DAY 2</b></p> <p><b>Module 3: Managing Channel Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing channel partner performance</li> <li>• Managing targets and sales funnels</li> <li>• Business reviews with your channel partners</li> <li>• Managing channel conflicts</li> <li>• Managing under-performance, recovery and termination</li> </ul> <p><b>Module 4: Influencing channel partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessing capability and willingness</li> <li>• Managing power imbalances</li> <li>• Channel partner motivation</li> <li>• Constructive feedback</li> <li>• Developing trusting relationships</li> </ul>
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This training is being offered by GAMBICA on a shared-cost basis, the more people who attend, the lower the per person price will be. Please register your interest [here](#) and Sarah Wicks (sarah.wicks@gambica.org.uk) will inform you about the cost per person and invoice you nearer the date.

We can accommodate between 6 and 12 people and the cost will be between £1500 plus VAT per person (if six people attend) and £750 per person (if 12 book).



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## INDUSTRY Events

### UK SCIENCE PARK ASSOCIATION | EXETER SCIENCE PARK | 13-14 MARCH 2025

THE UKSPA conference will discuss challenges and opportunities within the UK's Science and Innovation sector, including: Funding Beyond the Golden Triangle, Effective and Sustainable Incubation Ecosystems, The Journey to Net Zero Carbon Science, Sustainable Facilities and Infrastructure, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion- Inclusive Workspaces, The Procurement Challenge in Volatile Markets plus much more. Tours of Exeter Science Park will also be available. Sponsorship and exhibition opportunities are available from [Adrian Sell](#).

### CIM2025 INTERNATIONAL METROLOGY CONGRESS | LYON | 11-14 MARCH 2025

CO-LOCATED WITH France's largest industrial trade show this event aims to be a hub where science, industry and metrology players come together. For more information, click [here](#).

### LABORAMA | BRUSSELS EXPO | 20-21 MARCH 2025

TWO DAY conference plus exhibition now in its 25<sup>th</sup> year. For more information, click [here](#).

### FORUMLABO | PORTE DE VERSAILLES, PARIS | 25-27 MARCH 2025

A SHOWCASE for the French laboratory supplier market, enables academic and industrial buyers to meet their suppliers. For more information click [here](#).

### ANALYTICA VIETNAM | SAIGON EXHIBITION & CONVENTION CENTRE, HO CHI MINH CITY | 2-4 APRIL 2025

VIETNAM'S LARGEST international trade fair for the lab tech, biotech and analysis markets. For more information, click [here](#).

### PITTCON | BOSTON, USA | 1-5 MAY 2025

PITTCON WILL run at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center as usual in May. Click [here](#) for more details.

### LONDON LAB LIVE | EXCEL LONDON | 14-15 MAY 2025

YOU ARE invited to join industry leaders and innovators at London Lab Live 2025, where professionals from pharma, biotech, food & beverage, academia, and more unite to tackle the challenges shaping tomorrow's labs. Explore cutting-edge technologies on the exhibition floor, including the latest hardware and software from top suppliers and groundbreaking innovations in the start-up zone. With 8 themes across the conference program and countless networking opportunities, this event is your chance to connect, learn, and innovate. You can register now and attend for FREE by clicking [this link](#)

### SLAS EUROPE CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION | HAMBURG | 20-22 MAY 2025

SLAS IS the society for lab automation and screening and its exhibitions concentrate on lab automation. For more information about the German exhibition, click [here](#).



### **CHEM UK | NEC BIRMINGHAM | 21-22 MAY 2025**

REGIONAL UK exhibition for the chemical industry, includes chemlab. For more information click [here](#).

### **FUTURE LABS LIVE | BASEL, SWITZERLAND | 28-29 MAY 2025**



THE SAME UK company, Terrapin is behind both London Lab Live and the original event which was developed to serve the pharma industry in Switzerland. You are also invited to experience what the organisers describe as Europe's most dynamic and inspiring event for lab innovation, bringing together professionals from pharma, biotech and academia, this free event features cutting-edge technologies and

breakthrough ideas in the start-up zone. With nine conference themes, you'll leave inspired, connected, and ready to innovate. You can register for a free pass to this event by clicking [here](#).

