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# PHARMA PERSPECTIVE: GSK vaccines - in from the cold

'Thermostability' - it may sound very technical and complicated, but really it's all about fridges. The term just means 'how well something remains unchanged as the temperature varies'. Many vaccines are not very thermostable, so they need to be kept at a constant temperature to be effective. In most cases, this means 'cold'.

All the way through the process of manufacturing, to packaging and shipping, vaccines need to stay within this specific temperature range to ensure that they are fit for purpose when they reach their final destination - the patient.

Achieving this relies on what's known as the cold-chain - referred to by many as the biggest challenge in getting vaccines out to people around the world.

GSK vaccines begin their cold chain in manufacturing plants, then are sent to the airport, destined for a refrigerated unit on a plane. So far so good. But the challenges can really start as soon as the plane touches down. A typical journey in some countries - such as Tanzania for instance - might involve being transferred to a cool box and taken by sailboat to a small group of islands with no electricity, or taken by donkey to collections of small villages in the mountains - all in searing heat. From start to finish, the vaccines may have been travelling for many hours, and perhaps even days.

Most of our vaccines need to be stored between 2°C and 8°C. If the temperature strays beyond this range anywhere along the supply chain after the vaccine leaves our control, the local healthcare provider receiving the doses may need to dispose of the vaccines. Too many vaccines are reported discarded for this reason every year, instead of making it to the children who need them.

So to reduce this waste, and in an effort to make the distribution process easier in remote areas, we've joined forces with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to form a new Vaccine Discovery Partnership. The Partnership will look at whether we can make some of our vaccines more resistant to heat. If we can do this, then some vaccines may be able to remain outside refrigeration for short periods of time.

This could ultimately help everyone involved in the distribution chain make more informed decisions, stop unnecessary waste and ensure that more people can receive the vaccines that could protect them against a range of diseases.

regulatory document, initiatives of structured control on transport are important and welcome. The IATA certification gives more confidence that pharmaceutical air freight shipments are handled in accordance with EU GDP".

Different firms cope in different ways with the implementation of the GDP, because their activity in the supply chain varies and would thus implement the part of the

requirements that is applicable for its activity. But as Schaefer says, "everyone in the supply chain always has room to improve".

And improving this will take much more communication and cooperation, from the start to the end of the supply chain, and interaction with industry regulators.

"The industry needs to take a supply chain approach - one where each segment of the healthcare

supply chain must understand their roles and responsibilities. It starts with the healthcare industry, understanding the complexity of the full supply chain and getting more involved with its service providers and between the supply chain stakeholders.

Schaefer concludes: "In order to deliver, supply chain partners will need to collaborate on standards to ensure seamless integration of cargo

movements throughout the process. "The aviation industry, the airlines, ground handlers and even airports are investing a lot in enhanced processes, systems,

infrastructure and training, which is not always known to the healthcare industry and thus the IATA CEIV program provides better visibility of who can do what and where."



IATA will be presenting their CEIV pharma programme at the Fly Pharma conference in London in September 2015. To register visit [www.flypharmaconference.com](http://www.flypharmaconference.com)

INDUSTRY INSIGHT



**Trans-Bridge Freight Services:**  
+44 161 6550100  
sales@transbridgefreight.co.uk  
www.transbridgefreight.co.uk

## Trans-Bridge Freight Services Ltd commences phase 2 of new Northern Ireland site development



Temperature Controlled Platform facility will be constructed in their existing impressive warehouse facility. Once complete, Trans-Bridge will be commencing

the application process of gaining MHRA certification. Based at their Manchester head office, director, Brian Anderton, explains to Pharmafocus that the facility will be essential in providing the highest possible levels of enhanced service options to its current portfolio of healthcare and pharmaceutical clients and for new clients seeking a robust solution for shipments into Ireland from the UK and

Europe. In addition to the controlled and monitored section of warehouse, temperature-controlled distribution vehicles are to be introduced to the existing fleet offering a door to door fully temperature controlled groupage service.

The company currently offers GDP compliant overnight services into Ireland from its Manchester depot for a wide range of pharmaceutical and healthcare sector clients. It has seen positive growth in this sector in recent years as a result of providing a robust cost efficient service and by meeting and understanding the demands of regulatory compliance placed upon manufacturers and wholesalers in

regards to supply chain. Trans-Bridge recognises that different customers have different needs, however, essentially the MHRA expect the same high standards of quality and responsibility throughout the supply chain irrespective of product or device.

Supported by carefully selected industry specialists, Trans-Bridge will over the next few months be putting the finishing touches to their system processes and procedures with a view to starting the new service capabilities by the end of Q3 2015 and ultimately gaining MHRA

certification by the end of the year. Trans-Bridge hope to become a key player in supporting the well established and respected wholesalers and pharmaceutical warehouses within Ireland by being able to offer a fully flexible, reliable and compliant link in the supply chain.

