

The challenge

The STEMed category is fast-moving, with technical advances and developing priorities influencing the market. The rise in importance of ethical considerations and sustainability issues, for example, means that frameworks need to develop to reflect what the HE sector needs now, and in the future. Our members' strategic plans in this area cover researchers, teaching staff and students, so procurement activity must support a broad remit.



What happened?

The STEMed National Procurement Group has continued to bring together both procurement specialists and technical experts to develop solutions that meet members' STEMed procurement needs from regions such as SUPC, LUPC, APUC, HEPCW, NEUPC and NWUPC. Technicians, Researchers and academic colleagues have provided the ground knowledge of requirements and user feedback. Looking at angles such as spend data, market forces and the use of SMEs, the group has taken a strategic view of the market and the likely future needs of members when planning frameworks.

The sustainability of suppliers and their products has been a key consideration. It is an area that we know is important to our members and the activities of the group have reflected that.

The outcome

Members have helped develop and then used frameworks to support their strategic plans, in a more effective way. Benefits have included:

- Following user feedback, we have added a non-branded 'teaching lot' and a 'research lot' with branded goods to the IRLA Chemicals and Consumables Framework. This distinction has



given members a choice of suppliers, goods and prices, which reflects their specific requirements.

- Universities such as Aston are exploring pipette and other plastic recycling and working with framework suppliers to understand what other recycling options are available.
- Members have used the high value lab equipment (HVLE) framework to purchase better quality machines, with better service agreements and warranties. This in turn enhances the student learning experience, since they get exposure to cutting-edge equipment which might otherwise not be possible. For example, undergraduate students at Aston University have been using a high value mass spectrometer for final year projects.

SUPC helps us bring together the right stakeholders to develop support and solutions that deliver value for Aston, as well as the wider sector. We would not be able to do any of this without the involvement and commitment of the lab group members from across SUPC membership as well as support from colleagues in fellow consortia.

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Future-proofing STEMed frameworks to support our members

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