### **SOLUTIONS IN SCIENCE | BRIGHTON | 8-10 JULY 2025**

FEEDBACK FROM visitors to the last SinS conference in June 2023 was positive and the next event has now been scheduled to take place in Brighton. The aim of SinS is to showcase complementary and diverse ranges of analytical instruments, technologies, applications and present solutions to scientists from a range of industries and academic disciplines. To book your exhibition stand contact Chris Jarvis [chris@intlabbmate.com](mailto:chris@intlabbmate.com) 01727 855574.

### **ANALYTICA LAB INDIA | HYDERABAD | 18-20 SEPTEMBER 2025**

ONE OF two lab trade fairs based in India, the Analytica show in Hyderabad is German run and designed to cater for both local and international markets. For more information click [here](#).

### **JASIS | JAPAN | 3-5 SEPTEMBER 2025**

JASIS IS a large, well-attended exhibition run by the Japanese lab trade associations. It is a hybrid show with an effective online presence. For more information click [here](#).

### **ANALYTICA USA | CLEVELAND, OHIO | 10-12 SEPTEMBER 2025**

SET UP to capitalise on the slow decline of Pittcon, this exhibition may suffer from a less than glamorous location – but it should be relatively cheap because of that. Click [here](#) for more information.

### **ILMAC | BASEL, SWITZERLAND | 16-18 SEPTEMBER 2025**

THE INTERNATIONAL Laboratory, Measurement, and Automation Technology in Chemistry event has been held since 1959. For more information click [here](#).

### **FARMAFORUM | MADRID TRADE FAIR | 17-18 SEPTEMBER 2025**

WHAT LOOKS like a fairly small Forum for the pharmaceutical, biopharmaceutical and laboratory technology industry. For more information click [here](#).

## ARABLAB | DUBAI | 23-25 SEPTEMBER 2025

GAMBICA WILL be offering a pavilion at Arablab in 2025 so you can attend with minimal effort. For more information email Kirsty on [Kirsty.roberts@gambica.org.uk](mailto:Kirsty.roberts@gambica.org.uk)

## LABNL | JAARBEURS, UTRECHT, NL | 23-25 SEPTEMBER 2025

PROFESSIONALLY RUN by the Federatie Van Technologiebranches this event covers industrial electronics, automation and lab tech. For more information click [here](#).

## POLLUTEC | LYON, FRANCE | 7-10 OCTOBER 2025

FOCUSSED ON environmental and waste management, Pollutec is expected to attract 46,000 professionals over four days. For more information click [here](#).

## FUTURE LABS LIVE | PHILADELPHIA, USA | 15-16 OCTOBER 2025

RUN ON the same lines as their European shows, Terrapin also offer this event in the US. For more information click [here](#).

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## UPCOMING Tenders

### Tender alert service returns

We are really pleased to be able to tell you that the 'TOLLS' tender alert emails have recommenced. If you would like a sample, just drop Sonia a line on [sonia.dougall@gambica.org.uk](mailto:sonia.dougall@gambica.org.uk)

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## EXPORT News

### Early action needed to prepare for tariffs

UK BUSINESSES are advised to take proactive steps now, to mitigate potential impacts from anticipated US tariff increases. President Trump is expected to implement tariff hikes swiftly, primarily targeting China and the EU, though the UK may also feel effects indirectly through disrupted supply chains.

There are two main types of tariffs Trump may impose: high tariffs aimed at pressuring targeted nations into action, which can be volatile and swiftly removed; and long-lasting 'sin' taxes on US companies to discourage purchases from specific countries like China, which are likely to cause sustained disruption.

Actions you should consider taking now:

1. **Engage with US Customers:** Discuss potential exemptions and expectations regarding your product types. They can also provide insights on sourcing pressures and absorption of tariffs.
2. **Model Tariff Impacts:** Use your trade data from the Customs Declaration Service (CDS) to forecast the impact of varying tariffs on your business, while we wait for clearer insights (expected from February).

3. **Explore Duty Management:** Once impacts are modeled, explore options such as processing reliefs, warehousing, or deferral, to manage duties effectively.
  4. **Consider Tax Implications:** Potential 20% tariffs will affect VAT and other UK taxes, which will inevitably attract attention from HMRC.
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## **‘Buy European’ threat for public procurement**

THE EUROPEAN Commission has announced plans to revise the EU legislative framework on public procurement and industry bodies fear an intention to use public procurement ‘strategically’ to boost demand for ‘Made in Europe’ goods. It is believed that the Commission intends to ‘enable preference to be given to European products in public procurement for certain strategic sectors’.

