

L@b Brief | January 2024

INSIDE *this* ISSUE

	New conference speaker on implications for lab suppliers of AI-driven, 'lights out' labs
	Comment: Property groups latch on to laboratories
	GAMBICA meets with minister on export control delays... plus new export control information
	Range of shared-cost training for productivity improvements now available to GAMBICA members
	Salary survey points to average 4.6% pay increase in 2024
	Lab building update, South Africa, China, the US and UK
	UKCA mark; potential for non-compliance
	Research round-up: Cheaper materials for LED displays... Global deaths from fungal diseases double... Breakthrough crop fungicide... Bottled water contains thousands of nano-plastics
	Export news: Changes for exporters from 31 January... CDS nearly ready... China allows visa free access, but not for Britons
	HR news: Changes to NI contributions and parental leave...
	Also inside: GAMBICA and industry events and Get your PIC reports submitted by March

Hello again,



ACCORDING TO property agents, Knight Frank, demand for lab space in London stands at 974,500 sq feet, and even after major developments in Bloomsbury and King's Cross complete this year, there will still be a shortfall of more than 100,000 square feet.

Meanwhile, life sciences figures from construction analyst Glenigan, compiled for the *Architects Journal*, show a threefold rise in the value of project starts on UK laboratories between 2013 and 2022 – up from £174 million to £574 million, rising to an astonishing £966 million in 2023.

The value of planning approvals rose from £51 million in 2013 to £870 million in 2022 and then to £3.6 billion in 2023. The 2023 figure includes GSK's £900 million plans for one of Europe's largest life sciences campuses in Stevenage.

The world of construction is familiar with the 'Skyscraper Index', in which business cycles and skyscraper construction correlate in such a way that investment in skyscrapers peaks when cyclical growth is exhausted and the economy is ready for recession. Could we now be seeing a new 'Lab Index'?

CBRE in the US is now predicting a potential correction could hit the life sciences construction pipeline in 2025. Their economists expect the construction pipeline to 'drop dramatically in 2025,' largely due to economic challenges such as slow capital markets and high interest rates. Their latest report suggests that the 38 million square feet of new lab space currently under construction will be likely to outpace demand, especially in the sector's top markets — Boston, the San Francisco Bay Area and San Diego.

So while it looks as if the lab industry will see excellent opportunities in 2024 with so many new labs to equip, there may well be a correction after that.

It is clear that many larger life sciences companies really suffered in the post-covid correction while smaller, non-listed companies were able to accept the upside of covid as a bonus but still set their expectations appropriately afterwards. Let's hope we reprise that good performance if the current lab building does prove to be a bubble.

A full international lab equipment sales forecast will be available at our lab conference in March. Hope to see you there.

Toodle pip!

Jacqueline

UK News

New conference speaker on the implications for lab suppliers of AI-driven 'lights out' labs

THE EU, Japan and the US are funding CERN-scale labs using AI to drive automated laboratories. The objective is more productive labs and faster scientific advances. Lab equipment has always had to provide suitable interfaces for humans, but in future, it will have to develop



new levels of user-friendliness for AI. A new speaker has been added to the GAMBICA conference in March to cover this hugely important issue. Patrick Courtney, an automation expert retained by the European Commission will outline what's going on and the implications for lab product development of these major changes.

Meanwhile customers and suppliers of the lab industry are starting to make the move to digital and AI, and these changes will also impact on members. The conference will alert you to what's going on so that you are aware of the scale and importance of these changes and how your own products need to fit in. We will also have two expert speakers to help delegates think about their own back offices and how their businesses can be improved by digitalisation initiatives. Ved Sen, the author of *'Doing Digital: The guide to digital for non-technical leaders'* will outline the impact of AI and digitalisation for all businesses in the UK, and Donna Edwards from The Growth Company will provide a step-by-step guide to making your own digital transformation and how to get the funding to help.

The opposition front-bench team on trade will be represented at the conference by Lord McNicol who will be there to let you know what Labour's priorities are for the post-election period and to listen to your views on where the biggest improvements can be made for businesses and exporters.

