



The Global Language of Business

GS1 Healthcare Strategy 2018-2022

Harnessing the power of open, global standards to address the challenges of healthcare and benefit patients worldwide

ADDENDUM DECEMBER 2020





Addressing the impact of COVID-19

Background

In the last months the world has changed with the COVID-19 pandemic and its unprecedented impact on overall population health as well as healthcare supply chains worldwide. It is now more essential than ever to emphasise and understand the benefits of GS1 standards, not only to facilitate healthcare supply chain traceability, visibility and accuracy from the first processes around clinical trials, but all the way to the patient, even after care and for pharmacovigilance. GS1 standards in healthcare continue to help to ensure that patients can access safer care and that caregivers have a mechanism to 'double-check' when working in high pressure environments. With growing awareness of the need for trustworthy global supply chains, plus global cooperation to run clinical trials, GS1 standards have an increased role to play.

With this in mind, the decision was made to review our current strategy and the overall work of GS1 Healthcare. This was done through the lens of COVID-19 to assess if different priorities emerged or realignment of current priorities was required.

Process

The global [GS1 Healthcare Leadership Team](#), which oversees and directs the activities of GS1 in the healthcare sector, evaluated the areas being resourced under the current GS1 Healthcare strategy to identify which items should be accelerated, maintained with current effort, or slowed. At the same time the Leadership Team identified, and prioritised, additional topics considered pertinent in the current environment

Outcome

Impact on the current strategy

Of the areas listed in the current strategy, [Collaboration with healthcare provider organisations, including primary pack identification](#), was selected as the one topic that needed to be [accelerated](#). COVID-19 has placed unprecedented stress on healthcare provider organisations across the globe in both clinical processes and the support activities needed to ensure that hospitals have the medical items to protect their staff and to treat patients. Those healthcare provider organisations with GS1 standards already implemented have openly shared how these have provided benefit in the COVID-19 crisis. The GS1 Healthcare Leadership Team sees that taking the learnings from this situation, and leveraging on the application of GS1 standards, can help support healthcare providers in the current pandemic and prepare them for the next crisis.

To address the need to accelerate our work to collaborate with healthcare provider organisations, GS1 Healthcare will act to significantly increase and drive awareness about GS1 standards in hospitals by demonstrating and quantifying the benefits, and by using different tools and innovative technologies.

Specific activities to be delivered throughout 2021:

<p>Imagine 2.0: GS1 Healthcare working with Healthcare Providers</p>	<p>Leveraging the learnings from the GS1 Healthcare strategy 2016-2018 (Project Imagine) to inspire the next generation of healthcare providers, a comprehensive communication and engagement strategy articulating the benefits of GS1 standards for healthcare providers will be developed.</p> <p>Tactics will include identification of stakeholders, segmentation into personae, mapping the customer journeys and touchpoints of GS1 standards, and developing the relevant messages and compelling materials for the different stakeholder groups.</p>
<p>Create visibility & enable alignment on healthcare marketing activities</p>	<p>Develop a GS1 Healthcare communication plan focused on key themes and topics to be promoted throughout the year. Align with GS1 Member Organisations and the GS1 Healthcare community to facilitate partnership in communication, e.g. in monthly coordinated activities around selected topics.</p>
<p>GS1 Healthcare Reference Book 2021/2022</p>	<p>The GS1 Healthcare Reference Book is one of the most valued GS1 Healthcare publications. Each year this compilation of case studies is published, detailing the implementation of GS1 standards including the process, learning, outcomes of each implementation. The 2021/2022 edition will be enhanced to take into account the role GS1 standards can play in a crisis.</p>
<p>GS1 Standards through Virtual Reality</p>	<p>Virtual reality tools will be used to promote the benefits of using GS1 standards in hospitals. We will build on the current virtual reality tools demonstrating application of GS1 standards at the patient bedside and will aim to develop one new scenario (operating room). Deployment will occur via GS1 Member Organisations.</p>

Work relating to two existing strategy areas was identified as needing to be **slowed**. These topics - **Digital Disruption and Patient and Caregiver Identification** - will be resourced by leveraging existing initiatives. We do not want to lose our emphasis on these areas, as they are also important and relevant, but we will work differently, with less direct resource involvement.

Therefore, GS1 Healthcare will continue to proactively input into the two yearly GS1 Trend Report to ensure that digital disruptors in healthcare are identified and documented. The latest version of this report, contains significant healthcare input, making it a very relevant resource for the sector.

GS1 Healthcare references the ISO Technical Standard 18530 for application of global standards for patient and caregiver identification. In 2020, the latest version of this standard was ratified, meaning that the tools are in place for GS1 Healthcare members and GS1 Member Organisations to effectively advise healthcare stakeholders about this topic.

All other areas within the current strategy are to be continued as planned.