Orgalim, an umbrella body representing Europe’s technology industries, has warned against such measures, saying they would ‘fail to achieve their intended objectives and only generate additional regulatory burden for European technology manufacturers’.

Orgalim’s statement continues: “Our industries have extremely complex value networks spanning multiple countries worldwide. They typically source raw materials and components both on the EU and on third country markets, to use them as inputs for manufacturing a wide range of downstream goods.... Manufacturers must have the highest degree of flexibility to source manufacturing inputs both on the EU as well as on a wide range of third country markets. Introducing preference for European products in public procurement could put EU manufacturers that source inputs abroad at a disadvantage and potentially require a costly reshaping of value networks.

“Furthermore, ‘Made in Europe’ requirements would most likely lead to increased administrative burden for EU manufacturers, which will have to demonstrate that the products they supply meet complex local content requirements (e.g. including a certain share of domestically produced raw materials). This would add up to the already burgeoning regulatory burden which is holding back the growth prospects of our industries.”

GAMBICA, which is a member of Orgalim, has encouraged this stance and will further lobby the EU to promote an open trade agenda.

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## **EU squares up to China on public procurement of medical devices**



A FIRST investigation by the EU has found evidence of China limiting the access for EU medical devices to its government contracts in what is described as ‘an unfair and discriminatory way’.

The EU will now assess the possibility of adopting International Procurement Instrument (IPI), measures which could include a restriction on, or exclusion of, Chinese bidders from government contracts in the EU.

The Commission’s Report concludes that China has put in place several different forms of direct and indirect discrimination against EU medical devices and suppliers, meanwhile Chinese exports of medical devices to the EU surged by more than 100% between 2015 and 2023.

Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security; Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency commented: The European Commission strongly wishes to maintain open, fair and mutually beneficial trade relations with China, including on public procurement. However, openness needs to be reciprocal: government contracts in the EU are open to non-EU countries, and we expect other countries to treat our companies with similar fairness. We have found that China is discriminating against EU medical devices producers in bids for public contracts, and while we continue to prioritise dialogue as a first step to finding solutions, we stand ready to take decisive action to defend the level playing field, and support fair competition.

The International Procurement Instrument entered into force on 29 August 2022. The tool is designed to restore the balance of opportunities for EU companies tendering outside the EU, and promote open and fair access to public procurement markets around the world. Its main goal is to encourage the reciprocal opening of public procurement markets to EU economic operators and EU supplies.

To access the investigation, click [here](#).

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## FDA announces new regulations for laboratory-developed tests

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a final rule that will significantly change the regulation of laboratory-developed tests (LDTs). LDTs will now be subject to the same regulatory oversight as other in vitro diagnostic devices.

Previously, LDTs were exempt from many FDA regulations, including premarket approval and medical device reporting. However, with advancements in testing technology and growing concerns about the accuracy of LDTs, the FDA has decided to regulate them more strictly. Under the new rule, LDTs will now be categorised as medical devices under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, ensuring they meet rigorous safety and performance standards.

### Key Changes to LDT Regulation

The FDA's final rule introduces:

- **Increased Oversight:** Over the next four years, the FDA will phase out its general 'enforcement discretion' for LDTs. Laboratories will gradually be required to comply with regulations typically associated with in vitro diagnostics, such as quality system regulations, premarket approval for high-risk tests, and medical device reporting.
- **Phaseout Timeline:** The changes will be implemented in five stages:
  - **Stage 1 (May 6, 2025):** Laboratories must comply with medical device reporting requirements, including reporting adverse events.
  - **Stage 2 (May 6, 2026):** Laboratories will need to adhere to additional requirements such as registration, device listing, and labelling.
  - **Stage 3 (May 6, 2027):** Compliance with quality system regulations will be required for most tests.
  - **Stage 4 (Nov 6, 2027):** High-risk tests will require premarket review.
  - **Stage 5 (May 6, 2028):** Premarket review will be required for moderate and low-risk tests.

- **Exemptions:** The FDA has outlined specific policies allowing exemptions for certain LDTs based on their intended use or risk level, including tests for rare diseases, forensic tests, and those used for public health surveillance.

### Impact on Laboratories

It is thought that laboratories will face significant challenges in complying with the new requirements. In addition to updating quality management systems and revising documentation practices, labs will need to invest in staff training.

