

L@b Brief | January 2026

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COMMENT

Time to be a bit less verbose



A few years ago I had to provide a statement to the police. The statement ended up being seven pages long, even though I had only seen a chap jump out, grab something and run away.

So it doesn't come as news to me that I can be a bit long-winded. Unfortunately, some people have suggested that this newsletter has become rather the same, some even hinting that it's a bit....

well, whatever adjective has jumped into your mind right now!

But never fear! Things are about to change - for the better.

In really great news for GAMBICA, we now have an extra person serving the lab sector in a shape which will be very familiar to many of you, that of Tony Collins, ex MD of Priorclave. (See more below).

One of Tony's first jobs will be to use his operational knowledge of the industry to review this newsletter and make it more useful for all of you.

We are going to try to pick out a central theme for the newsletter each month, and this month it's Strategic decision-making in a world of uncertainty. We'll be looking at which aspects of the current *Sturm und Drang* are giving you most problems and how you want GAMBICA to step in to help change them. Even better, we are offering concrete help to enter or expand in the most lucrative market available to us at present – it's all this month's issue.

We want the newsletter to give you the information you need to keep on top of the regulatory, political and economic changes in our world and we would value your input on how it can be improved. You can get to either of us by emailing lab@gambica.org.uk

We really hope to hear from you

Toodle Pip!

Jacqueline

UK News

GAMBICA adds to the expert resource available to lab members



IN A significant positive development, GAMBICA has appointed Tony Collins as an additional sector head for the lab sector.

Tony brings over 40 years of experience in the laboratory equipment and scientific manufacturing industry, most recently as Managing Director of Priorclave, one of the UK's leading autoclave exporters. His strengths span business growth, operational leadership, and strategic planning — and he also brings hands-on expertise in production management, technical sales, and financial

oversight. His arrival gives GAMBICA members access to a new depth of practical, commercial insight. You can reach Tony at tony.collins@gambica.org.uk.

Tony has been particularly successful in using standards to drive business expansion. After Brexit, he recognised that if the UK moved away completely from EU standards, the only surviving standard was nearly 50 years old — and, more importantly, that lab autoclave manufacturers might be forced to conform to hospital autoclave standards (which, bizarre as it sounds, are entirely different).

Through GAMBICA, all UK Lab Autoclave members collaborated to overhaul the British Standard for Laboratory Autoclaves (BS2646), modernising it into something practical, relevant, and export-friendly. The unexpected bonus? With no equivalent EU standard available, European buyers began specifying the British standard — originally associated only with UK suppliers.

Tony has also used academic collaboration to Priorclave's advantage, serving as an Industrial Liaison Committee member with the University of Greenwich (Engineering and Science faculties) for 25 years.

If you need support with standards, product development, productivity, business development, or technical sales, Tony is now available to assist all GAMBICA members. As he puts it: "I'm thrilled to start my shared role at GAMBICA and eager to use my extensive commercial experience to make a meaningful contribution to supporting its members."

Your opportunity to control some variables in your markets

IF YOU'VE felt the commercial headwinds this past year, you are far from alone. The GAMBICA lab board has identified nine major issues affecting us all:

- Concerns about tariffs or potential tariffs
- Sluggish and unpredictable capital expenditure plans
- Chinese dumping, market manipulation, and counterfeiting
- Protectionist regimes abroad restricting our export potential
- University spending cuts and the Government's Student Visa policy
- Increasing use of AI to model experiments, reducing demand for capital equipment and consumables
- Sustainability registration costs and other regulatory burdens
- The persistent post-Brexit perception that doing business with the UK is difficult
- Additional risks such as cyber security and supply-chain fragility

We'll be forecasting the impact of these challenges — and gathering delegates' views — at the March conference. The Board will then meet to take leadership action on behalf of the industry, identifying where we have leverage and shaping a strategy to address the most pressing risks.

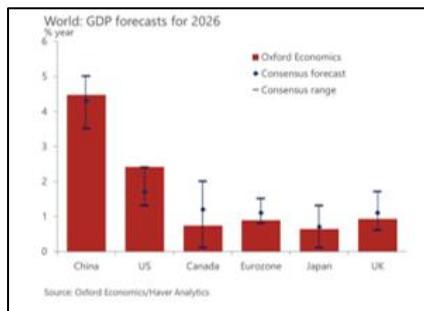
But we want to hear from you. Which of these factors is hitting you hardest? What action do you think we should prioritise? Or is it something else all together?

