

L@b Brief | July 2025

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COMMENT

Is the second-hand lab instruments market really benefitting users?



I AM very happy to tell you that we have had a number of new companies join GAMBICA in the last few months, these include Steribar, whose new member profile you can see in this issue, Esco Life Sciences, Vision Engineering and Fluid Science.

When new members join, I often ask them what they think are the big issues facing the industry. I was particularly struck by the response of Chris Moore, now MD of Esco Life Sciences, who many of you will know from his time with Appleton Woods. He responded:

“As a laboratory equipment manufacturer, we've observed a noticeable rise in second-hand and used equipment entering the market since the Covid pandemic.

While the upfront cost savings may seem appealing, especially in today's economic climate, these can quickly be offset by hidden costs over the equipment's lifecycle. Issues such as lack of warranty, potential contamination, compliance risks, unexpected downtime, and limited manufacturer support. These can all compromise the efficiency and reliability of commercial and research labs."

The extended period of 're-surfacing' of consumables over-purchased during Covid has been an issue for many lab companies. It also feels as if there has been an increase in the number of companies trading in second hand lab equipment in recent years.

You can see how appealing it would be to cash strapped universities to buy much cheaper second hand equipment, but if you agree that doing so will affect the quality of their research, perhaps GAMBICA should be mounting a campaign to reach purchasers on this issue?

Let me know what you think.

**Toodle pip!
Jacqueline**

UK News

Life sciences plan seeks to set real targets

THE GOVERNMENT has recently launched its new [Life Sciences Sector Plan](#) as part of its [Industrial Strategy](#). The plan seeks to build on the strengths of the UK Life Sciences sector and is unusual in that it sets out measurable targets and gives individuals responsibility for achieving them. There will be an annual sector plan implementation update which will measure, among many other things, the number of UK Life Science companies with a valuation above £10million and the speed with which products are being licenced or registered.

The headline aim is to position the UK as the leading life sciences economy in Europe with more investment in commercial R&D than any other European country by 2030 and to be the third biggest life sciences economy in the world by 2035 (after US and China). The plan is supported by £2 billion in government funding although whether all of this is new money is not made clear.

The plan includes making available a Life Science Innovative Manufacturing fund of up to £520 million. This will be used to bring globally mobile manufacturing investments to the UK. Of particular interest to GAMBICA members will be the new British Industrial Competitiveness Scheme which will reduce the costs of electricity for eligible companies by approximately £35/45\MWh up to 2030. To be eligible you need to be in the supply chain for an electricity intensive frontier industry in one of the eight industrial strategy growth driving sectors which are:

- Advanced manufacturing
- Clean Energy industries

- Creative industries
- Defence
- Digital technologies
- Financial services
- Life sciences
- Professional business services.

A consultation on eligibility will open shortly.

Investment seen as the key

Many life science firms are said to struggle to get funding at series B and in later funding rounds, which has led to a loss of many innovative companies to overseas buyers. £4 billion of growth capital from the British Business Bank (BBB) is to be targeted at this problem and BBB will publish its returns data to encourage other investors. There will be an additional service to support 10-20 high potential UK companies to scale up, invest and remain in the UK.

Investing in discovery and curiosity driven science

UKRI's biomedical catalyst is to be scaled up and a ten-year funding allocation has been given to the Laboratory of Molecular Biology which is situated on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and companies will be supported to invest in R&D, especially where their research leverages AI and is in the following areas:

- Translational models and networks;
- Commercial clinical research; and
- Data and genomics capabilities.

The translational models work is focused particularly on ending the use of animals in research and the Government intends to publish a strategy on this by the end of 2025.

One interesting fact to come out of the plan is that the NHS was paid £26,311 for every patient enrolled in a clinical trial in 2022/23. Part of the plan is to make it easier and quicker to set up clinical trials with the ambition to get this below 150 days.

Data gets top billing

Central to the plan is facilitating the further development of clean, accessible health data to attract researchers. The UK Biobank is to be given £20 million to undertake proteomic analyses of all 500,000 participants and link them to health outcomes. Genomics England will deliver a new adult population genomics programme which will sequence the genomes of 150,000 adults.

Export

Unfortunately, the plan falls rather short of anything more than warm words in the section on helping SMEs to export. While the Director of the Office for Life Sciences, Roz Campion, is required to develop dedicated support for Life Science SMEs to export, the only metrics by which she will be judged are the value of UK Life Sciences exports, split by pharmaceuticals and medical technologies and the sector sentiment on capability to export.