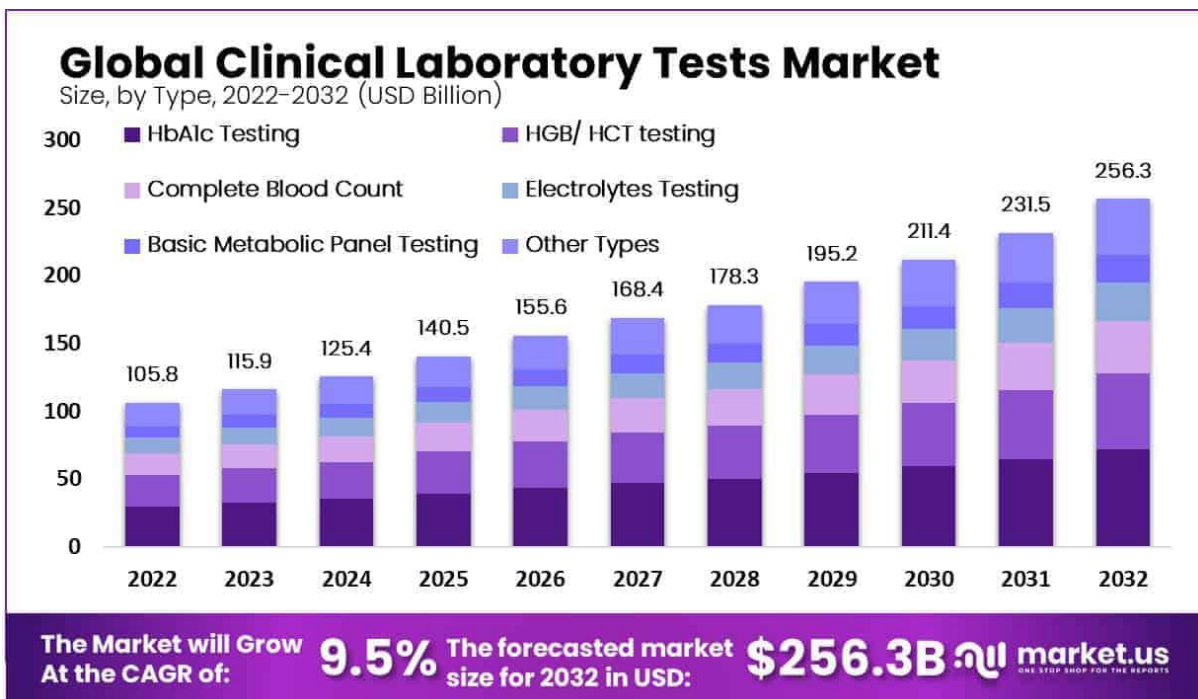
### Legal challenges have begun

The FDA's Final Rule is already facing legal opposition. Two lawsuits, *American Clinical Laboratory Association v. FDA* and *Association for Molecular Pathology v. FDA*, have been filed, challenging the FDA's authority to regulate LDTs. The plaintiffs argue that LDTs should not be treated the same as mass-produced medical devices, as they are developed by trained professionals within licensed labs. They contend that FDA oversight could hinder innovation, stifle competition, and impose significant financial burdens on laboratories. These cases, now consolidated under *ACLA v. FDA*, are currently pending.

If the lawsuits are unsuccessful, laboratories will be required to comply with Stage 1 of the rule by May 2025.

### Size of global lab test market

According to market intelligence company Market US, the Global Clinical Laboratory Tests Market is expected to be worth around US\$ 256.3 Billion by 2032 up from US\$ 115.9 Billion in 2023, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 7.6% from 2024 to 2032. In 2023, North America led the market, achieving over 43.6% share with a revenue of US\$ 46.1 Billion.



You can access the full report [here](#).



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## COMPANY News

# Spotlight on new member **ESSLAB**: Innovation, excellence, and growth



MANY GAMBICA Members will recognize Cliff Marshall, (right) CEO of laboratory distributors ESSLAB, from his tenure at Sartorius and his past involvement with the GAMBICA lab committee and its export group. However, for those who haven't visited ESSLAB's headquarters in Westcliff-on-Sea, near Southend, it might come as a surprise to find such a cutting-edge facility located in the East of England.

ESSLAB acquired their elegant office and warehouse complex from a glazing designer when they grew too large for their previous accommodation. The building's striking design reflects the company's ethos of visibility and accessibility to their customers. Recently, they added a neighbouring building to serve as a dedicated training centre, to help customers' keep on top of changing standards and norms.

