# Q&A with Brussels Airport, Changi Airport & Pharma.Aero

**1. Brussels Airport, Miami International Airport and Changi Airport launched 'Pharma.Aero'. Can you tell *IPI* more about how this collaboration came about?**

Way back prior to 2016, Brussels Airport, Miami International Airport and Singapore Changi Airport came together with the joint ambition to foster greater collaboration amongst IATA CEIV Pharma airport communities, as well as between the communities and pharma manufacturers to enhance the reliability of pharma air transportation.

To the above end, the founding members concluded the need to create a neutral platform for the air pharma supply chain. This approach proved to be successful as since Pharma.Aero's formation, many pharma shippers and operators have joined the alliance and work closely together in different projects.

**2. It is clear to see that Pharma.Aero have taken the initiative to improve pharma handling and quality in the air cargo industry worldwide. What is Pharma.Aero's next plan of action?**

Pharma.Aero aims to establish thought leadership within the organisation and become a global reference for creating transparency and reliability in the air pharma supply chain. This is achieved by bringing together pharmaceutical shippers and supply chain players to collaborate through projects, as well as the publication of technical/white papers.

**3. With the increasing demand for reliable end-to-end air transport for pharmaceutical cargo, what steps will you take to focus on pharmaceutical shippers and all industry stakeholders who embrace the IATA CEIV programme?**

Without any doubt, IATA CEIV Pharma is the backbone of our organisation. Pharma.Aero enhances collaboration between all stakeholders in the market. Close collaboration amongst members and with other international industry platforms such as IATA and TIACA will further emphasise the needs for and promote high and harmonised standards when it comes to airfreighting pharma.

**4. Pharma.Aero have recently signed global animal health giant Zoetis as a new Strategic Pharma Shipper Member. Can you tell IPI how collaborating with Zoetis can strengthen your pre-existing partnerships with airlines and airports like Brussels Airport?**

It is undoubtedly the case that a pharma shipper with global leadership such as Zoetis within the life science industry (in this case animal health) is of high value to Pharma.Aero. Zoetis' membership underlines the importance of collaboration with global pharmaceutical shippers. It is only strong collaboration with pharma shippers that helps improve pharma air supply chain standards.

*"Zoetis are delighted to join Pharma.Aero. The integrity of our physical supply chain plays an important role in how we transport our products," says Rita O'Sullivan, Zoetis' Head of Global Transportation. "Of specific interest to Zoetis is how we can partner with airlines, GSAs and freight forwarders to continually enhance and improve the cold chain service offerings, which are critical to the animal health sector."*

*Nathan De Valck, chairman of Pharma.Aero adds: "The pharmaceutical shippers are at the core of Pharma.Aero's cross-industry collaboration initiative. Therefore, we are very happy to welcome Zoetis into Pharma.Aero and look forward to their active participation in our project groups. We will continue to listen to the expectations of our four pharmaceutical shipper members. We aim to further intensify collaboration with our pharma shippers members in Pharma.Aero."*

**5. A growing number of US airports are investing in improving facilities and processes, as well as exploring cargo community systems and expedited custom clearance schemes, to facilitate cargo flows and stimulate new traffic. With Pharma.Aero partnering with pharma gateways like Brussels and Changi Airport, will Europe and Asia follow in the US's footsteps?**

The pharma industry is not only demanding faster and more reliable transportation, but also higher supply chain visibility. In addressing these, supply chain players are turning towards data-sharing, real-time visibility and collaboration.

In September 2017, Pharma.Aero kicked off the ***Digi 1.0: Certification of Pharmaceuticals Air Trade Lanes through Digitisation*** to examine whether data from different stakeholders could be ingested and displayed on a single platform to achieve greater visibility and insights throughout the supply chain. Subsequent to Digi 1.0, Pharma.Aero transcended from a proof of concept to a prototype, with ***Digi 2.0: The Global Pharma Tracker Prototype***, where real data from live pharma shipments were integrated into the platform and allowing the users to visualise the door-to-door performance of the entire pharma supply chain and, at the same time, control visibility of data based on the agreed data sharing and governance framework. Both projects were co-championed by Brussels Airport and Changi Airport. The prototype lane is Brussels-Singapore-Sydney with Singapore Airlines as the carrier. A white paper summarising the key findings of the project will be published in the coming months. As a next step, Pharma.Aero and Nallian will be launching an early adopter programme for operational use.

At present, Brussels and Singapore are connected through freighter services offered by Singapore Airlines. Come October 2020, Singapore Airlines will introduce non-stop passenger services between our two cities, strengthening our certified trade lane positioning, enabling safe, reliable and speedy transportation of pharma shipments

In 2019, Pharma.Aero kicked off a second project, aimed at increasing the transparency of pharma handling. Where the GPT focused on performance of the pharma handling, the **pharma corridor mapping project** focusses on the capabilities of all the operators involved in pharma handling on a specific airport-to-airport lane. Both performance and capabilities are in fact two sides of the same coin.