New areas of work

Via the re-assessment process, the GS1 Healthcare Leadership Team identified some additional projects to refocus the work of GS1 Healthcare, address the COVID-19 crisis and contribute to readying the healthcare sector for future crises.

Strengthen the COVID-19 supply chain

In clear recognition that COVID-19 has created increased awareness of the importance of global supply chain standards, the first topic will address the need for a secure and efficient supply chain. The GS1 Healthcare Leadership Team identified the necessity to act by the end of 2020 to help Healthcare stakeholders, regulators, public health agencies, manufacturers, donor organisations, logistic providers and healthcare providers understand the [contribution of GS1 standards in strengthening the healthcare supply chain in a pandemic context](#).



Specific activities to be delivered by end of 2020/beginning of 2021:

<p>White paper to provide thought leadership</p>	<p>The objective of this White Paper, which will be delivered together with a consultancy partner, will be to help healthcare stakeholders understand the global issues and the local challenges faced by each stakeholder during the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for cooperation and collaboration, and the role of GS1 standards to enable this collaboration.</p> <p>The scope will be ‘achieving readiness for a trusted supply chain enabled by global standards’. The focus will be primarily on COVID-19 vaccines in the current pandemic, but also future global outlook and taking other products into account. This will include potential challenges for readiness, such as last mile delivery; connection of product to patient, trusted products (e.g., counterfeit, traceability, recalls, etc.), regulatory compliance, specificities related to the vaccines supply chain (e.g., cold chain), scaling up serialisation, global harmonisation and the impact on cross border supply chains.</p>
<p>COVID-19 communication strategy and campaign</p>	<p>We have the opportunity to dramatically increase awareness about the critical contribution of GS1 standards to supply chain efficiency. In order to do this, we plan a global communication campaign during the first quarter of 2021.</p> <p>Leveraging the white paper to endorse our message, and on an emotional video with interviews of senior clinicians sharing their experience on the front line during the COVID-19 crisis, this campaign will be customised to the various stakeholders with distinct communications and messages highlighting benefits that really matter to each of them in a pandemic context.</p> <p>We aim to start the campaign as soon as the White Paper is available teaming up with GS1 MO's for the preparation and roll out to ensure maximum impact</p>

Develop a guideline for laboratory sample identification and tracking

In the time of COVID-19, millions of additional patient samples are being taken each day. These need to be clearly identified and accurately tracked so the results are communicated quickly and correctly for each patient. GS1 standards can provide the globally unique identification needed and therefore a [guideline for laboratory sample identification and tracking](#) should be developed.

Specific activity to be delivered in 2021:

Laboratory sample identification guideline

Develop a guideline that clearly explains how GS1 standards are used to identify and track patient samples that need to be processed in a laboratory. The scope will include samples taken in hospitals, doctor's surgeries, community / outpatient laboratory settings, and at mobile testing locations.

Other topics identified

During this reprioritisation process, topics not specifically related to the impact of COVID-19 were identified and prioritised by the GS1 Healthcare Leadership Team. These specifically relate to [improving the awareness of the role of quality master data](#) throughout the healthcare sector and [modernising the training resources](#) provided by GS1 Healthcare. These topics will be resourced as part of the GS1 Healthcare

'business as usual' activities and noted in the GS1 Healthcare 2021 Strategic Priorities.

There was also the suggestion to deliver a new report assessing the importance of GS1 standards and demonstrate and quantify the costs versus the savings generated by the implementation of GS1 standards in hospitals. This topic will be re-discussed in 2021.

Capacity

The GS1 Healthcare Leadership Team is conscious that taking on the additional activities noted in this addendum will not be possible without the GS1 Healthcare team concluding some existing tasks. Analysis has been done to identify what will be finished by the end of 2020 to allow these new tasks to commence. The net workload of the GS1 Healthcare Team will not change because of the new items listed above.

Next steps

The GS1 Healthcare Team is currently working to deliver the first tasks from this re-focussing activity, specifically related to strengthening the COVID-19 supply chain. Any work that will be undertaken in 2021 will be included as part of the GS1 Healthcare 2021 Strategic Priorities.

Acknowledgements

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About GS1 Healthcare

GS1 Healthcare is a neutral and open community bringing together all healthcare stakeholders to lead the successful development and implementation of global GS1 standards, enhancing patient safety, and operational and supply chain efficiencies.

The development and implementation of GS1 standards is led by the experts who use them: pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors, group purchasing organisations, hospitals, pharmacies, logistics providers, solution providers, governmental and regulatory bodies, and trade associations.

Evidence available from industry implementations shows that GS1 identification, data capture and data sharing standards in healthcare deliver tangible benefit to all stakeholders.

GS1 Healthcare members include more than 100 leading healthcare organisations worldwide.

For more information about GS1 standards in healthcare, go to www.gs1.org/healthcare.



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