### **A team built for success**

Under the leadership of Cliff and Managing Director Richard Day, ESSLAB has cultivated a smart and diligent team who support



customers across the UK, Europe, and the Middle East. Since its founding in 1982, the company has focused on providing first-rate customer service by investing in its people and creating an optimal working environment.

Located in an area with high employment rates, ESSLAB has faced challenges in finding the right talent. Richard identified degree apprenticeships as a promising solution. This initiative attracts school leavers with potential who are wary of university debt. Currently, three of the firm's 24 staff are degree apprentices. Richard explains, "Some think investing in young people is risky, fearing they'll leave after earning their degree. But we see it differently. We believe in showing them the opportunities we offer, creating a fulfilling environment, and ensuring they enjoy working with us. If they leave, it's on us. So far, the apprenticeships have been a boon for our business, and I'm confident others could benefit from adopting this model."



At present, ESSLAB's six strong team of applications specialists do have traditional degrees but recruits to the marketing and customer services teams come from more diverse backgrounds. A further seven members of staff are qualified in the increasingly arcane art of logistics import and export. This team uses its extensive knowledge of the IATA rules, different carriers' in-house rules and experience of which couriers can supply which regions most effectively, to identify the quickest and most cost effective way of getting products to customers. These are essential skills for any firm buying from or supplying to Europe and further afield. EMEA sales team leader Karolina Perek is responsible for managing all the



Esslab's Malcolm Wells checks stock with the help of the new ERP system.

certifications and registrations required to sell into the Middle East; "We were at Arab Lab last year and we are hoping to join the GAMBICA pavilion at the next one. As well as giving us a base to see all our distributors and make contact with new potential customers – it gives you that extra insight into what's going on in the territory – and that can help you avoid problems!"

### **Innovation in a changing landscape**

The acquisition of their new buildings has enhanced ESSLAB's ability to stock a wider range of products, cementing their reputation as a trusted supplier of reference materials, instrumentation, and consumables. Standards are their fastest-moving products, sourced from suppliers in the US, Bulgaria, and Germany. An efficient ERP system tracks inventory and expiry dates, ensuring optimal stock management and product compliance.

The company recently expanded its supplier portfolio to include artificial biological fluids, which are in growing demand among manufacturers of household products, cosmetics, food, and clothing. These fluids help ensure products are safe for human contact, even with repeated exposure. ESSLAB's offerings also include artificial sweat for dermal absorption studies and simulated earwax for testing earbuds.

ESSLAB also supplies materials to detect and quantify micro- and nanoplastics, which are under increasing scrutiny due to environmental and health concerns. Richard notes, "The growing awareness of environmental pollution and regulation in this area will continue to drive demand for high-quality reference materials. The shift to increasing UKAS accreditation for laboratories further highlights the need for reliable standards."



### **Strategic growth and customer focus**

Expanding ESSLAB's supplier base requires careful planning to ensure profitability. Sales Manager Chris Hoskyn explains; "Adding a new supplier introduces exciting opportunities, but it's crucial to maintain a clear head. Without sufficient turnover to achieve economies of scale, small orders can inflate costs without boosting profits." Richard agrees; "We carefully analyse costs and logistics before onboarding any new supplier."

ESSLAB also keeps a vigilant eye on industry standards. For instance, when ISO 8655 increased calibration precision for liquid handling devices, many laboratories needed to upgrade their balances. Similarly, updates to pH measurement standards prompted a wave of adjustments. Cliff emphasises, "Our customers rely on us to stay ahead of these changes and guide them through transitions."

### **A commitment to excellence**

ESSLAB's commitment to customer service extends to personal interactions. Digital manager Isabelle Carlin monitors online chat systems to ensure timely responses and encourages customers to leave feedback. "We actively seek reviews but give clients time to reflect after their experience with us," she explains. The result? Overwhelmingly positive Trustpilot reviews - a powerful sales tool.

Training has become another pillar of ESSLAB's customer service strategy. Proper pipetting is critical for consistent results, yet staff turnover at client organisations can make maintaining standards challenging. ESSLAB addresses this by offering training sessions and innovative solutions like the Pipette Wizard, which automates pipette checks and simplifies record-keeping.

As Richard puts it, "Increasingly, our customers need to demonstrate compliance at all times. It's a daunting task, but we're here to support them."

### **MEET ESSLAB**

**ESSLAB will be represented at the GAMBICA Conference in March, where Richard will be available to share insights and connect with members. Don't miss the chance say hello.**

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