You can email Tony and me at lab@gambica.org.uk or leave me a voice message on 07990 016421.

We would genuinely value your insights.

New for the GAMBICA conference

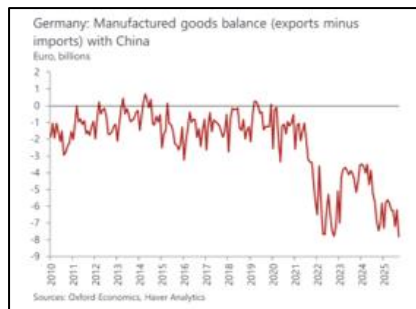
Breaking into America: What it really takes — and what it really costs



DESPITE MR Trump's actions and general uncertainty, the US economy continues to thrive, in marked contrast to markets in Europe — facts demonstrated by two slides from members' latest report from Oxford Economics. Europe, and particularly Germany are down, while the US is spectacularly up.

Despite plenty of bold rhetoric about tackling dumping, the EU simply isn't nimble enough to respond effectively.

Markets across the Far East are also being overwhelmed by Chinese products, and while the UK appears slightly less exposed directly, our markets are certainly feeling the impact. So if you are looking for growth, it looks as if the US is the place for you.



But the US is a huge, hungry market — and it is also a fiercely competitive one, dominated by well-established domestic suppliers. It's a marketplace that punishes hesitation, under-investment, and early mistakes.

That's why, at the GAMBICA Conference in March, we've recruited three specialists in US market entry to bring

you a grounded, US-based perspective on what's actually required to build a credible, scalable American presence. Tailored specifically for MDs and senior leaders, this session will slice through optimism and myth and deal squarely with operational reality.

A central theme will be the difference between selling into America and succeeding in America. Too many UK companies dabble in the US — and dabbling simply doesn't work. Costs are underestimated, resources are spread too thinly, and momentum evaporates. The session will outline what it really takes to be taken seriously by American customers, focusing on the fundamentals driving US growth today: local service and support, reliable fulfilment, cultural intelligence, and the capital commitment needed to deliver them.



This isn't a debate about whether the US is attractive. It's about what leadership commitment is essential to succeed, and the confidence to decide, deliberately, whether the investment is right for your business

It's not too late to book a day place at the conference — email sarah.wicks@gambica.org.uk or click [here](#).

New Health Data Research Service gets £600m



DR MELANIE Ivarsson has been announced as the Chief Executive Officer of the new Health Data Research Service (HDRS), which is backed by up to £600 million in funding from the government and Wellcome.

HDRS is intended to streamline processes for commercial and academic researchers to develop new medicines and therapies, while safeguarding data security, privacy and ethical oversight. Dr Ivarsson led the clinical trials that produced one of the world's first COVID-19 vaccines at Moderna and also held senior roles at pharmaceutical firms Eli Lilly, Pfizer and Takeda and has a strong research background, conducting post-doctoral research at New York University in the US and Lund University in Sweden.

[More details](#)

Growth package for scale-ups and red-tape review promised for life sciences

THE GOVERNMENT has announced measures to accelerate growth in key UK sectors, including life sciences including supporting high-potential scaleups, and reducing regulatory burdens for businesses.



The British Business Bank will invest £100 million across leading life sciences and deep tech funds, Epidarex Capital and IQ Capital, to strengthen priority sectors under the Modern Industrial Strategy

A series of regulatory reviews is planned to streamline health and safety, farming, and agri-tech rules—cutting duplication, reducing

paperwork, and enabling innovation while maintaining essential protections. Further planned reforms include modernising corporate reporting, enabling virtual AGMs, and consulting on faster, simplified competition investigations.

[More details](#)

AI Security Institute gives clearest picture yet of capabilities of most advanced AI

THE FIRST ever *Frontier AI Trends Report* from the AI Security Institute confirms that every system tested remains vulnerable to some form of bypass and that protection still varies greatly across companies. Nonetheless this public assessment of how the most advanced AI systems are evolving, suggests that progress is being made.

The time it took AISI red-teamers to find a 'universal jailbreak' - a general way of getting round a model's safety rules - for example, increased from minutes to several hours between model generations. That represents a roughly 40-fold improvement.