The full conference programme is now as follows... see below

GAMBICA'S UK LABORATORY INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

12th March 2024 Venue: Stapleford Park, Melton Mowbray

Strategic success in a future full of AI	
08.30 / 09.00	Conference registration and refreshments
SESSION ONE: THE SALES ENVIRONMENT AND HOW TO WORK IT	
09.00	Welcome: Paul Wheeler, Chair, GAMBICA Lab Tech Board
09.05	Forecast for the lab industry: Mike Tice, Instrument Business Outlook
09.30	Selling to universities – the upcoming framework and sustainability scoring Jiteen Ahmed, Chair, Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium
09.50	Sustainability update: Ben Sunderland, CAMLAB
10.10	Finding the fastest path through the maze of buyer requirements – Raj Patey, My Green Lab
10.30	Refreshments
SESSION TWO: WHAT WILL 2024 BRING?	
11.00	Political keynote: Lord McNicol, Labour business frontbench team and APPG for trade and investment
11.25	Questions to Lord McNicol
11.45	Economic forecast: Lee Hopley, Director, Economic insight and research, UK Finance
12.05	Political forecast: John Arnold, Northern Universal
12.25	Lunch
SESSION THREE: AI, DIGITALISATION AND THE LAB INDUSTRY	
14.00	The impact of the AI revolution on UK businesses over the next 5 years Ved Sen: Head of Innovation at Tata Consultancy Services and author of <i>Doing Digital: The guide to digital for non-technical leaders</i>
14.20	AI driven laboratories – the implications for lab equipment manufacturers and suppliers; Patrick Courtney, TEC connection
14.40	How AI is currently being used in the medical and lab industries Tim Hargreaves, Partner, Marks and Clerk, International Intellectual Property Experts
15.00	How to develop and fund your digital transformation strategy Donna Edwards, MD Business Support and Finance, The Growth Company
15.20	Refreshments
SESSION FOUR: OUR ASKS FOR THE INCOMING GOVERNMENT	
15.40 – 16.15	Influencing future government policy – your priorities Led by Steve Brambley, chief executive, GAMBICA
16.15 - 16.20	Results of business sentiment survey and close

Salary survey points to average pay increase of 4.6% in 2024

A 2.5 year low in starting salaries and reductions in both permanent and temporary vacancies might lead you to conclude that the wage increases are going to be minimal this year but the recruitment agency, *Europrojects*, has recently released a salary survey which predicts an average wage growth this year of 4.6 per cent and that companies which are doing well will pay 7 per cent to retain key staff. As employment conditions become less certain, Europrojects predicts that staff may become risk averse, and will look for security above other considerations.

Due to the increase in minimum wage, it is not uncommon to see a higher rate of award for lower paid employees (to maintain the gap between them and the lowest paid), with 6 per cent being offered to employees with up to £40,000 per annum earnings and 5 per cent for those above £40,000 annual earnings.

In the three months to November 2023, there were approximately 949,000 job vacancies in the UK, compared with 959,000 in the previous month. This is still roughly 25 per cent higher than before the pandemic. But a low growth 2024 is likely to reduce the number of job opportunities overall and may increase the use of temporary staff.

Roles in engineering and manufacturing remain in growth, albeit weaker than 12 months ago. Candidate supply remains tighter than in other sectors with engineering employers recognising the need to prioritise the retention and recruitment of their staff. At an average of just 3 applications per job, electronics receives the second lowest number of applications per job across all industries. To meet demand, the number of engineering apprentices and graduates needs to double the agency says.

To receive a copy of the report, click [here](#).

GAMBICA meets with minister on export control delays



IN JANUARY, GAMBICA used the opportunity of a round table on trade and export to raise the issue of delays to export licences with Minister of State for Trade, Greg Hands MP.

Hands was given a concise and effective explanation of the impact of the delays, currently standing at ten months or more, by Ian Wilcock of Oxford Instruments.

Sheffield Precision also recounted that their output had reduced by 50 per cent, primarily because of the inactions of the UK Government, and Baker Hughes concurred that the difficulties with getting products through the Export Control Joint Unit were real and pressing.

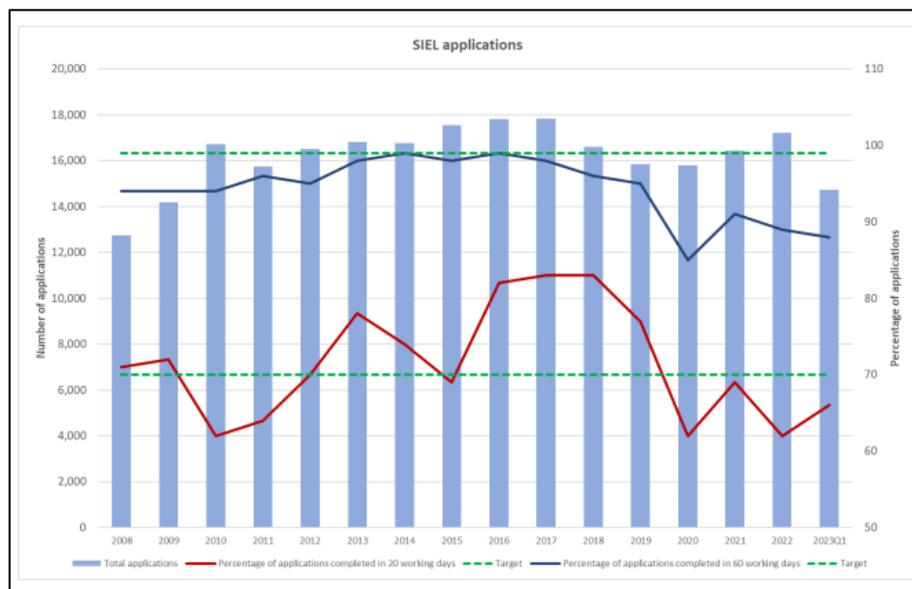
Hands expressed his concern but also his desire ‘to test what you say’. He was then presented with evidence that getting export licences is considerably slower in the UK than in competitor countries.

