



## COVID-19 VACCINE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION WEEKLY REPORT

<b>Week ending:</b>	18 September 2020	<b>Priority:</b>	Routine
<b>Security classification:</b>	In Confidence	<b>Tracking number:</b>	2021-0896

	Action sought	Deadline
Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern <b>Prime Minister</b>	<b>Note</b> the contents of this Weekly Report	N/A
Hon Grant Robertson <b>Minister of Finance</b>		
Hon Dr Megan Woods <b>Minister of Research, Science and Innovation</b>		
Hon Chris Hipkins <b>Minister of Health</b>		
Rt Hon Winston Peters <b>Minister of Foreign Affairs</b>		

  
Peter Crabtree  
General Manager Science, Innovation and International  
18 / 09 / 2020

**Minister's comments:**



IN CONFIDENCE

# COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy Implementation

Weekly Report

Week beginning 18 September 2020

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## 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)

The APA team has been working to secure advance purchase agreements (APAs) with 5 priority vaccine candidates.

#### *Overall progress summary*

Briefings to our science review panel:

- 3 presentations completed;
- 2 more booked.

Provision of Heads of Terms/supply agreements;

- 4 drafts provided by suppliers;
- 1 more likely to be provided shortly.

Negotiations with vaccine suppliers:

- 1 well advanced;
- 3 where we will be engaging with the suppliers on the terms of the offer over the coming fortnight;
- 1 has indicated interest and will progress negotiations when we receive a Heads of Terms.

#### *Progress this week*

This week, two suppliers delivered science briefings to our scientific review panel. Advice from the panel will inform our advice to Ministers on whether we should sign up to any particular APA. We are working to ensure we are able to capture the advice and input from the panel effectively.

This week we also met with our external legal counsel, commercial adviser and cross-ministry colleagues to discuss a Heads of Terms we received last week from a priority candidate. Using our broader negotiating priorities, we agreed the changes we would like to see in the Heads of Terms, and are now working with our legal teams to advance negotiations with the pharmaceutical company.

We received another Heads of Terms from one of our five active candidates. We will review the terms against our negotiating priorities over the coming week. We also received a draft supply agreement from an additional candidate. A supply agreement contains similar information to a Heads of Terms, including supply schedules, number and cost of doses, as well as indemnity position. It differs to a Heads of Terms in that, once a Heads of Terms is signed, a definitive agreement then needs to be negotiated and signed. A supply agreement, once signed, will be final and secure the agreed doses.

We have been continuing negotiations with the furthest progressed candidate. We have reached satisfactory outcomes on a number of aspects of the terms and discussed outstanding issues with the supplier on Friday morning.

Due diligence and analysis of each offer against the framework is progressing in parallel with the negotiations. Once due diligence and sufficient scientific advice has been received, the Task Force will assess the suitability of any offers, and we will brief joint ministers with a recommendation on whether we should sign an APA.

We have also been providing information to our Ministry of Health colleagues about the storage and equipment requirements for delivering each of the top 5 priority vaccines, to inform immunisation planning.

## Immunisation Strategy and Programme

Contact: Mathew Parr

Phone: 9(2)(a)

The Minister of Health received advice on the COVID-19 Immunisation Programme on 11 September 2020, and he accepted the following working assumptions to underpin the development of scenarios:

- New Zealand will continue to pursue an elimination strategy
- the New Zealand border will be tightly controlled in a safe manner
- a COVID-19 vaccine has regulatory approval in New Zealand
- a COVID-19 vaccine is publicly funded
- a COVID-19 vaccine will not be made compulsory
- Pacific and Realm countries will be included in New Zealand's COVID-19 Immunisation Programme, to some extent.

Scenario planning is being progressed on the basis of the assumptions above and likely vaccine portfolios. They will be refined as further information and evidence emerges. We are also urgently scoping the cold chain storage and consumable requirements for each of these vaccines, to put in place the infrastructure and purchase consumables as required.

The chairs of the Immunisation Implementation Advisory Group (IIAG) will meet on Friday, 18 September to discuss the Terms of Reference and forward agenda for the group. At this meeting, we will seek to confirm that discussions on the prioritisation framework will be first on the agenda. Papers on the prioritisation framework will be provided to the IIAG in advance of the meeting.

In response to a request from the Minister of Health, the Ministry of Health is preparing advice on the costs to the health system of influenza and the costs of immunisation, and how the 2021 influenza immunisation programme could be used to prepare for a COVID-19 immunisation programme. This advice is due to be submitted to the Minister of Health on 18 September.

## COVAX

Contact: Glenys Karran

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Agencies have prepared advice to Joint Ministers recommending that the New Zealand Government enter into a legally binding Commitment Agreement by 18 September 2020 to secure options to purchase approved COVID-19 vaccines for up to 50 percent of the population of the Realm of New Zealand through the COVAX Facility. In line with the Commitment Agreement for Optional Purchase, New Zealand will be required to provide an upfront payment of approximately NZ\$23.64 million and a risk-sharing guarantee of approximately NZ\$3.04 million by 9 October 2020.

