

Industry Report



No action yet on sustainability? Then the market will sail on without you

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At GAMBICA's Lab Suppliers' conference in March, the procurement lead from Astra Zeneca told delegates that it was imperative that they get on board with sustainability or risk losing their pharmaceutical customers.

Laboratories use up to ten times more energy and four times more water than a typical office. Globally the pharmaceutical industry produces 55% higher emissions than the automotive industry. Laboratories also produce over five million tonnes of plastic waste each year.

Because of the impact of science on climate change, the United Nations has developed targets specifically for the pharmaceutical industry as part of the Race to Zero campaign. The target is that by 2030, 95% of major pharma and med tech labs must be My Green Lab certified.

It is clear that the UK pharma industry has embraced these targets and by November last year, 46% of the sector had already committed to Race to Zero.

And it's not just pharma labs who are interested in sustainability. In 2019, the University of Leeds pledged to go single-use-plastic free by 2023 and is busy auditing all its labs for plastic use. University College London has also set the same ambition by 2024 and 85 academic institutions are using the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework to reduce their carbon emissions.

Scientists, as an educated group, are interested in sustainability, and want to achieve more sustainable operations without compromising the effectiveness of their science, so support their employers' commitments to sustainability. Research companies recognise that having a genuinely sustainable approach helps them hire the best staff and is essential if they are to continue to win funding and be attractive to investors.



So what does all this mean for lab suppliers?

Astra Zeneca has set its own target that 95% of its key suppliers and partners will have verified Science Based Targets in line with the aspiration to limit global warming to 1.5°C by 2025. Further, the company has committed to achieving a 50% reduction in its Scope 3 emissions through buying from more sustainable companies by 2030. This will require Astra Zeneca to engage not only with their 700 large suppliers, they will have also to persuade 3000 SME companies to considerably up their game if they want to continue to buy from them.

So how do SME suppliers of lab equipment start their sustainability journey? The language is unfamiliar, the best course of action is not clear, and within a nano-second things can get very, very complicated. Where do you start, where do you find the information you need? Should you account for the emissions from your website? If so, how? How do you rank all your possible actions to identify the most effective?

Help is at hand. GAMBICA's sustainability group has developed an ultra-simple Environmental Impact Survey which will get you started. Participation is free and you don't even have to crunch the numbers, GAMBICA will do it for you. Like all of GAMBICA's data collections, your data will be held absolutely confidentially, but the aggregate of all the data submitted will be used to produce an industry benchmark, and if we get enough data, we will provide different benchmarks depending on company size and type. We will give you detailed explanations of the data that's needed and how to pull it together, and will share insights from other members about what really works and what doesn't. All those companies which send us their data will be able to use the GAMBICA **Environmental Impact Champion** logo. For more information email jacqueline.balian@gambica.org.uk

So you don't need to be like AA Milne's Old Sailor - waiting for salvation - join GAMBICA and you can begin sailing in the same sustainability direction as your clients.

THE LAB SUPPLIER (WITH THANKS TO AA MILNE)

*There was once a lab supplier my grandfather knew
Who had so many things which he wanted to do
That, whenever he thought it was time to begin,
He couldn't because of the state he was in.
He was shipwrecked, and lived on an island for weeks,
And he wanted a hat, and he wanted some breeks;
Then, because of the weather, he wanted a hut
With a door (to come in by) which opened and shut
So he thought of a hut ... and he thought of a boat,
And a hat and some breeks, and a chicken and goat,
And some hooks (for his food) and a spring (for his thirst)
But he never could think which he ought to do first.
And so in the end he did nothing at all,
But basked on the shingle wrapped up in a shawl.
And I think it was dreadful the way he behaved -
He did nothing but basking until he was saved.*