Roberto Deger, Chief Financial Officer of microscope manufacturer, Carl Zeiss which has manufacturing centres across Europe, the US and in the UK, told Hands that exports from the UK are routinely blocked. “When clients, particularly in China, select a range of our products, we have no problem at all in supplying from Germany or the US, but those items manufactured in the UK are subject to very long delays.”

GAMBICA explained the effect delays are having on members’ businesses and passed the minister a graph, formulated from the Department for Business and Trade’s answers to our Parliamentary Questions, showing the steadily worsening throughput of the Export Control Joint Unit.

Data provided by the department reveals that:

- The total number of applications has not increased above 2015-2017 levels
- ECJU Target 1: 99% of applications responded to within 60 days - Currently 88%
- Target not achieved since 2016, with a general downward trend
- ECJU Target 2: 70% of applications responded within 20 days - Currently 66%
- Target not achieved since 2019



Hands agreed to ‘take the matter back to the Department’. GAMBICA will be following up with a letter to Greg Hands, and a follow up to our recent letter to the Minister most directly responsible for Export Control Joint Unit, Nusrat Ghani, which has not yet received a response.

Hands listed his priorities which were all about trade agreements, specifically:

- the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) the free trade agreement which he sees as likely to expand to fast-growing Asia Pacific countries such as Korea and Thailand;
- the India trade agreement – he said he was more interested in getting the right things into the Indian trade deal rather than getting it through in a particular timeframe,
- the Gulf Co-operation Council;
- Europe – where he said his priority was to get regular talks with the major markets in the EU similar to the Joint Economic and Trade Commission talks held with other major economies. The objective would be to reduce trade friction; and

- the US, where he felt there had been considerable success in gaining agreements with different states, 7 so far, with 3 more in negotiation.

These met with almost no response from those attending apart from a question about Canada which, it was pointed out, is very rich in critical minerals and whose proximity to the giant US markets make it a big prize. Canada was felt to be 'very difficult'. Others were keen instead to ask instead about support for exports in the form of the trade access programme. Hands spoke about 'severe budgetary constraints' in his reply.

Lord McNicol, front bench spokesmen for trade for the opposition will be the keynote speaker at the GAMBICA Lab Industry conference on 12 March and will be ready to hear about your priorities. To book your place click [here](#).

Meanwhile – new trade information announced – mostly restrictions

New trade sanctions on Russia:

New measures in the [Russia \(Sanctions\) \(EU Exit\) \(Amendment\) \(No.4\) Regulations 2023](#) prohibit the export, supply and delivery, and making available to, or for use in, Russia, of critical-industry goods and critical-industry technology, luxury goods) and G7 dependency and further goods. For further information on import related sanctions, contact DBT's Import Licensing Branch, email: importcontrols@businessandtrade.gov.uk.

Wet signatures no longer required

During coronavirus, ECJU announced they would accept electronic signatures. It has now been confirmed that electronic or e-signatures remain valid in connection with all UK export controls documents.

Four countries no longer eligible for OGLs

ECJU has recently altered 13 open general licences (OGLs) to remove Burkina Faso, Haiti, Mali and Niger from the eligible destinations.

The ECJU has issued a reminder about good practice which can be accessed [here](#).

Shared-cost training now available

THE GAMBICA Lab Board requested last year that training be made available for members *on a shared-cost basis. Members have enthusiastically taken up the opportunity and a significant* number of courses have now been scheduled, the first is designed to help office staff be more productive.

Productivity for office staff

The one-day training programme is designed for any employee responsible for delivering excellence with minimal waste in an office or service environment. It introduces the concept, culture and basic tools of Lean and addresses the benefits and applications of practicing Lean in workplaces.

By completing this course, delegates will:

- Understand the Lean principles and techniques and their benefits in the office and service environment.
- Identify customer value and waste.
- Recognise the eight wastes that are specifically relevant to the office and service environment and learn how to reduce them.
- Measure and continuously improve performance.

This course will take place at Buchi's offices in Newmarket on 11 April. To book places for your staff email Sonia.dougall@gambica.org.uk or signal your interest on our Eventbrite page [here](#).