UK Export Finance has £80 billion to support UK exporters and the plan suggests that there will be export missions, global exhibitions, international partnerships and dedicated account management.

Which sounds rather like the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) picking favourites rather than any industry-based activity to promote exports across the sector.

Other targets which may be of interest include:

ACTION 13: The Life Sciences sector will benefit as the BBB commits an additional £4 billion of Industrial Strategy Growth Capital to support investment and growth in the IS-8. UK

Metric: Total, and global share of, equity finance raised by private Life Sciences companies headquartered in the UK.

Senior Responsible Officer: CEO, British Business Bank, currently Louis Taylor

ACTION 19: Deliver the £520m Life Sciences Innovative Manufacturing Fund (LSIMF). UK

Metrics:

- Number of LSIMF investments supported.
- Amount of private investment leveraged through the LSIMF.
- Number of jobs created and safeguarded by the LSIMF.
- Value of R&D spillovers delivered by LSIMF investments.

Senior Responsible Officer: Director, Office for Life Sciences, Roz Campion.

ACTION 20: Continue to invest at scale in Life Sciences manufacturing innovation.

Metrics:

- Industrial investment leveraged through government funding for manufacturing process innovation.
- Overall impact through tracking Life Sciences manufacturing productivity.

Senior Responsible Officer: Executive Director, Healthy Living and Agriculture, Innovate UK, Dr Stella Peace.

ACTION 23: Establish a dedicated service to support 10-20 high-potential UK companies to successfully scale, invest and remain domiciled in the UK.

Metrics:

- Number of Life Sciences companies listed on FTSE 350.
- Number of IPOs by UK Life Sciences companies on the LSE and on overseas markets and amount raised overall.
- Number of people employed by UK Life Sciences SMEs.

Senior Responsible Officer: Director, Office for Life Sciences, Roz Campion

Solutions in Science finds a new home

Report by Lara Stomberg

THE BIENNIAL *Solutions in Science* event, a Royal Society of Chemistry meeting aimed at the chromatography and mass spectrometry markets, appears to be thriving in its new location in Brighton.



THIS YEAR, the event got off to a strong start with a plenary session calling for improved data labelling. Such improvements would enable more effective sharing of libraries. The event also featured 14 researchers giving 'flash' oral presentations. These short, generally well-presented and engaging talks served to draw attention to – and generate interest in – a display of research posters positioned next to the exhibitor stands.

Among the presentations – which included topics such as using high-resolution mass spectrometry to screen for human PFAS exposure, evaluating the cleanliness of reused pipette tips, and testing seawater and green solvents – were some particularly interesting contributions from the University of York's collaboration with their local policeforce. These included a methodology for fast screening of substances seized by police, and the extraction of cannabinoids from 'edibles' (otherwise known as 'gummy bears').



Rebecca Williams, (left) also from York, presented techniques to quantify iridium speciation with a view to improving recovery rates of this rare element. It is always a question for lab suppliers as to whether meeting research scientists is actually useful for them. From Rebecca's perspective, as an organic chemist, she would not typically attend a mass spectrometry-focused event, but found the experience valuable, mentioning positive conversations with exhibitors about their outreach. Although, as a second-year researcher, she is unlikely to be purchasing equipment just now, she felt that the opportunity to meet exhibitors will be useful as her career develops.

The organisers had clearly recognised the need to encourage interaction between delegates and exhibitors at this highly specialised conference and had therefore located the refreshments alongside the exhibition stands.

The scientific committee, which sets the topics for the event and plays a significant role in attracting researchers, comprises leading names in UK and European mass spectrometry. This includes Professor John Langley, Chair of the RSC Separation Science Group; Dr Jackie Mosely, Academic Lead at the Centre of Excellence in Mass Spectrometry at the University of York; and Dr Stefaniya Velichkova, a researcher in volatomics at the University of Antwerp. They were joined by colleagues from Imperial, Swansea, Portsmouth, Sunderland, Southampton and Manchester.



The exhibition was notably larger and more diverse than that at the London Lab Live event earlier this year, and it is hoped that interactions between speakers, delegates and exhibitors will continue to grow as the event develops.

Exhibitors at the event enjoyed numerous opportunities to highlight their offerings. Two companies presented posters and were therefore included in the 'flash' oral sessions. In addition, sponsors Da Vinci Laboratory Solutions UK and Ireland were given a prominent speaking slot on the first day, where they introduced their new venture – the result of a merger between Element Materials Technology Laboratory Instrumentation UK (formerly Anatune) and JSB UK.

