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TIACA and Pharma.Aero call for an urgent industry collaboration to address a concerning lack of readiness for COVID-19 vaccines logistics

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Pharma.Aero together with TIACA expressed a strong concern over the current state of air cargo readiness for the upcoming COVID-19 vaccines transportation, with only 28%¹ of the industry feeling well prepared for it today.

According to the results of our airfreight readiness survey, completed by 181 airlines, freight forwarders, ground handlers, airport operators and solution providers, majority of the industry players have begun preparation to handle, store, transport and deliver the future COVID-19 vaccines. They are setting up dedicated teams, engaging with partners, mapping and upgrading their capabilities, as well as developing new services. As compared to companies which are already in close engagement with vaccines manufacturers, companies not involved in direct conversations with the manufacturers felt the least prepared for the upcoming logistics challenge of vaccines transportation.

“We as an industry are as strong as our weakest link. To move the needle on industry readiness, we need to ensure everyone is engaged and informed. Only with a strong and transparent dialogue between pharmaceutical and air cargo sectors, governments, non-governmental organizations and healthcare institutions can we overcome these challenges. The sooner, the better,” – said Emir Pineda, Member of TIACA’s Board of Director and co-lead of the Sunrays project, initiated by TIACA and Pharma.Aero this August.

Areas of priority

¹ In the Sunrays airfreight readiness survey, 28% of the respondents scored 8, 9 or 10 to the question “From 1 to 10, how well-informed and prepared is your organisation in the global air transportation of Covid-19 vaccines?”

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Focus on industry collaboration between pharma and air cargo sectors; improving visibility and transparency; building adequate capabilities; getting the support from regulators to speed up the process and remove cumbersome procedures, and the help from international organizations and donors to ensure no country is left behind will ensure maximum air cargo preparedness to meet shippers' needs and expectations for speed, security, reliability and transparency and ultimately save lives.

Strengthening industry collaboration

- Vaccines manufacturers should involve all their air cargo logistics providers as early as possible
- All air cargo stakeholders shall be involved in the conversation, including airports and ground handlers

Ramping-up air cargo capabilities

- Each air cargo stakeholder should map its existing capabilities at each location and make this information available
- Dry ice, active containers, trained staff, and cold chain space availability should be secured early
- Infrastructure investment decisions should be made as early as possible

Improving visibility

- The use of tracking and monitoring devices should be encouraged and the approval process for their safe use in flight needs to start as soon as possible
- Rollout of digital solutions and data sharing platforms should be accelerated

Removing barriers

- Governments, customs authorities, and border agencies should be ready to facilitate and expedite all COVID-19-related goods
- International organizations, NGOs and donors should support cool chain capacity building efforts in least developed countries to ensure no one is left behind in the upcoming global immunization campaign

“We are still at early stages of industry preparation for the transportation of COVID-19 vaccines and there are still a lot of unknowns. Delivering COVID-19 vaccines is a life-saving mission which will need a combination of people, infrastructure, standards, packaging solutions and collaboration. Getting the equation right requires us to work together now,” – Nathan De Valck, Chairman of Pharma.Aero’s Board of Directors and member of the Sunrays project.

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[Full analysis of the industry preparedness survey results \(pdf\).](#)

More information about the [Sunrays Project](#).

All information can be found on www.pharma.aero

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