Lean Six Sigma course

The first course on Lean Six Sigma is now sold out, but it will be run again at Cherwell Laboratories' offices in Bicester.

The course introduces delegates to Six Sigma in its main forms: define, measure, analyse, improve and control (DMAIC) and Lean Six Sigma. It enables participants to improve the quality of process outputs by removing the causes of defects and minimising variability in manufacturing and business processes. It is aimed at individuals who have responsibility for implementing or studying the implementation of six sigma in their organisation. It can also be successfully used to train team members who will be part of six sigma project teams but who do not require the depth of knowledge of a green belt.

The following courses are planned:

Lean office	Newmarket	11 April
8D Practical problem-solving	Wrexham	16 April
Introduction to Six Sigma	Bicester	6 June
How to behave assertively	Wrexham	20 th June am
Time management and prioritisation	Wrexham	20 th June pm
Effective communication	Birmingham	TBC
Project management for non-project managers	Birmingham	TBC
Problem solving using Lean techniques	Birmingham	TBC
Interviewing skills	London	TBC
Managing performance, probations and 1-2-1s	London	TBC
Managing conflict	London	TBC
Effective minute and note taking	London	TBC
Effective leadership	London	TBC

For more information on the courses available, please see GAMBICA's Eventbrite webpage, but you can book the courses direct with Sonia who will invoice you once we everyone has booked and we can finalise the price.

As this is shared cost training, the cost will vary depending on how many delegates book. The minimum number is six, and the cost in this case will be around £360 per delegate, the maximum is normally twelve attendees at which point the cost will be around £180 per delegate.

For the courses which show a London or Birmingham location, please get in touch, we may be able to bring a course directly to your premises. To book places contact Sonia on 07788292842 or email: Sonia.dougall@gambica.org.uk

Course contents and trainers provided by Make UK: GAMBICA has engaged with Make UK to provide this shared cost training which can be backed up by consultancy and support. It gives GAMBICA members access to an experienced team of professional coaches with extensive knowledge of supporting a variety of manufacturing and service environments. Make UK has a long and extensive track record of delivering continuous improvement training and consultancy with a strong manufacturing focus.

Underground labs are all the rage

AFRICA HAS taken a step towards developing its first deep underground science laboratory with the establishment of the Paarl Africa Underground Laboratory (PAUL) in the Du Toits Kloof mountains in South Africa. Already a decade in planning, the future Paarl Africa Underground Laboratory would be only the second such laboratory in the Southern hemisphere after Australia's Stawell Underground Physics Laboratory.

Meanwhile, China has opened the world's deepest and largest underground laboratory 7,800 feet below a mountain where it should be shielded from cosmic radiation. The China Jinping Underground Laboratory-II in Sichuan Province seeks to uncover the secrets of dark matter. It opened in December 2023, as an expansion of the original CJPL facility.

Listed building will be London's largest office to labs project



A LISTED building in Bloomsbury is to be the latest London landmark to be converted to a hi-tech life sciences hub. The Victoria House scheme is the brainchild of joint venture developers Oxford Properties and Pioneer Group. They plan to convert the 300,000 sq ft Bloomsbury Square building into a wet lab-enabled life sciences space. The property will feature 80,000 sq ft of office, amenity, meeting and retail spaces and an eighth-floor club lounge and a roof terrace overlooking central London. Since the start of 2021, Oxford Properties has completed approximately £2.5bn of life sciences investment and secured a further £4 billion of follow-on development opportunities.

University to turn 1980s Los Angeles shopping mall into labs

THE UNIVERSITY of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) has bought a disused shopping mall in West Los Angeles in order to turn it into a cutting-edge research hub. With \$500m from the state of California and private donations, UCLA will convert the 700,000-sq-ft Westside Pavilion mall into the UCLA Research Park which will house the California Institute for Immunology and Immunotherapy, and the UCLA Center for Quantum Science and Engineering.

Potential 'regulatory non-compliance' with the UKCA mark

THE OFFICE for Product Safety and Standards is highlighting an issue with the use of the UKCA mark and is asking for industry input to an impact assessment.

The issue affects manufacturers who depend on certificates issued by EEA-based competent bodies for personnel and materials, and intend to introduce pressure equipment to the GB market before January 1, 2025.

One of the transitional arrangements that allowed certification by EEA-based competent bodies as part of the UKCA marking conformity assessment process, ceased at the end of December 2023. The government's announcement in August last year extends the acceptance of CE marking indefinitely, providing businesses with the flexibility to choose between UKCA or CE markings for the final conformity marking.

To facilitate the use of UKCA marking, the Pressure Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016 allow EEA-based competent body issued certificates for personnel and materials to be recognised within the UKCA process until 11 pm on December 31, 2024. Presently, UKCA marked pressure equipment can only be placed on the market before 11 pm on December 31, 2024, under specific conditions outlined by the regulations.

The Government proposes to amend the Pressure Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016 to allow certificates issued by EEA-based competent bodies, as well as UK-based bodies, to be used as part of the UKCA process in advance of 2025, subject to parliamentary approval. However, any new legislation cannot be retrospectively applied to equipment that has already been placed on the market.

Legislative adjustment will be necessary to amend essential safety requirements, allowing reliance on certificates for personnel, materials, or material manufacturers' quality assurance systems issued by either a competent body based in the UK or one based in the EEA.

To better understand the financial costs and benefits of these proposed changes, an Impact Assessment is asking for your views on:

- What is the volume of business/projects intended for the GB market between May 1 and December 31, 2024, not covered by an EU Notified Body Module B certificate, UKCA marked, and reliant on post-December 31, 2020, EEA-based competent body issued certificates for personnel and/or materials?
- How much of this volume could potentially be delayed to January 1, 2025?
- What would be the cost of delaying per day, week or month?
- How much business/many projects would you consider delaying?
- What alternative actions would you take instead?
- What would be the cost of those alternative actions?

The deadline for response is Monday, February 12. Please send your responses to Richard Mortimer at the Department of Business and Trade

Richard.mortimer@businessandtrade.gov.uk.

Get your PIC reports in by March

ANNUAL REPORTING for 2023 exports and imports of Prior Informed Consent (PIC) chemicals is due by March 31, 2024. Exporters and importers must submit quantity data to HSE using templates provided on their website. Reporting covers movements to or from Northern Ireland under Article 10 of the GB PIC Regulation. For EU transactions, specifying the EU country is optional, but indicating the movement to or from NI is encouraged. Exemptions include certain Reference Indication Number (RIN) requests and research imports not exceeding 10kg per year. If no export occurred for a previously notified PIC-listed chemical, you are asked to confirm with a NIL return. Submit completed templates to ukdna@hse.gov.uk by March 31, 2024, with the subject line "GB PIC - Annual Reporting - Article 10 - 2023 - company name." Non-confidential, anonymised, and aggregated data will be published on the HSE website later in the year.

Research round-up

Global deaths from fungal disease double



A NEW study led by Professor David Denning at The University of Manchester reveals that the annual global death toll from fungal diseases has doubled to 3.75 million, a figure twice the previous estimate. The study, published in *Lancet Infectious Diseases*, also estimates approximately 6.55 million acute cases annually, based on data from over 80 countries. Fungal diseases now surpass deaths caused by other single pathogens, such as malaria and tuberculosis. Of the deaths linked to fungal diseases, around 68% (2.55 million) are probably directly caused by fungal infections. Notably, the study finds that about one-third of global chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) deaths are linked to *Aspergillus* fungal infection. Pulmonary tuberculosis deaths may also include as many as 28% (340,000) due to fungal diseases. Fungal infections, including aspergillosis, are implicated in a percentage of deaths attributed to conditions like leukemia and lung and bronchus cancer. *Candida*, another fungal infection, poses a serious threat, with an estimated 1.57 million cases of *Candida* bloodstream infection or invasive candidiasis resulting in 995,000 deaths annually. The study emphasises the significant global impact of fungal diseases and underscores the need for increased awareness and diagnostic capabilities.

For more information see the University of Manchester [here](#).

Breakthrough dual crop fungicide

RESEARCHERS AT the University of Nottingham have successfully conducted a field trial of a material that could replace current fungicides. The material resists the attachment of fungal spores, protecting surfaces from fungal infection, including crop surfaces. In the trial, the

material was sprayed directly onto wheat, resulting in a significant reduction in fungal infection by the fungus *Septoria tritici*, up to 26%, while the crop grew as well as the control group. The material is not toxic and provides a potential solution for protecting crops from fungi without the environmental and health risks associated with current fungicides.

For more information see University of Nottingham [here](#).

Cheaper material discovered for LED displays

A RESEARCH team led by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab) has developed 'supramolecular ink,' a groundbreaking technology for use in OLED (organic light-emitting diode) displays and other electronic devices. Unlike conventional OLED materials that often contain rare and expensive metals like iridium, the new supramolecular ink is made from inexpensive, Earth-abundant elements, potentially revolutionising the OLED display industry.

The supramolecular ink technology could be a game-changer for the OLED display sector by replacing precious metals with readily available material not only in displays but also in organic printable films for wearable devices, luminescent art, and sculpture.