[More Details](#)

Competition closes shortly for Innovate UK Growth Catalyst funding

INNOVATE UK Growth Catalyst is a program designed to help growth-oriented start-ups



from seed to Series A. This competition combines grant funding, aligned private investment and structured support services to help innovators progress through key growth milestones.

This competition comprises a £100 million program to support innovative companies in these fields:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Clean Energy Industries
- Creative Industries
- Defence
- Digital and Technologies
- Life Sciences
- Batteries
- Clean Energy Industries
- Creative Industries
- Defence

Applications close 3 Feb 2026.

[Find out more and apply today](#)

LABORATORY Construction Update

DID YOU know that GAMBICA's Tender Alert Service (TAS) lists every new laboratory construction project in the UK? To receive updates twice weekly into your inbox, email Natalia.pan@gambica.org.uk

For those of you who provide equipment used in non-laboratory settings, there is also an industrial construction alert which will inform you about manufacturing construction projects.

The TAS reports are provided to you as part of your membership. To see the latest TAS report, [click here](#).

We will continue to feature some of the overseas lab construction projects in these pages.

First, organ-on-a-chip, now, lab-on-a-bus

A BIOSAFETY Level 3 laboratory on a bus with a team of scientists, technicians, and a



specialist driver, is now ready to tackle disease outbreaks in India.

Based at the Baba Raghav Das Medical College the RAMBAAN (Rapid Action Mobile BSL3+ Advanced Augmented Network) is one of two mobile BSL-3 labs in India, both of which were inaugurated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In an outbreak emergency the lab can be parked up at the epidemic epicentre to collect samples and do advanced testing on the spot. When the lab rolls into town, experts and technicians no longer need to transfer samples to faraway technical hubs.

New Jersey private university to convert IT areas to labs

THIS SPRING, Seton Hall University will be converting former IT office spaces into new



laboratories, including a semiconductor plasma processing lab and an optics/laser lab.

The renovation will accommodate the new state-of-the art instrumentation supported by nearly \$1 million in federal funding for semiconductor research. The grant through the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) expands the University's instrumentation infrastructure and capabilities to study how low-temperature plasmas (LTP)

used in advanced manufacturing of current and next-generation semiconductor materials are used in the fabrication of microchips and microelectronics.

For more information, please contact: communications@shu.edu

GAMBICA Events

THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL BIDS | ONLINE | 10 FEBURARY 2026 | 10.30 - 11.30

DELEGATES AT the recent training sessions to help GAMBICA members improve their success at bid writing have been very impressed by trainer Gemma Waring. Gemma is a tendering and procurement specialist with more than 17 years' experience supporting organisations to win work across the UK public sector and regulated markets. She has kindly

agreed to provide this short webinar for all members giving top tips on successful bid writing.

Gemma is also offering members access to professional bid management and bid writing support, with a 10% discount on services that include:

- bid writing support (answer drafting, improvement and rewrite support), bid management support (tender planning, timelines, inputs, governance and submission coordination),
- bid reviews and scoring feedback to strengthen your final response before submission, bid strategy and win themes to position your offer strongly, compliance and tender readiness support to respond confidently to buyer requirements,
- bid library support to create and improve reusable content, and training and coaching for individuals or teams tailored to your market and tender profile.

If you would like to hear more about Gemma's services or want to make your bids stand out, join us for the best strategies, tips, and tricks.

Register via Eventbrite [here](#).

BID WRITING INCLUDING BEST USE OF AI – SHARED COST TRAINING | GAMBICA OFFICES, LONDON | 19 MAY 2026 | 09.30 - 16.30

BACK BY popular demand, we will be running the highly successful Bid writing, including best use of AI training again in our London offices on 19 May.

Building on core bid writing principles, the course provides practical insights into crafting persuasive, well-structured, and compliant tenders. Delegates will explore strategies to improve win rates, including how to tailor responses to buyer priorities, avoid common pitfalls, and make best use of feedback.

In addition, the course examines how generative AI tools can be used ethically to support the bid writing process.

For a full course outline and prices (which will depend on the number of delegates) email jacqueline.balian@gambica.org.uk or click [here](#) to reserve your place.