A full session of the conference was dedicated to the Technology Specialist Network, a group focused on enhancing the skills of laboratory technicians.

Technician education and training is now the business of the recently established Institute of Technical Skills and Strategy (ITSS), based at the University of Nottingham, has been funded by Research England. It offers knowledge exchange and training for technicians, and provides funding for members to attend conferences and, crucially for the laboratory industry, is helping technicians to develop the skills necessary to exploit their new eligibility to apply for research funding in their own right.

With the next Research Excellence Framework evaluation due in 2029, now may be the time to explore opportunities to support your university clients with their submissions.

Further highlights from the Scientific Programme

Further notable sessions included a talk by Dr Ben Williams (UWE Bristol), who shared his work on the measurement and characterisation of airborne microplastic. Microplastics are now ubiquitous, detected not only in outdoor and indoor environments but even in

atmospheric cloud samples. He had demonstrated a correlation between inhaled microplastics and respiratory diseases like COPD, with microplastic particles identified in human lung tissue, breast milk, and blood.

Ben detailed the range of analytical approaches used to detect and classify these particles, including optical microscopy for larger particles and infrared micro spectroscopy for more precise characterisation. He also highlighted the contamination risks within labs themselves, stressing the need for strict cleanliness and procedural standards.



One standout feature of his work was the use of ‘citizen science’ during the COVID-19 pandemic, when home sampling kits were distributed to the public, allowing researchers to collect data remotely. This innovative approach revealed differences in microplastic concentrations by room type—bathrooms showed particularly high levels. Of the particulates found, 41% were microplastics and 55% natural fibres, with polyester being the most common synthetic polymer. His work underscored both the analytical challenges and the need for cleaner lab protocols, offering plenty of relevance for those supplying trace-level detection and contamination-resistant systems as well as for citizen science-compatible devices that can bridge professional and public engagement.

For anyone with a wheezy chest, one interesting finding is that levels of indoor air pollution are significantly higher in UK homes during the summer than in the winter. This is likely due to the off-gassing of solvents at higher temperatures and the increased likelihood of benzoic acid from car emissions entering homes through open windows.

A clinical perspective was provided in a session on LC-MS/MS methods for profiling steroid hormones in plasma. The validated method, enrolled in the National External Quality Assessment Scheme (NEQAS), is now ready to apply to clinical studies. The talk reinforced the continuing centrality of LC-MS/MS in both research and clinical diagnostics and highlighted the growing role of highly reliable, robust, multi-analyte mass spectrometry in diagnostics—a trend likely to drive demand for high-sensitivity instruments and compliant workflows.

Another interesting talk was an engaging presentation from the University of Southampton. Dr Julie Herniman described the ‘walk-up’ chromatography and mass spectrometry facility, as well as the outreach initiative ‘Spectroscopy in a Suitcase,’ which brings portable analytical tools to schools and colleges. Their message was clear: technician training and access to modern instrumentation are critical—and growing—needs in both research and education.

These sessions, along with others throughout the event, collectively pointed to a market increasingly focused on flexible, high-performance tools that serve both scientific and educational demands.

Lara Stomberg

GAMBICA urges government to act on China's rare earth export ban

GAMBICA IS actively lobbying the UK government on behalf of its members following China's export controls on Rare Earth Elements (REE), particularly Neodymium (NdFeB). We have written to officials warning of mounting concerns over supply chain disruption and urging the government to act swiftly to protect UK manufacturing and scientific research.

While much media focus has been on the automotive sector, the ban could significantly disrupt the supply of scientific and medical instruments. Many devices, including spectrophotometers, magnetic stirrers, electron microscopes, and NMR systems, depend on REE-based components such as magnets and optics.

GAMBICA members report early signs of shortages and shipment delays, with some UK suppliers already unable to fulfil orders as a result of the new Chinese export licensing process, which takes up to 75 days and offers no transparency or status updates.

We are calling on the government to engage directly with China, support the introduction of a general export licence scheme, and resist overly intrusive end-user disclosure requirements and also advocating for protections against quantity limits that could hamper sector growth.

LABORATORY Construction Update

New Cold Spring Harbor Lab Expansion



COLD SPRING Harbor Laboratory (CSHL) in New York has reached a major milestone with the topping out of its new Artificial Intelligence and Quantitative Biology (AIQB) building. The 28,000 sq. ft. facility is part of a larger 379,500 sq. ft. campus expansion that includes cutting-edge neuroscience and cancer

biology labs, a conference center, and housing for visiting scientists.