Pharma.Aero performed a first pilot project for the Brussels – Hong Kong

route with Cathay Pacific as the carrier. The capability mapping allows the user to visualise the internal handling SLAs of the operators in the pharma corridor, and gives an indication on how the actual door-to-door performance is aligned with these SLAs. This level of transparency of the entire pharmaceutical supply chain is unprecedented, giving an insight into the internal processes that very often remain hidden for pharmaceutical shippers. As a result, the information obtained by this corridor mapping can be used to optimise the packaging of pharmaceutical shipments or to work with operators to optimise procedures in order to eliminate temperature deviations.

**6. The pilot for the CEIV Pharma certification took place at SATS in Singapore. Brussels Airport was the first cargo community in the world to start a community certification approach with the CEIV Pharma Certification, with 18 companies active at BRUcargo being CEIV Pharma Certified. What percentage of companies will be certified in 2020 and why?**

The CEIV pharma community certification at Brussels Airport involved all the operators that are active in maintaining the cool chain through the airport. Airlines, forwarders, handling and trucking companies participated. The community certification was obtained five years ago, and all the participating companies have already renewed their certification after the three-year validity period. The group of local certified entities continues to grow and today more than 95% of all pharma shipments transiting via Brussels Airport are handled in a 100% certified supply chain at each step in the transit.

This quality guarantee gives peace of mind to pharma manufacturers and improves the risk profile of Brussels Airport compared to other gateways. As a result, the pharma volume passing through the specialised pharma premises at the airport continues to grow every year.

**7. Brussels Airport has publicly stated that 'The Airside Pharma Transporter aims to close all risks in the cold chain and offer more transparency and increased confidence to the pharma industry'. Can you explain to our readers how Pharma.Aero will plan to work alongside its airport members to increase confidence in the pharma industry?**

The Airside Transporter is only one of the examples of handling pharma shipments within the airport. Pharma.Aero embraces different innovative solutions, such as this one, to testcase within wider and larger projects. For example: recently a Pharma Corridor Pilot Project was launched and executed between Brussels Airport and Hong Kong International Airport. Different solutions, different KPIs and CEIV standardised practices were taken into account to map this corridor project.

Another project that was recently finalised is the Air Transport Benchmark Survey. In this project, Pharma.Aero concentrated on identifying the pitfalls that might occur on tarmac and the common practices that have been adopted in major cargo hubs, such as specific pharma transport vehicles.

**8. To drive forward the airport's activities and uphold the connectivity and the economic growth of the country, the infrastructure of Brussels Airport and Changi Airport had to be/will need to be adapted. How does Pharma.Aero plan to engineer these changes?**

Through the championing of thought leadership and projects, Pharma.Aero hopes to be able to contribute to the airfreight industry through identifying and setting best practices including, but not restricted to, physical and digital infrastructure, SOPs and processes in the area of air pharma transportation. In addition, the role of Pharma.Aero is to testbed innovative ideas and solutions on a wider scale and offer technical feedback and advice for the industry, and for its airport members in particular.

**9. As the economies of Singapore and Belgium are open economies which are heavily focused on exports, it is only natural that highly efficient logistics are required. Can you tell our readers more about how air cargo transport plays a central role in this?**

Singapore is an open and trade-oriented economy. Logistics and airfreight play an integral role in enabling Singapore's global trade.

Pharma is an important manufacturing pillar of Singapore. Today, four out of the world's top 10 drugs are manufactured in Singapore. Between 2018 and 2018, Singapore's air pharma trade has achieved a CAGR of 9.4%1 per annum. Though 7% of our pharma exports by volume were airfreighted in the first nine months of 2019, it represents 78% of SIN's pharma export value2. In supporting this key manufacturing pillar, Changi Airport and our air cargo community have continuously improved on our pharma handling capabilities through local and global community collaboration. Locally, we are the first airport in Asia Pacific to forge an airport community to attain the IATA CEIV Pharma certification. On a global basis, Changi Airport is collaborating with other airport communities under the ambit of Pharma.Aero on a few projects, notably Digi 1.0 and Digi 2.0.

Like Singapore, the Belgian economy is very open and trade-oriented. On top of this, there is a large presence of pharma R&D and production facilities in the country, with the pharmaceuticals that are produced there destined for patients all over the world.

In that perspective, Brussels Airport plays an important role in offering good connectivity and air cargo transport options for the Belgian economy. In the past three years, the flown export pharma volumes have doubled, representing 10.5% of the total cargo volume handled at the airport. The size of the pharma segment is three times bigger than the average at other European airports.

**10. Brussels Airport is widely recommended as the 'preferred European pharma gateway', specialising in the handling of time- and temperature-sensitive goods. Why, in your opinion, is this?**

For Brussels Airport, the life sciences, pharma and medtech segment of the market has been a strategic priority. Perishables handling is a second strategic market segment. Pharma and perishables have different operational requirements. However, the business logistics, the expertise and type of infrastructure required are similar. So, the combined efforts and investments by all the operators at Brussels Airport have resulted in cold chain expertise for both market segments contributing to our reputation of the preferred European gateway.

**REFERENCES**


1. Includes medical devices. Source: Seabury 2019
2. Includes medical devices. Source: Seabury 2019