THE GAMBICA LAB CONFERENCE 2026 | THE BARNSDALE, RUTLAND | 9-10 MARCH 2026

YOUR AI & CUSTOMER INSIGHT TOOLKIT FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

THE GAMBICA Lab Conference 2026 will cut through the noise, showing you what your customers want, how to keep up with your peers who are already applying AI to achieve productivity improvements, and how to break into or grow in the currently most lucrative market in the world – the US.



HEADLINE KEYNOTE: NICK ROSA, ACCENTURE

Nick Rosa brings over 20 years of digital transformation and innovation expertise. With a career spanning Google, Spotify, IBM IX, Yahoo!, and Atari,

Nick now leads as *Industry Technology Innovation Director for Europe* and directs the *Accenture Global Generative AI Studio for Consumer Products*.

Nick will deliver a clear-eyed overview of AI: what's possible today, how to spot the pitfalls, and the roadmap you need to implement AI successfully in your organisation.

CUSTOMER PERSPECTIVES: WHAT BUYERS WANT IN 2026

Hear from Laura Williams, Data Capability Leader at GSK, on how your customers are upskilling for the digital revolution—and what they expect from their suppliers. You'll also gain direct insight from other leading customers about their buying priorities for the year ahead.

NEW FOR 2026: PEER-TO-PEER AI BREAKOUTS

This year, it's not just about listening— you will have the chance to dive into focused discussions with your peers, exploring specific applications of AI, the barriers you'll face, and how to overcome them. Choose your AI focus area in advance and leave with actionable ideas tailored to your business.

EXPERT FORECASTING: POLITICS, ECONOMICS, TRADE

Anand Menon and Lee Hopley will again bring their sharp insights into the political and economic landscape, equipping you with the intelligence you need to navigate 2026 with confidence.

BOOK ONLINE [HERE](#) OR CONTACT SARAH SARAH.WICKS@GAMBICA.ORG.UK TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EARLY BIRD RATES.

EXPORT TRAINING DISCOUNTED FOR GAMBICA MEMBERS | ONLINE | DEC 25-MAR 26

EXPORT TRAINING is available to GAMBICA members from Chamber International at Chamber members' prices.

FEBRUARY TO MARCH 2026 COURSES	
10 Feb 2026	<u>Shipping Lithium Batteries by Air, Road, & Sea</u>
12 Feb 2026	<u>Customs Declaration Service (CDS) for Exports</u>
18 Feb 2026	<u>Rules of Origin, Trade Agreements and Commodity Codes</u>
19 Feb 2026	<u>Export Documentation & Import Procedures</u>
5 Mar 2026	<u>Importing and Customs</u>
5 Mar 2026	<u>HMRC Audits & Customs Record Keeping Requirements</u>
11 Mar 2026	<u>Incoterms® - The Basics</u>
19 Mar 2026	<u>Export Documentation</u>

FURTHER INFORMATION is available [here](#). When booking, quote discount code 'CICSP25' to get your 10% discount. **TO BOOK** your place click [here](#).

INDUSTRY Events

WHX LABS | DUBAI | 10/13 FEBRUARY 2026

FORMERLY MEDLAB Middle East, GAMBICA offers a pavilion at this exhibition. For more information about this event click [here](#).

MATERIALS RESEARCH EXCHANGE | LONDON | 18-20 FEBRUARY 2026

MATERIALS RESEARCH Exchange 2026 is run by Innovate UK and will offer new insights and strategies on materials research and innovations in the UK and the opportunity to network and collaborate with key industry users and investors. **For more information click [here](#).**

ANALYTICA | MUNICH | 24/27 MARCH 2026

WE RECEIVED a good number of early bookings for Analytica 2026, and availability is already limited. We are offering two options for participation with the GAMBICA UK pavilion: 'regular' pavilion stands of 6+sqm & 4sqm 'pod' stands. Please contact Kirsty if you wish to discuss availability.

For more information about the event itself please click [here](#). To book your stand contact Kirsty at Kirsty.roberts@gambica.org.uk

DRUG DISCOVERY 2026, | LONDON, | 14/15 OCTOBER 2026

ELRIG'S DRUG Discovery is back at ExCel, London in 2026. Registration is not yet open but more on speakers and themes is available [here](#).