The AIQB building alone will house four research labs, nearly 100 postdoctoral workstations, and multiple meeting and administrative spaces. This makes it a prime opportunity for laboratory equipment suppliers targeting neuroscience, computational biology, and AI-driven research applications.

Suppliers interested in providing lab equipment and technology may contact:

- Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Procurement Office: procurement@cshl.edu
- Facilities Management: facilities@cshl.edu
- CSHL Research Admin: researchadmin@cshl.edu

With construction supported by \$55 million in New York State funding and completion expected by 2027, CSHL's expansion strengthens Long Island's position as a global research hub—offering new demand for lab instrumentation, fume hoods, cryogenics, and imaging systems.

Battery R&D company fits out UK HQ in Coventry

POTENZA TECHNOLOGY, the battery R&D division of FPT Powertrain (part of Iveco Group), is creating a new 26,000 sq ft UK headquarters in Coventry. The facility, designed by office interior consultancy OP, will combine technical labs with collaborative office space while maintaining an EPC A energy rating. A key feature is a flexible 'town hall' area with reconfigurable furniture and a striking seating installation built around half a commercial vehicle, nodding to the Iveco brand.

New lab for New South Wales

THE UNIVERSITY of New South Wales (UNSW) has officially completed its Science and Engineering Building (SEB), a ten-storey, state-of-the-art research and teaching hub located at the Kensington campus in Sydney. The SEB now anchors the university's physical sciences precinct and supports the Schools of Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, and Arts and Media. Designed for adaptability, the SEB features over 7,000 m² of wet chemistry labs and 10,000 m² of teaching, office, and breakout space. Laboratory spaces are modular and can be reconfigured with minimal disruption. The Mark Wainwright Analytical Centre, housed within the SEB, offers access to advanced electron microscopy and instrumentation. Energy efficiency was a core focus, with manifolded fume cupboards, photovoltaic cells, bore water systems, and high-performance glazing contributing to sustainability goals.

New contractor appointed to run Canadian nuclear labs

ATOMIC ENERGY of Canada Limited (AECL) has named Nuclear Laboratory Partners of Canada Inc. (NLPoC) as the Preferred Bidder for the next contract to manage and operate Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) after the current agreement ends in September 2025. NLPoC is a joint venture of BWXT Government Group Inc., Amentum Environment & Energy Inc., and Kinectrics Inc., with Battelle Memorial Institute as a key subcontractor. The contract includes management of AECL's sites and assets—most notably the Chalk River Laboratories, as well as environmental remediation work in Port Hope, Ontario and Pinawa, Manitoba. It also supports AECL's innovation agenda in clean energy, health sciences, and nuclear security.

Alicante to get new biomedical research building

CONSTRUCTION IS underway on the new Alicante Institute for Health and Biomedical Research (ISABIAL) building, offering potential opportunities for UK-based laboratory suppliers. The €13.3 million project, now in its fourth month, is being built on the grounds of Alicante General Hospital and will span 6,194 square metres across three floors. The new facility will allow ISABIAL to expand beyond its current location within the hospital, enabling growth of its 44 research groups and over 600 researchers. The building will include advanced laboratory spaces such as a freezer room, nitrogen tank room, centrifugation area, and sequencing area, as well as a Clinical Trials Unit with patient beds and consultation rooms.

With construction expected to continue into 2026, UK lab suppliers may find opportunities to provide specialised equipment and systems to support biomedical research, genomics, and clinical trials. Suppliers interested in exploring procurement possibilities can monitor developments via official ISABIAL or Valencian government channels as the project progresses.

Novo Nordisk to expand testing labs in China

NOVO NORDISK has announced it will invest approximately RMB 800 million (\$112 million) to expand quality testing laboratory of its production plant in Tianjin, China, and hold a project launch event. The total construction area of the quality inspection laboratory expansion project is about 18,000 square meters and includes chemical, microbiological and biological laboratories. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2026.

GAMBICA Events

BID WRITING INCLUDING BEST USE OF AI – SHARED COST TRAINING | BRADFORD | 16 SEPTEMBER 2025 | 09.30 - 17.30

THERE IS one place left on this shared cost training course designed to help suppliers elevate the quality and effectiveness of their bid submissions in an increasingly competitive public procurement landscape. Building on core bid writing principles, it will provide 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 depends on the number of delegates) email jacqueline.balian@gambica.org.uk or click [here](#) to reserve your place.

