


## COVID-19 VACCINE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION WEEKLY REPORT

<b>Week ending:</b>	16 October 2020	<b>Priority:</b>	Routine
<b>Security classification:</b>	In Confidence	<b>Tracking number:</b>	2021-1085

	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>		

  
 Dr Peter Crabtree  
**General Manager Science, Innovation and International**  
 16 / 10 / 2020

  
 Maree Roberts  
**Deputy Director-General, Systems Strategy and Policy**  
 16 / 10 / 2020

**Minister's comments:**



IN CONFIDENCE

# COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy Implementation

Weekly Report

Week ending 16 October 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)

#### Overall progress summary

Heads of Terms announced: 1 binding agreement announced.

Science reviews: 6 science reviews completed.

Provision of Heads of Terms/supply agreements by vaccine developers: 5 drafts received.

Negotiations with vaccine suppliers: 4 in active discussion, 1 definitive agreement underway (following agreement on Heads of Terms).

#### Progress this week

This week, the Minister of Research, Science and Innovation, and the Minister of Health announced New Zealand's purchase of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine. This is the first advance purchase agreement (APA) agreed by New Zealand. The agreement secures 1.5 million doses of the BNT162 mRNA vaccine, providing coverage for 750,000 people. Under this agreement, it is possible that New Zealand may receive doses of the vaccine as early as Q1 2021. The proposed delivery schedule sees the doses shipped to New Zealand over three calendar quarters next year. This makes the Pfizer vaccine one of the earliest available, should the company complete all clinical trials and authorisation within their proposed timelines. We are now working to negotiate and finalise the definitive agreement (which contains additional detail to the key terms in the Heads of Agreement).

We have been advancing negotiations with four other suppliers this week, including candidates, which may be able to provide full population coverage. We hope to conclude at least two more negotiations by early November.

### Immunisation Strategy and Programme (MOH)

Contact: Mathew Parr

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Following the approval of funding, the Ministry has purchased a number of ultra-low temperature (-70 degrees Celsius) freezers to use as part of the national warehousing and logistics infrastructure. Over the coming weeks, the Ministry will also purchase smaller ultra-low temperature freezers to be used within DHBs.

There has been difficulty in sourcing the required needles to deliver a COVID-19 vaccine. The Ministry has confirmed that the needles held in the National Reserve are fit for purpose as a 'giving' needle, however has been unable to source the 'drawing' needle recommended by vaccine manufacturers. A supplier has recommended an alternative drawing needle, and we are confirming with vaccine manufacturers whether they are appropriate for use.

Work is underway to develop the COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritisation framework that will underpin the COVID-19 Immunisation Strategy. We are scheduled to meet with the Immunisation Implementation Advisory Group (IIAG) on 16 October and intend to discuss and agree:

- key parameters for the prioritisation framework, including: proposed problem definition, assumptions, principles and other considerations that should be taken into account;

- objectives for the prioritisation framework under a range of scenarios; and
- key questions that need to be considered and answered to complete the prioritisation framework.

Work is underway to ensure that the analysis of population cohorts and vaccine characteristics will be available ahead of the 30 October meeting with the IIAG. This analysis will enable us to discuss the answers to the questions that are agreed at their meeting on 16 October.

Updated programme governance structures and a programme gantt chart is being presented to the Minister of Health this week.

## COVAX

Contact: Glenys Karran

Phone: 9(2)(a)

- China announced on 9 October that it would join the COVAX Facility to procure doses for 1 percent of its population. At least one China-produced vaccine candidate (Clover) is expected to be distributed internationally through the COVAX Facility. The United Kingdom has also confirmed its participation.
- In a budget announcement this week, Australia unveiled a COVID-19 Vaccine Access and Health Security Program (AU\$23.2 million over three years), which will support the development of national immunisation policies for Pacific island countries, Timor-Leste and Southeast Asian countries, for delivery of COVID-19 vaccines. We are seeking further details about this initiative.
- Following the Minister of Foreign Affairs' agreement in-principle to using Official Development Assistance to purchase vaccines for Polynesia, a paper was approved by the interagency Vaccine Taskforce on the details of this, including how we will factor it into our overall purchasing strategy. Officials will commence engagement with Polynesian governments to understand their needs and support planning. We remain in close contact with Australia and are enquiring about the details of its plans for vaccine provision to the Pacific.
- The US has published an "Executive Order on ensuring essential medicines, medical countermeasures, and critical inputs are made in the United States". It is unclear whether and how this will impact the flow of vaccines and inputs to vaccine manufacture in and out of the US. MFAT is following this issue in the World Trade Organisation as a member of the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA), and will coordinate with likeminded GPA members to understand the implications of the Executive Order decision. Given that the definitive list of products is likely to be made public by early December, the process is not dependent on the November election as inauguration will not take place until 20 January.

## Science and Manufacturing

Contact: Justine Daw

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### *Vaccine Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand (VAANZ) – Clinical trials*

VAANZ is making good progress in establishing a collaborative vaccine research platform in New Zealand. This month has seen continued progress, with VAANZ having prepared an application to the Environmental Protection Authority to bring in hamsters for use as an alternate model to mice for preclinical studies of vaccine candidates. Australian research groups have expressed interest in using these models if approved, which is positive in terms of thickening NZ-Australian collaboration in vaccines. The Platform has also agreed with NZ company CVC (COVID-19 Vaccine Corporation Ltd) to evaluate their vaccine candidate through the VAANZ screening platform in early 2021, and progressed discussions with other vaccine and adjuvant research groups on accessing the screening platform.

## Communications

Contact: Karl Fergusson

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### *Communications planning*

We worked closely with Task Force agencies on key communications collateral to support the Pfizer announcement. We worked with Pfizer to coordinate the timing of the press release and ensure consistent messaging for Q&As. Key stakeholders – especially those likely to be approached by media for comment – were provided with a ‘heads up’ prior to the announcement going out. A number of those stakeholders have provided positive public comment as a result. The announcement received widespread coverage in New Zealand (52 mentions in media articles), with a generally positive sentiment.

We anticipate being in a position to make further APA announcements late October/early November. We will work with Ministers’ offices to develop the details of these announcements.

### *Stakeholder engagement*

We are continuing to work with MoH to determine the membership of a joint Stakeholder Reference Group and its Terms of Reference. Based on feedback from key agencies, we intend to complement the role of the Stakeholder Reference Group through direct engagement with related sectors (disabled peoples, education, etc.) via already established sector forums.

As part of our engagement approach, we are working with Te Kupenga (MBIE’s Māori Economic Development Unit) to connect with existing Iwi engagement forums.

Separately, we are working with MoH and MFAT to develop a communication plan for the Pacific, to ensure that their communication needs are understood and met.

### *Media management*

We are working with MoH and Pfizer on any follow-up media queries, post-announcement.

We have provided reactive Q&As to Minister Woods’ office and other agencies after Johnson & Johnson announced a pause in their COVID-19 vaccine trial.

## Upcoming Briefings

Due Date	Briefing Number	Title	Sign Out Manager
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

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