

Key milestone: DHL delivers 1 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses

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COVID-19 has become the largest global health crisis in a century. Governments, NGOs, and public authorities have focused on containing the virus, accelerating vaccination programs to keep populations safe, and ensuring that economies recover quickly. Since the global vaccine campaign began in December 2020, DHL has safely delivered more than 1 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses to more than 160 countries, playing a key role in the global vaccination roll-out.

"Looking back at the state of emergency these past nine months, we are honored to be playing our part, seamlessly managing and executing multiple supply chain set-ups without cold chain interruptions or security incidents. We are working across multiple supply chain set-ups and managing direct distributions in certain countries. We implemented new, dedicated, and reliable services at an accelerated speed to ship the highly temperature-sensitive vaccines, as well as ancillary supplies and test kits. In line with our purpose of 'Connecting people, Improving Lives', we will continue tapping into our cold chain infrastructure, resilient global network, and deep pharmaceutical logistics knowledge and experience of our people", says Katja Busch, Chief Commercial Officer DHL.

The global vaccination campaign represents a crucial instrument in the fight against the virus, and it is essential for containing further virus variants. To reach high immunization levels, around 10 billion vaccine doses will be required worldwide by the end of 2021. The global distribution of these doses is necessary to ensure that as many people as possible have access to vaccines. Besides managing various and complex supply chain set-ups, the sensitive temperature requirements have been a major challenge for logistics experts.

"Our advantage is that we already had a sophisticated network in place with the

necessary healthcare expertise. This allowed us to react swiftly", explains Claudia Roa, President of Life Sciences & Healthcare at DHL Customer Solutions & Innovation. "We ship the vaccines in special active thermal containers equipped with state-of-the-art GPS temperature trackers to ensure consistent temperatures and provide full transparency throughout the entire journey."

DHL Global Forwarding and DHL Express have been tasked with transporting COVID-19 vaccines on multiple routes from Europe and other origins to countries across Asia Pacific, South America, and Europe. DHL Supply Chain is responsible for the proper storage and local distribution of the vaccines in several German states.

"Making a meaningful difference is what drives us, and we are proud of our contribution to the enormous task of delivering COVID-19 vaccines and related critical medical supplies to the right place at the right time, worldwide", says Thomas Ellmann, Vice President of Life Sciences & Healthcare, DHL Customer Solutions & Innovation. "The current COVID-19 situation clearly demonstrates how collaboration across governments and NGOs, pharmaceutical companies, medical equipment manufacturers, and logistics companies is the only way to beat pandemics, both now and in the future."

Essential preparation for the future

As outlined in DHL's white paper "Revisiting Pandemic Resilience", the logistics infrastructure and capacity built up for the pandemic should be maintained because another 7-9 billion vaccine doses will be needed annually in the coming years to keep (re-)infection rates low and to slow down the pace of virus mutations - not counting seasonal fluctuations.

To be prepared for the future, it is essential to identify and prevent health crises early through active partnerships, expanded global warning systems, an integrated epidemic

prevention plan, and targeted R&D investments. DHL also recommends expanding and institutionalizing virus containment and countermeasures (e.g., digital contact tracing and national stockpiles) to ensure strategic preparedness and more efficient response times. To facilitate a speedy roll-out of medication (i.e., diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines), governments and industries should maintain "ever-warm" manufacturing capacity, blueprint research, production, and procurement plans, and expand local deployment capabilities.

Source: [Deutsche Post DHL](#)