LAB INNOVATIONS, | LONDON, | 4/5 NOVEMBER 2026

DON'T FORGET, if you want to book at the UK's largest lab exhibition, GAMBICA members are entitled to a 15% discount. **Register your interest for the event [here](#).**

ANALYTICA CHINA, | SHANGHAI, | 16/18 NOVEMBER 2026

BOOKING DETAILS will be available later this year for the GAMBICA pavilion at this event. **For more information about the event click [here](#).**

EXPORT News

New Chinese packaging standard from 1st June

CHINA'S NEW standard GB 18580-2025 on formaldehyde in wood-based panels makes it



necessary for GAMBICA members to review the business impact of sourcing packaging from China and shipping it to China.

The standard limits formaldehyde emissions from both finished and unfinished wood-based panels and their products, including wood-plastic composites from 1 June 2026.

Wood based articles intended for indoor use will need to comply with limits lower than those required by the EU currently. As such GAMBICA members or its supply chain, will need to make sure that items such as plywood inserts, medium density fibreboard supports or composite pallets meet Chinese standards if being shipped there. Otherwise, they may be rejected at customs.

Cross sector trade visit to China and Hong Kong



GAMBICA partner body, Chamber International is making available to GAMBICA members an opportunity to join their trade visit to China and Hong Kong which will run from 18th to 24th April 2026 visiting Guangdong Province, Shenzhen and Hong Kong.

Participants will need to source and fund their own flights and transfers as well as accommodation for the duration of their stay. Prices start from £1800 plus VAT.

There will be a number of curated events for you to participate in and your business logo can be included on all marketing collateral pre and during the visit.

If you have business in China this is a great opportunity to establish your bona fides with the help of the British Embassy and the China Britain Business Council and Chamber International. For more information contact nikkic@chamber-international.com

South Carolina Lab settles \$6.8M kickback case

CLINICAL LABORATORY LTD Holding LLC, formerly known as Labtech Diagnostics LLC (Labtech), of Anderson, South Carolina, and its founder and CEO Joseph Labash, of the United Arab Emirates, have [agreed](#) to pay at least \$6.8 million to the United States to resolve False Claims Act allegations involving illegal kickbacks to doctors.

Labtech agreed to plead guilty to five counts of offering and paying health care kickbacks in violation of the Anti-Kickback Statute, and will also pay \$103,551.90 in restitution.

The settlement resolves allegations that Labtech and Labash knowingly and wilfully paid five types of kickbacks to induce laboratory testing referrals.

In addition, the settlement resolves allegations that, from September to December 2016, Labtech and Labash arranged to pay a physician practice in Charlotte, North Carolina an inflated amount for used laboratory equipment to induce the healthcare provider to order Labtech's testing. Also, from March 2018 to November 2021, Labtech and Labash allegedly provided a pain management practice in Landis, North Carolina with free services and supplies in connection with drug screen testing, in return for the practice referring its lucrative drug confirmation testing to Labtech.

The settlement resolves allegations in a lawsuit originally filed by a whistleblower under the False Claims Act, which permits parties to sue on behalf of the government and receive a share of any recovery. The whistleblower will receive \$1.36 million of the proceeds from the settlement.

Except to the extent that Labtech's admissions are part of its criminal resolution, the claims resolved by the civil settlement are allegations only and there has been no determination of liability.

The Anti-Kickback Statute prohibits offering, paying, soliciting, or receiving remuneration to induce referrals of items or services covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and other federally funded healthcare programs.

MEMBER News

Markes International acquired by platform of laboratory-automation brands, Velaris

Investor Schauenburg International has sold GAMBICA member, Markes International, to Velaris, a group backed by global investment firm Battery Ventures.



The Velaris family of brands includes Skalar Analytical, LCTech, PromoChrom, EST Analytical, GERSTEL and TE Instruments.

Nigel Fry, CEO of Markes International commented: "Markes has built a strong position through innovation, technical excellence and the dedication of our talented teams earning the trust of customers

worldwide. Joining the Velaris family marks an important milestone in our journey, creating a compelling platform to work alongside a group of complementary businesses and expand our capabilities. This combination strengthens our ability to support our customers and the markets we serve, while creating meaningful development opportunities for our people."

Markes, founded in 1997, in Bridgend, Wales is a recognised global provider of specialist analytical technologies that enhance the sensitivity, separation and interpretive power of gas chromatography (GC) and GC-mass spectrometry (GC-MS).

Amod Kher, CEO of Velaris said: " We look forward to working with the management and associates of Markes as we build on the strong foundation that it has established in this attractive growth market."

More information is available at www.velaris.com