SELLING THROUGH DISTRIBUTORS – SHARED COST TRAINING | GAMBICA OFFICES, LONDON | 3 and 4 DECEMBER 2025 | 09.30 - 17.30

BACK DUE to popular demand, this shared cost training normally costs £3600 per person but could cost as little as £900 per person from GAMBICA if 12 people sign up for the course. Taught by lab industry experts, Sharon Eaton and Ludo Chapman the modules are:

MODULE 1 Channel partner skill development	MODULE 2 Channel partner management planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The role model channel partner manager• Developing personal goals• Prioritising a focused workload• Managing v Leading skills• Communication & listening skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business plan development• Current situation audit & gap analysis• Defining best partner profile for optimal coverage• Channel partner recruitment process• Planning and managing growth

MODULE 3 Managing Channel Partners	MODULE 4 Influencing channel partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing channel partner performance Managing targets and sales funnels Business reviews with your channel partners Managing channel conflicts Managing under-performance, recovery and termination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing capability and willingness Managing power imbalances Channel partner motivation Constructive feedback Developing trusting relationships

We can accommodate between 6 and 12 people and the cost will be between 1600 plus VAT per person (if six people attend) and 850 per person (if 12 book).

Click [here](#) to register your interest and Sarah will be in touch with a price once we know how many people will be taking the training.

EXPORT TRAINING DISCOUNTED FOR GAMBICA MEMBERS | ONLINE | AUG-SEPT 2025

EXPORT TRAINING is available to GAMBICA members from Chamber International at Chamber members' prices. A range of courses for the next two months is listed below but GAMBICA members may be particularly interested in a new course called ***Accelerating export success: A practical training programme to help businesses trade smarter***

The Export Trade Accelerator programme, provides a comprehensive, practical training solution tailored for new and developing exporters. Delivered live online via Zoom over six half-day modules, the programme offers step-by-step guidance to help businesses build in-house expertise across key areas of export operations. Each module is delivered by experienced trade professionals, focuses on practical application, compliance, and commercial efficiency. The course has helped businesses improve confidence, performance, and profitability in international trade without requiring strategic consultancy or export market planning.

Delegates from companies like [Asynt](#) and [NaughtOne](#) have already seen measurable results, strengthening in-house capabilities and streamlining export operations as a direct result of participating in the programme. Whether you're looking to improve compliance, reduce costs, or build a confident export team, the Export Trade Accelerator programme offers a practical, accessible route to sustainable international growth.

Explore upcoming dates and book your place at: chamber-international.com/export-trade-accelerator For more information contact Carla at carlaa@chamber-international.com

AUGUST COURSES	SEPTEMBER COURSES
6 Aug: Shipping to the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar	2 Sep: Methods of Payment & Letters of Credit
7 Aug: Importing and Customs	10 Sep to 22 Oct: Export Trade Accelerator (ETA) - International Trade Qualification
14 Aug: CDS for Exports	15 Sep: Incoterms® - The Basics
19 Aug: Importing from the EU	16 Sep: Lithium Batteries by Air, Sea & Road
21 Aug: Understanding Exporting	25 Sep: Shipping to and from Northern Ireland

Further information is available [here](#). When booking, quote discount code 'CICSP25' to get your 10% discount.

INDUSTRY Events

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](#).

UK SUPPLY CHAIN EVENT | RUTHERFORD APPLETON LAB | 10 SEPTEMBER 2025

THE UK Industrial Liaison Office is hosting an event for UK companies interested in supplying both the International Facilities and STFC's National Laboratories at the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus in Oxfordshire on 10 September 2025. This is an opportunity to meet technical and procurement experts from the international facilities and national laboratories in one place. Spaces are filling up rapidly. Click [here](#) to find out more – including how to book your exhibition space.

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. 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 will in fact feature **the Community of Madrid**, through the **Fundación para el Conocimiento madri+d**. For more information click [here](#).

LIFE SCIENCES INNOVATION CONFERENCE | LONDON | 18 SEPTEMBER 2025

THIS CONFERENCE aims to bring together 250+ attendees from the NHS, health research communities and prominent members of the life sciences sector to discuss Government plans to channel significant investment into the UK's health and life sciences sector over the next five years. For more information click [here](#).

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 local and international markets. 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

LABNL | JAARBEURS, UTRECHT, NETHERLANDS | 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](#).

