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# Life Sciences and Industrials

## Segment Burst

Spring 2024

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# Temp work challenges in EU manufacturing

After two years of above-average expansion, temporary employment in Europe is witnessing a contraction phase. Analysts from [ING](#) and [SIA](#) anticipate a freeze on temporary worker hiring, attributing this trend to both slow economic growth and persistent staff shortages.

Within this landscape, France is grappling with a further economic slowdown, with the GDP growth projected to drop from 0.9% in 2023 to [0.6%](#) in 2024. Both the services and manufacturing sectors face challenges, marked by decreased demand, elevated inflation, and heightened uncertainty.

The German automotive industry is under pressure due to adverse macroeconomic developments. Substantial declines in production are observed also in various subsectors of manufacturing. The shortage of temp workers, driven by demographic shifts, further exacerbates challenges, with temp workers often being the first to be laid off during production downturns.

In the Netherlands, the staffing industry faces a significant hurdle in the form of stricter regulations. These regulations elevate the cost and reduce the flexibility of agency workers,

making alternative employment contracts, such as those with self-employed professionals, more attractive to hire.

Meanwhile, Switzerland, with its emphasis on the cyclical chemical and pharmaceutical sectors, is witnessing a contraction in its manufacturing industry. The market is hampered by staff shortages, making it challenging for talent providers to find suitable candidates and [close the Swiss talent gap](#).

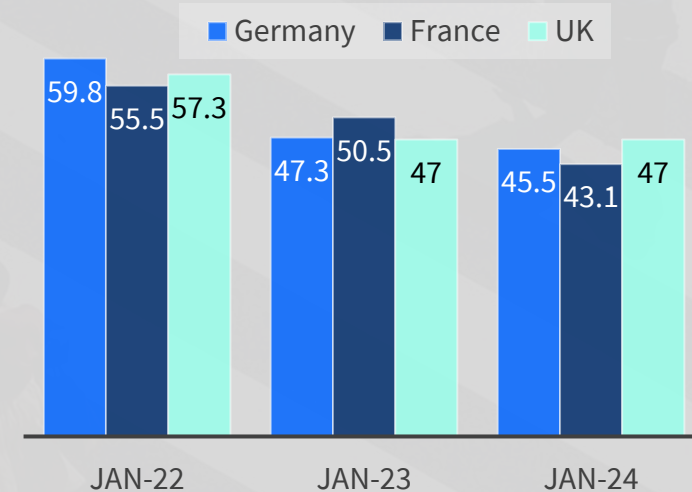
To stay agile in a talent-scarce market, manufacturing leaders should explore innovative employment solutions. Pontoon helps companies stay up-to-speed with legal changes while making sure that talent is sourced strategically, with the right methodology, whether it is Managed Service Provider, Services Procurement, direct sourcing of contingent talent or permanent recruitment through an RPO partnership. We also empower clients to hire in the right geography, e.g. by leveraging talent in neighbouring EU countries and [opening Central and Eastern European talent markets](#).

Our global and local expertise, strengthened by [the Adecco Group's brand portfolio](#), enables companies to access top contingent talent through direct sourcing, customise supplier partner strategies, and realise other benefits – as discussed in this article on the [benefits of Pontoon and Adecco Group solution](#).

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## Manufacturing PMI

PMI over 50 suggests business expansion and less than 50 suggests contraction.



Source: [MacroMicro](#)

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## Clinical roles

Pontoon MSP programme data, Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2023

Role	Number of roles filled	Time to fill (in days)	Negative attrition rate
Clinical Research Assistants	417	14.2	9.1%
Scientific Lab Technicians	297	8.6	13%
Lab Assistants	78	7.8	15.4%

Pontoon aggregates, cleanses, anonymises, and analyses data from internal and external sources, including client programmes. We help manage data on thousands of contingent workers across unique roles and categories.

## Clinical talent dynamics amidst M&A surges

The surge in mergers and acquisitions (M&A) in life sciences has become a defining trend, with spend reaching an impressive [US\\$191 billion](#) in 2023, marking a significant 34% increase from the previous year. This trend is expected to persist in 2024.

As organisations engage in heightened M&A activity, the talent market is undergoing significant shifts. Layoffs become a common occurrence, amplifying competition for skilled professionals. Recognising this, organisations must proactively adjust their staffing strategies to align with evolving needs and navigate the impact on existing teams, including [clinical roles](#).

Mergers and acquisitions often lead to short-term contract work opportunities, including clinical roles such as Clinical Research Assistants, Scientific Lab Technicians, and Lab Assistants. Pontoon’s proprietary data confirms this trend.

In 2023, through our Managed Service Provider (MSP) programmes, we facilitated the hiring of 417 Clinical Research Assistants, 297 Scientific Lab Technicians, and 78 Lab Assistants.

Notably, our data shows that the time-to-fill for these roles ranged from 7.8 days for Lab Assistants and 8.6 for Scientific Lab Technicians to 14.2 days for Clinical Research Assistants.

Pontoon’s data also demonstrates that Lab Assistants and Technicians have significantly higher attrition rates of, respectively, 15.4% and 13%. Clinical research assistants demonstrate the lowest negative attrition rate (9.1%) among the three roles. Possible reasons for this lower turnover rate may include greater job satisfaction, clear career pathways, or fulfilling work responsibilities.

Pontoon understands the challenges posed by increased [M&A activity in life sciences](#) and the subsequent impact on the talent market. With a keen focus on life sciences, Pontoon's MSP programmes provide tailored contingent hiring solutions to address the unique staffing needs of organisations undergoing mergers.

Our approach ensures a seamless integration of short-term clinical talent, particularly in critical areas such as quality and validation.

## AI in the energy sector

The transition to a green economy presents a significant challenge due to skill gaps in the workforce. Bridging these gaps requires a focus on lifelong learning and talent development. This challenge is compounded by the revolutionary impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the energy industry, which is driving demand for new skills and reshaping workforce dynamics.

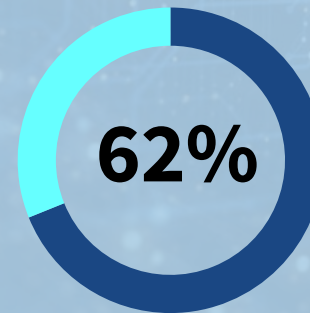
According to the Global Energy Talent Index report by Airswift, [95%](#) of energy professionals anticipate AI to increase demand for human skills, particularly in technical fields such as programming and IT, as well as soft skills like critical thinking and creativity. With 92% of professionals gearing up to acquire new skills, from cybersecurity to design thinking, the energy sector is witnessing a profound transformation in talent requirements.

As automation gains momentum in the energy sector, [38%](#) of professionals are already leveraging AI, with 82% expressing optimism about its impact. Enhanced productivity (74%), improved career prospects (60%), and better work-life balance (54%) are among the anticipated benefits driving enthusiasm for AI adoption.

The rise of AI in the energy sector presents both opportunities and challenges for talent acquisition. By investing in upskilling initiatives and leveraging external talent resources, companies can position themselves to thrive in an AI-driven future while overcoming obstacles and driving advancement. Pontoon remains committed to supporting energy companies in navigating this transformative journey and unlocking the full potential of AI in the workforce.

### Interested in AI workforce insights?

Explore Pontoon's [Global Workforce of the Future](#) report and its four sectoral editions – [automotive](#), [life sciences](#), [financial services](#), and [technology](#) – for the results of our global survey of 30,000 workers across 23 countries.



of global workers believe that the impact of AI on their job will be positive

Source: Pontoon's [Global Workforce of the Future](#) report