

“We have tied up with a few solution providers to accommodate vaccine storage at -70 degrees”

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Established in November 2020, Mumbai-based cold-chain marketplace startup Celsius is working to reinforce the cold-chain infrastructure in India. In conversation with BioSpectrum, Swarup Bose, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Celcius, Mumbai shares how their technology is helping overcome the challenges of the conventional cold-chain network in India, especially in terms of transporting the COVID-19 vaccine and other essential resources. Edited excerpts



How are you currently working with the vaccine manufacturers for effective distribution?

We are working with many smaller transporters through our platform. These transporters are spread across 90 different cities across the country and they possess the last-mile delivery vehicles that can be utilised for transportation of various cold storage commodities. We audit and select these vehicles and upgrade them with the latest IoT devices. Once we ensure that the vehicles are up to date, we onboard the transporters onto our proprietary software platform. We also have tie-ups with several vaccine manufacturers and they can use our platform to find transporters with a fleet size that would accommodate their shipment. They can even check if the transporters have a reach in the cities that the shipments are to be delivered to. We endeavour to ensure that the collaboration between transporters and manufacturers is seamless and that we continue to grow our reach in tier II and tier III cities. By forming a network that allows the cold chain industry to utilise its infrastructure to its true potential, we can expand our platform and our offerings for vaccine distribution.

What further plans are in store particularly for those vaccines that might require storage conditions such as -70 degrees?

We have over 75 cold storage units linked to our platform. Some of them are capable of storing products that require temperatures up to -40 degrees. However, a few storage providers are in talks with us to upgrade their storage and accommodate temperatures up to -70 degrees. This can pose certain challenges as these upgrades are expensive and the units may not have many applications in the future. To counter this, we have tied up with a couple of PCM (Phase Change Material) solution providers to acquire units that can maintain -70 degree temperatures up to the last mile. We are confident that we will be able to maintain this temperature to the point of vaccine administration as we have tied up with SpiceJet for transporting pharmaceutical products. With SpiceJet's air and surface transportation services, we can effectively pick up the

vaccines and deliver them, within the set time frame to most cities across India.

Recently Celcius has raised funds through various investors. What will be the sole purpose of this fundraising?

We were fortunate enough to raise about \$500,000 as our seed funding in May of this year. We are thankful to the institutional VCs that backed us up early on. MaGEhold, Keiretsu forum, EVAN, LUMIS partners, Huddle, Mumbai Angels and a few others showed confidence in our offerings. We are looking at using the fund to expand our team and reach. Currently, we operate across 90 cities in India, but we aim to expand our operations to have a reach all over the country. We will also be using the funding to scale up our partner base and enhance our tech platform to make it more efficient with each update.

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