ELRIG'S DRUG DISCOVERY | LIVERPOOL | 21-22 OCTOBER 2025

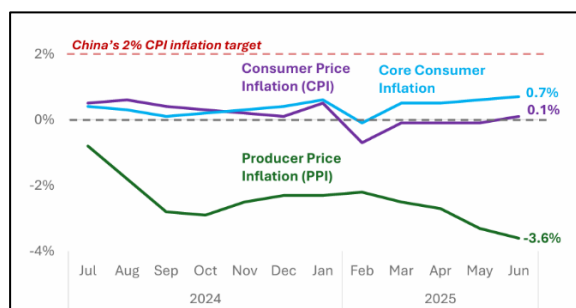
EXPECTED TO host 3000 attendees over two days, this seems to be an exhibition disguised as a free-to-attend conference, but it does have SILA and Royal Society of Chemistry as event partners. For more information click [here](#).

EXPORT News

China – opportunities and concerns

WHILE CHINA remains an important market, and supplier, for GAMBICA members, latest figures confirm its broader economic challenges. Recent figures show that consumer price inflation remains barely above zero, with continuing weak domestic demand despite targeted stimulus. Meanwhile, the producer price index (PPI) has continued to fall, driven by overcapacity, intense competition in sectors such as electric vehicles, and external uncertainty. China's exports have recently surged, largely due to front-loaded shipments during the truce in the US-China trade dispute and concerted efforts to diversify markets. Imports, have picked up modestly, supported by restocking activity at factories and relatively low global commodity prices.

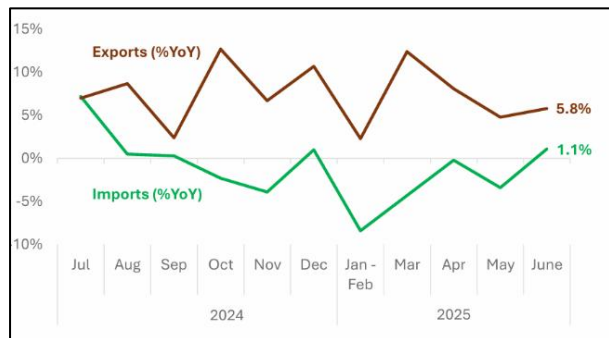
China Inflation Trends (% Change YoY)



In a development which may present opportunities for UK suppliers, China's Ministry of Finance has imposed new restrictions on the procurement of medical devices from the European Union. Under the new rules, government procurement projects for medical devices with budgets above 45 million yuan (approximately €5.34 million) will now exclude EU suppliers. Analysts at the

Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS) interpret the policy as a political signal rather than an economic necessity, reflecting Beijing's willingness to use procurement rules to assert pressure in advance of the EU-China summit.

China's Imports and Exports (% Change YoY)



The move comes in response to the European Commission's June decision to exclude Chinese firms from certain public procurement tenders exceeding €5 million.

One opportunity has arisen in relation to a controversial infrastructure project; China has started work on what is set to become the world's largest hydropower dam, located in the Tibet Autonomous Region. The 1.2 trillion-yuan (£124 billion) project,

due to complete in the 2030s, is designed to generate around 300 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually—comparable to the entire electricity consumption of the United Kingdom in 2024.

The announcement sent construction and engineering stocks sharply higher, with investors optimistic about the broader infrastructure pipeline and associated demand across materials, components, and services. However, the dam has raised concerns in India and Bangladesh, where it is feared that Beijing's control over the Brahmaputra River could affect regional water security. Critics argue the project could disrupt downstream ecosystems, damage agricultural land, and even be used strategically in times of geopolitical tension. Environmental groups have also voiced alarm over the potential impact on the Tibetan plateau's unique biodiversity.

As both sides weigh their strategic options, laboratory suppliers in Europe and beyond are advised to monitor developments closely. The ongoing interplay between infrastructure expansion, domestic economic policy, and shifting trade relations will continue to shape demand patterns and regulatory environments for medical and scientific products.

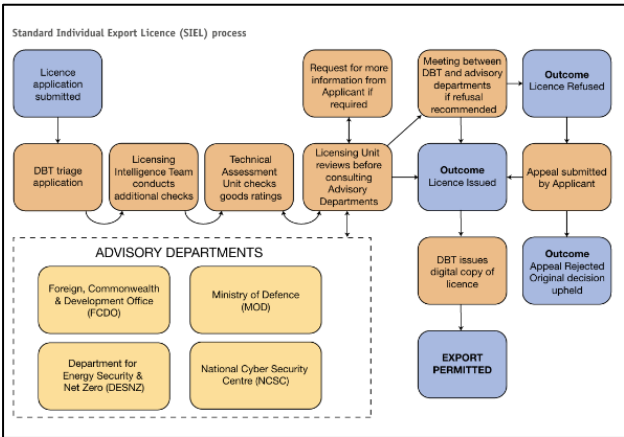
UK France agreement has potential for lab suppliers

THE FIRST bilateral industrial partnership between the UK and an EU member state has been signed by the UK and France. The agreement aims to provide greater clarity and opportunity for cross-border collaboration, particularly in advanced sectors such as clean energy, artificial intelligence, and manufacturing and includes over £1 billion in new French investment in the UK, expected to create thousands of skilled jobs.