OLED screens have gained popularity due to their lighter, thinner, and energy-efficient characteristics, offering superior picture quality without requiring an additional backlight layer. However, the incorporation of rare and expensive metals poses challenges. The Berkeley Lab's supramolecular ink provides an alternative, allowing electronics display manufacturers to adopt a more affordable and energy-efficient fabrication process.

The supramolecular ink is composed of hafnium (Hf) and zirconium (Zr) powders that can be mixed at low temperatures to form a semiconductor 'ink'. This material, created through supramolecular assembly, self-assembles in solution, demonstrating stability and high-purity synthesis at low temperatures. The ink exhibits high efficiency in emitting blue and green light, making it suitable for energy-efficient OLED emitters in electronic displays.

For more information see the Berkley Lab website [here](#).

Bottled water contains thousands of nanoplastics

SCIENTISTS USING stimulated Raman scattering microscopy have discovered thousands of previously invisible nanoplastic particles in bottled water. The study, led by researchers from Columbia University, revealed that an average of 1 litre of bottled water contains approximately 240,000 detectable plastic fragments, a significantly higher count than reported in previous studies. The nanoparticles, measuring less than one micrometer, can enter the bloodstream directly due to their small size. The researchers used this innovative microscopy technique to identify and count nanoplastics in water samples from common bottled water brands, detecting between 110,000-370,000 plastic particles per litre, with around 90% being previously unseen nanoplastics. The most common plastics identified were polyethylene terephthalate (PET), used in water bottles, and unexpectedly high levels of polyamide, possibly originating from water purification filters. The study underscores the

ecological and potential health impacts of nanoplastics, urging further research to understand their distribution, abundance, and potential adverse health outcomes. For further information see The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences [here](#).

Upcoming GAMBICA Events

How to successfully defend your 'No Licence Required' position | Online | 22 February 2024 | 10.30

THIS IS a webinar for anyone who exports goods, providing a thorough refresher on what evidence is needed to successfully defend yourself if you opt not to join the lengthy queues of companies waiting for export licences. It will highlight any areas of weakness you may wish to consider.

Vince Taylor, customs expert from Chamber International will cover:

- The range of laws which could affect you.
- Licences and Lists.
- Due diligence and legal expectations.
- Constructing your HS code.
- Correct legal logic.
- The difficulties of the US regime.
- Best defence.

To reserve your place, click [here](#)

The 61010 suite of standards | Online | 28 February 2024 | 10.30

THIS WEBINAR from Jonathan Hamilton, who has spent over 15 years working in the engineering sector on the IEC 61010 standards for safety compliance, will offer insights on:

- The current development state of IEC 61010
- What to look out for in the next release of IEC 61010 and how it is likely to affect your company.
- Critical timing of release of 61010 parts and when they will become mandatory.
- What's coming further down the road from IEC 61010 and how to best prepare your company for it.
- How to make the most from upcoming 61010 changes and boost your profits as a result.

Aimed primarily at managers, engineers and product development teams, the webinar will benefit anyone who works at a company which uses IEC 61010. The 61010 suite of standards cover safety aspects of products in the process instrumentation, test & measurement, Industrial automation and laboratory technology sectors and are viewed as a key enabler of sales in those sectors.

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

Strategic growth in a future full of AI – GAMBICA lab industry conference | 12 March 2024 | Stapleford Park Country House Hotel, Leicestershire

HOW FAST and how far can your company grow? If you are making plans to take advantage of the growth in laboratory capacity, the 2024 GAMBICA Lab Industry Conference will provide you with essential information on the key issues including:

- How AI and digitalisation will affect the lab and the world, and how they can be harnessed to give you a competitive edge.
- The latest economic and political projections for the market you will be trading in.
- Updates on sustainability and how your peers are faring, together with insights on customer requirements.
- How to sell to universities as UK frameworks come up for revision.

The conference also provides an opportunity to prepare industry demands for an incoming government on the support needed by business, removing road blocks for exporters, addressing skills shortages and building the UK's standing in international research. Our keynote speaker will be opposition front-bench spokesperson on trade, Lord McNicol. Click [here](#) to book your place and meet with your peers and formulate plans for your company and the future UK lab industry.

Refrigeration Group meeting – what's happening on F-Gas | 28 March 2024 | 10.30

A MEETING that offers an update on how F-Gas Regulations are changing in the Middle East, Turkey, the US, the EU and most importantly, the UK. Davide Palumbo, from Navis International Trade & Consulting Ltd, an international consultancy offering F-Gas advice will provide insights on international developments in F-Gas. To register to attend, click [here](#).

Shared cost training available via GAMBICA | Multiple dates | Multiple locations

THE FOLLOWING courses have been arranged for GAMBICA members with trainers provided by Make UK. Cost depends on the number of delegates. If fully booked (12 people) the courses will cost c £180 pp, if six people attend the costs will be c £360pp.

The following courses are available:

Lean office	Newmarket	11 April
8D Practical problem-solving	Wrexham	16 April
Introduction to Six Sigma	Bicester	6 June
How to behave assertively	Wrexham	20th June am
Time management and prioritisation	Wrexham	20th June pm
Effective communication	Birmingham	TBC
Project management for non-project managers	Birmingham	TBC
Problem solving using Lean techniques	Birmingham	TBC
Interviewing skills	London	TBC
Managing performance, probations and 1-2-1s	London	TBC
Managing conflict	London	TBC
Effective minute and note taking	London	TBC
Effective leadership	London	TBC

To book places contact Sonia on 07788292842 or email: Sonia.dougall@gambica.org.uk

Industry Events

Pharma CMC Process Ontology | Online | 1 February 2024

PISTOIA ALLIANCE is developing a project to build a pharmaceutical (CMC) process ontology based on the ISA88/95 framework to standardise laboratory and plant production process recipes to establish standardised definitions, facilitate digital technology transfers and integration with execution systems in order to capture structured process data. Speakers will be from Amgen and Crownpoint technologies. To register, click [here](#).

Doing business in Thailand | Online | 29 February 2024 | 10.00 - 11.00

SANTANDER BANK is running an introductory webinar with Mahanakorn Partners Group on everything you need to know about expanding into Thailand. The event is free but to access it you have to register for the Santander Navigator portal which is free for GAMBICA members. To do so, click [here](#).

ELRIG Research and Innovation 2024 | Manchester | 20 March 2024

THIS CONFERENCE will feature scientific streams covering: Oncology, Animal-free drug discovery, New horizons in anti-microbial resistance and Mass spectrometry and 'Omics'. ELRIG Conferences are free to attend. For more information click [here](#).

Innovate UK Materials Research Exchange | London | 23-24 April 2024

FOUR MATERIALS events in one place, Global research and innovation in plastics sustainability; Circular critical materials conference, Reimagining materials and manufacturing and Investor showcases. To register to attend, click [here](#).

London Biotechnology Show | London Olympia | 8-9 May 2024

A WORLD class exhibition and comprehensive conference according to the organisers, this inaugural event aims to cover the full value chain for biotech in the UK. To book an exhibition stand, click [here](#).

SLAS Europe Conference and Exhibition 2024 | Barcelona | 27-29 May 2024

THIS LAB automation and biotech exhibition and conference offers scientific sessions, keynote presentations and new product demonstrations concentrating on frontiers of technology, screening applications and diagnostics and shaping the future of therapeutics. For more information click [here](#).

GAMBICA discount for Future Labs Live | Basel | 26-29 June 2024

THERE IS now a 10% discount available to GAMBICA members who would like to exhibit at Future Labs Live in Basel. The organisers have offered GAMBICA members the opportunity to present to attendees, exhibit or sponsor at reduced rates and improve your brand awareness among industry leaders, innovators, and enthusiasts attending this leading global

R&D lab event for innovation and technology. Key themes of the show are digital transformation, connectivity and collaboration, data management, AI and deep learning, lab operations and efficiency and smart lab facilities. The event aims to bring together industry disruptors, start-ups, lab heads, and technicians alongside tech and practice innovators to showcase solutions and discuss the future of labs.

For speaking and partnering enquiries contact Ellie at ellie.whitehead@terrapinn.com, for exhibiting inquiries and to claim your 10% discount, email Shilpa at Shilpa.suthar@terrapinn.com For more information, click [here](#).

Festival of Biologics | Basel | 15-17 October 2024

THIS CONFERENCE is designed for experts working in antibody therapies, immunotherapies and biosimilars and features 150 speakers from Cancer Research UK, Novartis, Roche, Numab, Pierre Fabre and others. It covers discovery, development, manufacturing, market access, and fill and finish. The agenda will be released next month. Tickets cost 150 Euros and there will also be a small exhibition. For more information click [here](#).

Solutions in Science | Cardiff | 8-10 July 2025

FEEDBACK FROM visitors to the last SinS conference in June 23 was positive and the next event has now been scheduled. 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@labmate.com 01727 855574.

Export News

Changes for importers and exporters from 31st January 2024

Please note: this information was provided before the announcement on 30 January about changes to the import and export regimes in Northern Ireland. We do not yet have details of those changes.

FROM 31st January 2024 the requirement for health certification on imports of medium risk animal products, plants, plant products and high-risk food (and feed) of non-animal origin from the EU comes into force.

There are two further important milestones this year. On 30 April 2024 documentary and risk-based identity and physical checks on medium-risk animal products, plants, plant products and high risk food (and feed) of non-animal origin from the EU will begin. And on 31 October 2024: Safety and security declarations for EU imports will come into force. Alongside this, HM Government will introduce a reduced dataset for imports and use of the UK single trade window will remove duplication where possible across different pre-arrival datasets.