Gavi has confirmed that they intend to publish the full list of economies that have submitted (non-binding) Confirmation of Intent to Participate in the COVAX Facility in a statement on 21 September 2020. It will be in New Zealand's interests to make a strong public statement of support for the COVAX Facility in coordination with Gavi's planned publicity around the 18 September deadline in order to stimulate political support for the initiative and, in doing so, support other economies to participate in the COVAX Facility. Agencies will advise Ministers' offices on a proposed communications approach.

MFAT is drafting a submission to the Minister of Foreign Affairs seeking in-principle agreement to use Official Development Assistance to purchase COVID-19 vaccines to cover Polynesia through New Zealand's own purchasing arrangements. Further consultation with Australia and regional partners will be required to ensure equitable arrangements for all Pacific Islands Forum countries. 9(2)(ba)(i) & (ii)

## Science and Manufacturing

Contact: Justine Daw

Phone: 9(2)(a)

### *Manufacturing strategy*

As signaled last week, the potential to domestically manufacture COVID-19 vaccines in the next 12 months is limited, with developers focusing on proven production facilities with significant scale. A commissioned report from Avalia Immunotherapies has assessed New Zealand's current research, development and manufacturing capability and capacity in vaccine production, and recommends a three-pronged approach in the face of global manufacturing demand: near-term purchasing of the most promising vaccines from international manufacturers; secure medium-term rights to locally produce promising vaccine(s), and invest in New Zealand's existing vaccine infrastructure to produce >2.5 million doses by 2022, scaling to >10 million by 2023; and longer-term, consider development of novel vaccine candidates which could be produced locally by existing, or yet-to-be established, New Zealand manufacturers. While we are giving further consideration to the detail of the report, it supports our emerging thinking, as discussed during this week's visit to South Pacific Sera in Timaru, about the potential role of domestic manufacture to increase resilience to future pandemics. See accompanying briefing 2021-0894.

### *BioCell investment*

Of the \$4.75 million set aside to support initial steps to develop manufacturing capabilities, \$2.88 million was contracted to the Biocell Corporation (Biocell) to upgrade its facilities to produce commercially significant quantities of COVID-19 vaccines (potentially up to 100 million doses a year). MedSafe has engaged constructively with Biocell to ensure the new facilities meet regulatory standards required to produce vaccines. While work is underway, the new facility is delayed, with production now unlikely before the second quarter in 2021 due to high global demand for vaccine manufacturing equipment. As noted above, international developers are not yet interested in New Zealand-based production, which is small by global standards. 9(2)(ba)(i)

We will shortly explore opportunities for international (CEPI) investment in New Zealand manufacturing to also support our Pacific partners. We are monitoring the situation and will provide an update in our next report.

## Communications

Contact: Karl Fergusson

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### *Communications planning*

In conjunction with MFAT, a key focus is co-ordinating and drafting communications to support an announcement about New Zealand's official commitment to the COVAX Facility. This includes developing a draft press release and series of Q&As, and inputting into planned and complementary international announcement. Minister's offices are assisting in co-ordinating the announcement, on behalf of Ministers. The Friends of the COVAX Facility will issue a joint media statement on 21 September (UK time), which will reference New Zealand's commitment to the COVAX Facility amongst other countries. Singapore is drafting this statement and is liaising with MFAT. New Zealand will issue the domestic press release to align with the Friends of the Facility media statement on 22 September (NZ time).

Separately, we are working with Task Force agencies to coordinate a weekly update of key messages and Q&As, to reflect the changing global environment and the pace at which work is progressing.

Development of an overarching communication strategy is progressing and we are in the early stages of connecting with the COVID-19 Health System Response directorate to ensure our approach and messaging is aligned, and that MoH are well placed to lead communications during the immunisation roll-out phase.

### *Stakeholder engagement*

We held a cross-agency workshop as part of the development of Phase 2 of the Vaccine Strategy communications strategy. A key output of this workshop was a common group of stakeholders and a stakeholder plan, including priority groups to engage with and brief as the Task Force work progresses.

*Media management*

We provided speaking notes and a series of Q&As for your recent visit to South Pacific Sera in Timaru, which received positive media coverage.

We responded to a Newsroom media query about Vaccine Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand and shared our responses with your office. The published article was positive and accurately reflected the work and purpose of the Alliance.

## Recent Briefings

Date	Briefing Number	Title	Sign Out Manager
09/09/2020	2021-0845	Proactive release of Cabinet paper – Vaccine Strategy funding envelope	Simon Rae
11/09/2020		COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy – COVAX Facility Binding Commitment Agreement and Upfront Payment	Peter Crabtree
11/09/2020		Event Briefing: Visit to South Pacific Sera	Peter Crabtree

## Upcoming Briefings

Due Date	Briefing Number	Title	Sign Out Manager
TBC (October2020)		Strategic assessment of COVID-19 vaccine portfolio	Simon Rae
TBC	TBC	Approval to sign binding Heads of Agreement for first Advance Purchase Agreement	Poppy Haynes
21/09/2020		COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy – Update on Manufacturing options	Simon Rae