Laboratory suppliers could benefit from the partnership's focus on carbon capture, critical minerals, and the adoption of AI in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Both governments have committed to joint efforts in upskilling workers, sharing supply chain methodologies, and supporting innovation-led growth.

The National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB) welcomed the move, calling it a 'critical step' in reversing the decline in UK research and development (R&D) investment. Since 2021, business R&D in the UK has fallen by 6.3% in real terms, with foreign direct investment in UK R&D down 26%.

UK Export Control performance remains below target



THE UK Government’s 28th Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls, which covers January to December 2024 shows that during that period, 60% of the 15,464 Standard Individual Export Licence (SIEL) applications received were completed within 20 working days, which it calls a marked improvement from the 52% achieved in 2023, while acknowledging that this is still short of the Government’s target of 70%.

The report acknowledges the shortfall and attributes it to several operational challenges, including:

- Increased application complexity due to evolving global security risks,
- Staff shortages in key assessment roles,
- Shifting geopolitical dynamics requiring greater scrutiny of export destinations.

To address these issues, ECJU is said to have begun implementing performance improvement measures, though specific details are to be outlined in future reports.

Licence type	Applications and registrations received in 2024
Standard Individual Export Licences (SIELs)	15,253 ⁸
Open Individual Export Licences (OIELs)	375
Open General Export Licences (OGELs)*	1,099
Assimilated General Export Authorisations (GEAs)*	225
Union General Export Authorisations (GEAs)*	35
Standard Individual Trade Control Licences (SITCLs)	206
Open Individual Trade Control Licences (OITCLs)	34
Open General Trade Control Licences (OGTCLs)*	51
Standard Individual Transshipment Licences (SITLs)	12
Open General Transshipment Licences (OGTLs)*	2
General Trade Licences*	77
Other types of General licences*	1

* Registrations

Outcome	SIELs	SITLs	OIELs	SITCLs	OITCLs
Issued	10,814	1	316	116	15
Refused / Rejected	600	0	62	11	12
No Licence Required	2,661	1	0	19	1
Withdrawn, Stopped or Unsuitable	1,389	10	93	68	18
Revoked	0	0	0	0	0

Advanced tube reader company, Steribar joins GAMBICA to network and raise their profile

STERIBAR HAS been supplying OEM tube readers for laboratories and automated liquid handling systems for over 20 years, remaining one of the industry's best kept secrets. Now having identified a gap in the market, the company's directors are aiming to raise it's profile.



The development of Steribar's 2D data matrix reading capabilities involved an element of chance. Financial director Liz Clynes began her career as a laboratory technician in the chemical industry before pursuing a clinical then later a managerial career in the National Health Service. In the late 1990s, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) were causing widespread concern. Disposable, single-use instruments were not practical in many cases and the challenge was tracking re-useable surgical instruments – especially given that prions which carry these diseases are resistant to both heat and radiation. At this time Liz was working with podiatry and dental

services, which were considered particularly vulnerable.

In a coincidence which often underpins innovation, Liz's husband Mike was working on component tracking for Triumph motorcycles. A graduate in mechanical engineering and with a strong interest in computer science, Mike brought experience from a wide range of traceability roles; from monitoring temperatures on poultry farms to logging equipment at the Sellafield nuclear facility.

Drawing on this experience Mike worked closely with the company's current Technical Director Richard Byng to develop the first range of affordable 2D data matrix readers capable of reading small, difficult, low contrast codes on surgical instruments.

GAMBICA members may recognise a time when initial interest from the NHS was overtaken by the introduction of a new nationwide software system, causing other initiatives to be postponed.

“By that stage we had developed a 2D data matrix barcode reader which performed well and most importantly we had gained the expertise to read challenging codes. We were able to offer our solution to other organisations that required specific applications” says Liz Clynes, Financial Director of Steribar Systems. “Our first customer was a Kent-based company making racks of coded laboratory tubes. This company was later acquired by a US-based global supplier of analytical instruments which Steribar has been pleased to supply with OEM tube and rack readers for over 20 years.”

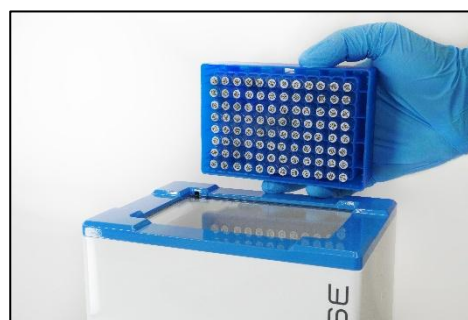


This has been a strong partnership and Steribar’s OEM products have been familiar in larger laboratories and automated sites for many years. Over time it became clear, however, that smaller laboratories were somewhat overlooked and there was a perception that coded tubes were beyond the budget of smaller organisations. These labs often initially only require one barcode reader and a small number of tubes.

To address this, Steribar has developed its own affordable product range of readers to meet different needs and budgets. The KODA Sense can scan an entire SBS rack of tubes in under a second regardless of rack type or brand and is also able to check and correct rack orientation. The compact KODA Solo reads individual test tubes and costs under £600. There is also the KODA Cryo for cryo boxes and SBS sized racks, the KODA Slim especially designed to fit into an SBS sized space within an automated system.

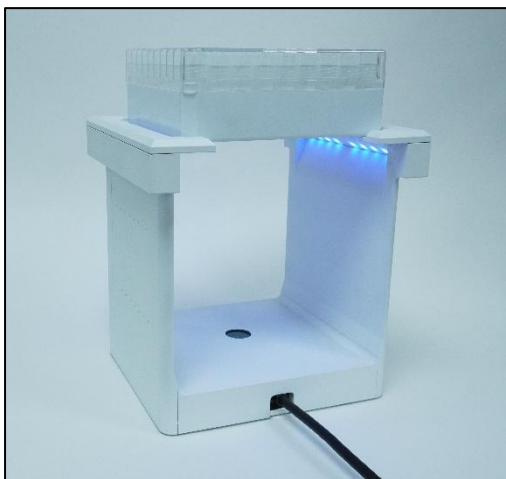
The company’s aim is to challenge the perception that barcode readers are unaffordable for smaller labs, offering alternatives that are both high-performing and accessibly priced.

Raising awareness of the KODA product range is now a priority. “We know that we are not well known in the sector and we want to change that over the next few years,” says Liz. Mike adds “We’ve always thoroughly enjoyed our work and we want our reputation to reflect the quality of what we offer. The flexibility of our new range means we can adapt quickly to customer needs. Our software and hardware development is all done in-house, and we can move quickly. If someone suggests a useful change, we often adopt it without charging for it – if its a good idea we see it as part of the development process”



“In five years’ time we’d like KODA to be as recognisable in labs as Coca-Cola is on the high street. It’s fast, reliable, easy to use and significantly more affordable than many alternatives” he says.

With one of their main competitors in the small lab market – Ziatech – having recently been acquired by Azenta Life Sciences, Steribar sees further potential for growth.



“It’s a promising market” says Liz. Barcoded tubes are becoming more affordable and more labs are recognising the value of automation- not just for time savings, but also for reducing errors and providing greater confidence. Our scanners are compatible with all kinds of racks, so we’re in a good position to support a broad range of users.

Steribar joined GAMBICA with the aim of building stronger connections with LIMS providers and other equipment manufacturers. The team is also interested in collaborative opportunities.

Steribar will be taking part in GAMBICA’s seminar

sessions at Lab Innovations in October – so do come and say hello to Liz there.

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

HORIBA opens new Analytical Solution Plaza

HORIBA HAS opened a new UK-based technical innovation facility in Nuneaton on MIRA Tech Park to give UK scientists ready access to the global company’s breadth of technological capabilities. Scientists from all fields will be welcome to collaborate on demonstrations, feasibility studies, educational seminars and training, with access to technology displays and working products.



***From left to right:** Managing Director of HORIBA MIRA and HORIBA Corporate Officer, Mr. Declan Allen, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Embassy of Japan, Mr. Masaki Ikegami, British Ambassador to Japan, Her Excellency Ms. Julia Longbottom CMG, Chairman and HORIBA Group CEO, Mr. Atsushi Horiba, and President of HORIBA UK and HORIBA Corporate Officer, Mr. Stuart Knight*