In order to help businesses prepare for the Border Target Operating Model, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has published guidance materials covering a range of issues that you can access [here](#).

Also, from 31 January 2024 some goods will face full customs controls when moved directly from Irish ports to Great Britain. Traders, or anyone who moves goods on their behalf, will need to be familiar with the new process. Goods will need to complete import processes if they are being imported directly from Ireland into Great Britain (not moving from or through Northern Ireland). Goods moving from Northern Ireland to Great Britain through Irish ports will also have to complete import processes if they are:

- non-qualifying Northern Ireland goods
- excise goods (alcohol, tobacco, and energy products) or
- goods which do not move directly to an Irish port once they have left Northern Ireland for example, goods which are held in storage in Ireland.

For these goods you will have to follow the import requirements set out in the Border Target Operating Model.

Finally (for now), from 31 January 2024 you will no longer be able to delay sending HMRC the full information about your goods by up to 175 days after import. If you moved goods from Northern Ireland or Ireland to Great Britain before 31 January 2024 and used the delayed declarations process, you will need to submit your supplementary declarations and pay any customs duty within the 175 days deadline for the following movements:

- goods moved from Northern Ireland or Ireland to Great Britain which are not qualifying Northern Ireland goods;
- goods moved from or through Northern Ireland to avoid the UK tariff or import processes; and
- goods moved from Ireland to Great Britain, having originally started their journey in the EU and passed through Northern Ireland.

You could receive a penalty up to £2500 if you fail to submit your supplementary declarations and pay any outstanding customs duty.

It has also been announced that the threshold for submitting an online declaration for merchandise carried in baggage has increased to £2500. The Merchandise Online Declaration Service is available [here](#).

Useful helpline numbers

- HMRC Customs & International Trade - 0300 322 9434
 - New Computerised Transit System - 0300 322 7095
 - The Office for Product Safety and Standards - 0121 345 1201
 - MHRA Customer Service Centre - 020 3080 6000
 - Home Office - UK Visas & Immigration - 0300 790 6268
 - Home Office - EU Settlement Scheme Application Resolution Centre - 0300 123 7379
 - HMRC Import/export general enquiries can be made by calling 0300 200 3700.
-

CDS nearly ready

FINAL TESTING is still taking place of the new Customs Declaration Service (CDS), the IT front-end which is replacing the old CHIEF system. HMRC has stated that most businesses will be able to move to the new system for exports by 30 March 2024.

Those unable to fully migrate before the deadline will be given a period of three months from when HMRC tells them they can migrate, to do so. HMRC will be in touch with businesses submitting export declarations with further details of timelines around when migration will be commencing.

There will also be an exceptions process in place following the initial three months for businesses who are unable to migrate by this extended deadline through no fault of their own. Businesses are invited to subscribe to CDS to be able to submit export declarations. Declarants who have already subscribed for imports do not need to do so again. There is also a free Trader Dress Rehearsal (TDR) Service to practice submitting declarations in a safe test environment. You should contact your software provider to ask if you can start using their software for TDR.

China allows visa-free access to Europeans but not the British

ON 24 November 2023, China announced a new visa-free entry policy for ordinary passport holders from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Malaysia, effective from 1 December 2023 to 30 November 2024. This policy allows for business and tourism for up to 15 days per entry.

The move is part of the gradual softening of China's entry requirements following the lifting of its Covid-era restrictions in early 2023. China resumed its pre-Covid visa and entry policies in March 2023, including the 144-hour visa-free transit policy, which allows foreign travellers transiting through the country to enjoy a six-day stay in certain Chinese cities without a visa.

There has been no indication that UK visitors can expect the same visa-free entry, and the British government has made no specific comment on the announcement.

HR News

Changes to national insurance contributions: an employer's guide

A REDUCTION in national insurance (NI) affecting 27 million UK workers came into effect on January 6, lowering the main employee NI rate from 12% to 10%. The change, announced in the November 2023 autumn statement, is expected to benefit the average earner by £450

annually. The government claims that full-time nurses, junior doctors, and teachers will save £520, £750, and £630, respectively.

Proposed paternity leave changes

THE UK government has published draft regulations reforming paternity leave to allow fathers and partners to divide statutory leave into one-week blocks and take them any time within the child's first year. Effective from March 8, but applicable only to children whose expected week of birth is after 6 April, The Paternity Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2024 seek to overcome financial pressures by accommodating varied earnings during paternity leave and the notice period necessary for each period of absence has reduced from 15 weeks before the birth to four weeks. Only legally classified employees are within scope, and agency workers, even if legally classified as employees, may be excluded.