


COVID-19 VACCINE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION WEEKLY REPORT

Week ending:	6 Novemeber 2020	Priority:	Routine
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	2021-1201

	Action sought	Deadline
Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern Prime Minister	Note the contents of this Weekly Report	N/A
Hon Grant Robertson Minister of Finance		
Hon Dr Megan Woods Minister of Research, Science and Innovation		
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister of COVID-19 Response		
Hon Nanaia Mahuta Minister of Foreign Affairs		
Hon Andrew Little Minister of Health		


 Dr Peter Crabtree
General Manager Science, Innovation and International
 05/ 11 / 2020


 Maree Roberts
Deputy Director-General, Systems Strategy and Policy
 05 / 11 / 2020

Minister's comments:



IN CONFIDENCE

COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy Implementation

Weekly Report

Week Ending 6 November 2020

RELEASED UNDER THE
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

Purpose

This weekly joint report updates Ministers on key developments of the implementation of the COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy.

Workstreams

Advance Purchase Agreements

Contact: Poppy Haynes

Phone: 9(2)(a)

Progress this week

We are aiming to recommend up to four additional deals this year. We expect to brief relevant Ministers on another heads of terms late next week, and in the second half of November on two further deals as well as the Pfizer definitive agreement. We will provide further advice in December as we complete negotiations of other definitive agreements.

We are ensuring the pharmaceutical companies are connected with the relevant regulators (Medsafe and the EPA) as well as with the Ministry of Health team responsible for logistics and immunisation rollout. This helps the immunisation programme team gather the information needed (such as delivery and storage/cold-chain requirements) to plan effectively for immunisation rollout.

Immunisation Strategy and Programme (MOH)

Contact: Mathew Parr

Phone: 9(2)(a)

A health report is being prepared to provide an update on the COVID-19 immunisation strategy and sequencing framework in the coming week. The draft COVID-19 immunisation sequencing framework was well received by the Immunisation Implementation Advisory Group at the meeting on Friday 30 October, however it will continue to be developed iteratively to reflect emerging guidance, analysis and evidence from international and New Zealand experiences.

A draft Cabinet paper is also being prepared to report back on the COVID-19 immunisation strategy and sequencing framework by the end of November. This was circulated for interagency consultation on 3 November.

Preparation for implementation continues at pace. A funding request for workforce training is expected by next week to train and prepare the required workforce.

COVAX

Contact: Glenys Karran

Phone: 9(2)(a)

The first meeting of the COVAX Facility Shareholders Council took place on 2 November, including representatives of all 94 self-financing participants. The focus of the agenda was to establish a pathway for finalising governance structures and electing officeholders, and to provide further details on candidates in the COVAX portfolio.

Three vaccine candidates are included in the first purchasing decision window, and participants are required to indicate whether they would like to opt in or out of purchasing these doses by 16 November. Officials are working on advice to Joint Ministers on these purchasing decisions. Participants are also asked to organise and vote on officeholders by 23 November. MFAT is leading engagement with regional partners to form an approach to constituency arrangements ahead of this deadline.

Further to recent budget announcements, Australia has announced \$500 million in assistance over three years to provide safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and support health security in the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Officials

will continue to engage with Australia to ensure our assistance and messaging to the Pacific on vaccine access is well-coordinated.

Research, Science and Manufacturing

Contact: Justine Daw

Phone: 9(2)(a)

Surveillance and monitoring

The Taskforce's Science and Technical Advisory Group (STAG) is turning its mind to the clinical trials/research, surveillance systems and associated data needed to assess the safety and effectiveness of purchased vaccines. With several vaccines likely to be employed across the population, and no/limited global data for key population cohorts (e.g. Maori, Pacific peoples, the aged), the Science and Technical Advisory Group has asked Dr Fran Priddy, Clinical Director for the Vaccine Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand (VAANZ) Platform and globally-recognised clinical trials expert, to work with experts on the STAG to identify priorities for national surveillance and monitoring. A consistent approach will support the immunisation roll-out, underpin the evidence-base for ongoing public communication and engagement, meet our obligations to our Polynesian partners, and optimise any new investment in this area.

Science advice

The Taskforce's independent *Science and Clinical Review Panel* has completed two further science reviews of priority APA vaccine candidates in the reporting period, and progressed scientific documentation for other potential candidates. Science assessments have been finalized for five vaccine candidates, with a sixth assessment to be closed off next week. The Panel is also preparing to support assessment of three vaccine candidates to be offered to New Zealand via the COVAX Facility, and provide science advice on 'portfolio balance' across the priority vaccine candidates.

Comparing approaches – Singapore and Australia

Contact: Simon Rae

Phone: 9(2)(a)

We have been closely engaging with our counterparts in Singapore and Australia to compare and evaluate our approaches to vaccine purchasing. Singapore and Australia are largely employing a similar response to our own, where they are using similar decision-making criteria to establish a 'core portfolio' of several leading vaccines.

Australia has announced two additional APAs, taking its overall portfolio to four candidates (similar to our intended core portfolio). The most recent announcements include 40 million doses of the Novavax vaccine and 10 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine.

6(b)(i)

These engagements have led us to conclude that we are well-aligned with the approaches of similarly placed countries, including on the vaccine candidates that we are targeting. We will provide further advice to ministers on the shape and needs of our vaccine portfolio in our upcoming advanced purchase agreement briefings.

Communications

Contact: Karl Ferguson

Phone: 6(a)

Communications planning

The “science and safety” video of STAG member, Dr Helen Petousis-Harris, is due to be published this week, with accompanying content and a new page on the Covid-19 website.

We are starting to engage with our contacts at pharmaceutical companies ahead of the next APA announcements and will work with your office to shape how the announcement(s) will take place. We will provide talking points and reactive Q&As.

Stakeholder engagement

We have started to send invitations to members of the Stakeholder Reference Group, with briefings looking to progressively roll out during November and December. We are actively working with other agencies to access their existing forums (eg, Ministry of Education).

Media management

We are in the process of contacting stakeholders who are frequently called upon in the media to discuss the topic of vaccines and are aiming to deliver a briefing in the week of 9 November. The purpose of the briefing is to ensure that commentators are supported with accurate messaging where needed.

We have provided your office with messaging ahead of a potential announcement by Australia to purchase additional vaccine candidates. We are not aware of a set date for the announcement, but anticipate it will take place in the coming days.

Upcoming Briefings

Due Date	Briefing Number	Title	Sign Out Manager
13 Nov	2021-1195	Purchase of COVID-19 vaccines from Janssen Pharmaceutica	Poppy Haynes
16 Nov		Initial COVAX purchase opportunities	Maree Roberts Peter Crabtree
TBC (Nov 2020)		Business Case for Domestically Manufacturing COVID-19 Vaccines	Simon Rae

Cabinet Paper

Due Date	Briefing Number	Title	Sign Out Manager
TBC (Nov 2020)		COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy – Nov 2020 Progress Report	Peter Crabtree
TBC (Nov 2020)		COVID-19 Immunisation Strategy – November 2020 progress report	MOH

Ministerial Official Information Act Requests

Number	Due to MO	Due to Request or	Requestor	Request	Status	Sign out
OIA 2021-0890	11 Nov	24 Nov	9(2)(a)	NZ's approach to purchasing vaccines developed using "unethical" cell lines	Scoping	Poppy Haynes

RELEASED UNDER THE
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT