Date
June 15, 2026

Subject
Joint direction of Dutch hospitals: standardization of product data through GDSN

Dear supplier,

The Dutch Hospital Association (NVZ), together with its members, is committed to further professionalizing the exchange of product data for medical devices. This is being carried out within the framework of the project *Acceleration of GDSN Implementation*.

In the discussions currently taking place with suppliers, we notice a need for further clarification regarding the shared direction, principles, and preconditions. With this letter, we aim to provide that clarification.

Progress and first results

All Dutch hospitals are now connected to the Global Data Synchronisation Network (GDSN). This infrastructure has already been used for several years for, among other things, the Dutch National Implant Registry (LIR), thereby forming an important foundation for further digitalization.

The use of GDSN is currently being expanded towards logistical processes and the onboarding of medical devices within hospitals. Initial experiences show that the use of standardized product data leads to:

- improved patient safety through better traceability;
- more efficient logistical processes;
- faster and more efficient onboarding of medical devices (such as assessment, approval, and implementation within hospitals);
- reduced administrative burden.

This development represents an important step towards the digitalization of healthcare processes.

Joint direction

Hospitals are moving towards one uniform approach for product data exchange, based on the use of GDSN as the primary infrastructure. To support this, a declaration of intent was previously signed by the various stakeholders within the supply chain, including suppliers and their industry associations.

This choice is necessary because hospitals require up-to-date, validated, and directly usable product data that can be integrated into internal systems (ERP and EHR systems).

EUDAMED and GDSN serve different purposes. EUDAMED is primarily designed for regulatory compliance and market surveillance within the framework of the MDR/IVDR. Registration is mainly focused on the Basic UDI-DI level (family/model level) and primarily supports compliance purposes for manufacturers and regulators.

Hospitals, however, require additional operational product data for, among other things:

- procurement and logistical processes;
- inventory management;
- operating room and sterilization department processes;
- onboarding and assessment of medical devices;
- quality and implant registries;
- sustainability-related requirements and future reporting obligations, including the CSRD;
- fulfilling due diligence obligations under, among others, the Wkkgz and MDR.

GDSN specifically addresses these needs by providing structured and validated product data at GTIN level (product and packaging levels). In doing so, GDSN supports operational and logistical processes, ERP and EHR integrations, and the exchange of country- and market-specific datasets, allowing suppliers to share product information selectively with the markets and healthcare institutions for which it is relevant.

In addition, GDSN supports continuous synchronization of current product data from suppliers to the internal systems (such as ERP and EHR systems) of healthcare institutions. This enables healthcare institutions to process changes to existing products, new products, and packaging hierarchies in a standardized and controlled manner through automatic update messages (delta updates).

GDSN also offers the flexibility to further expand datasets based on new information requirements, such as sustainability data and additional implant-specific characteristics.

Furthermore, quality registries increasingly make use of standardized product data through GDSN, such as within the NHR, LROI, and DBIR. For DBIR, for example, additional implant-specific characteristics are added (such as shape of the device, device fill, and device texture for breast implants).

As such, GDSN is essential for safe, efficient, and future-proof operational processes, data exchange, and quality registrations within hospitals, while EUDAMED primarily serves as an important source for compliance and market surveillance.

Control over data remains with the supplier

The starting principle is that suppliers remain the owners of their product data. This means that suppliers determine with which parties their data is shared. This ensures that suppliers retain control, while enabling secure and efficient data exchange.

Responsibility within the supply chain

The supplier of the medical device is responsible for making correct, complete, and up-to-date product data available through GDSN. In cases where a distributor role applies, the supplier is expected to ensure that the required product data becomes available through GDSN. This can be achieved, for example, by entering the data directly, receiving and forwarding it from the manufacturer, or by activating the manufacturer to make the product data directly available through GDSN.

Uniform requests from hospitals

Hospitals are working towards a uniform and consistent approach in their requests to suppliers. Concretely, this means that the provision of standardized product data will be included in:

- the procurement conditions of hospitals and hospital purchasing alliances; and
- tender requirements and procurement specifications.

In addition, the extent to which suppliers make standardized product data available through GDSN will be taken into account in hospitals' purchasing and supplier selection decisions.
As a result, the use of GDSN is becoming the standard.

We call upon suppliers to actively make product data available to Dutch hospitals through GDSN and to support the full ECHO dataset. Incomplete datasets or referring hospitals to EUDAMED result in additional manual Excel-based data requests, increasing administrative burden and hindering further standardization. Full participation in GDSN is therefore an important prerequisite for efficient collaboration and further digitalization of the healthcare supply chain.

To support suppliers in this process, GS1 Netherlands offers guidance regarding the implementation of GDSN and the publication of the required dataset for Dutch hospitals. For questions or support, suppliers may contact healthcare@gs1.nl or schedule an appointment directly.

Single registration of medical device product data for all Dutch hospitals

To prevent duplicate registration efforts, the principle of "one single source of data entry" is being pursued.

GS1 has realized a connection between GS1 Data Source (GDSN) and EUDAMED. As a result, manufacturers can:

- register product data once;
- use this data both for regulatory obligations (EUDAMED) and for exchange with healthcare institutions (via GDSN).

This reduces administrative burden and supports efficient data exchange.

Collaboration and next steps

The NVZ and its members are in discussions with suppliers to shape this development together. These discussions contribute to further clarification and acceleration.

Within this context, efforts are aimed at creating a situation in which the provision of standardized product data through GDSN becomes an integral part of the collaboration between suppliers and hospitals.

The transition towards standardized product data is a necessary step to safeguard patient safety, improve processes, and enable collaboration throughout the healthcare supply chain.

We invite you to actively contribute to this development and look forward to continued cooperation.

Kind regards also on behalf of the participating organizations
UMCNL, Santeon, mProve, Inkoopsamenwerking Friese ziekenhuizen, LNAG, IAZ en VDSMH,

Veronique Esman,
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