



## COVID-19 VACCINE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION WEEKLY REPORT

<b>Week ending:</b>	30 October 2020	<b>Priority:</b>	Routine
<b>Security classification:</b>	In Confidence	<b>Tracking number:</b>	2021-1136

	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  
 30 / 10 / 2020

  
 Maree Roberts  
 Deputy Director-General, Systems Strategy  
 and Policy  
 30 / 10 / 2020

**Minister's comments:**



IN CONFIDENCE

# COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy Implementation

Weekly Report

Week Ending 30 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)

We are in active negotiations with six vaccine suppliers, and are aiming to recommend up to four additional deals this year. We expect to brief you on the next heads of agreement in early/mid-November, with advice on other deals coming over the following few weeks. The tempo of negotiations is not being limited by our resourcing and processes, but rather by the fact that we are dependent on the response times of pharma companies that are themselves managing multiple parallel negotiations in different jurisdictions. In addition, some companies have chosen not to use a heads of agreement but to go straight to negotiating a full definitive agreement, which takes more work upfront but has the advantage of being a one-step process. We are pushing hard and seeking to streamline the number of times positions and issues have to move back and forth. The allocation of risk, payment terms and indemnity provisions continue to be key factors in the negotiations, but we are managing to find solutions acceptable to both us and to the pharma companies. We are also progressing the definitive agreement for the Pfizer deal, which Hons Woods and Hipkins announced on 12 October, and will brief you on that in the coming weeks.

### Immunisation Strategy and Programme (MOH)

Contact: Mathew Parr

Phone: 9(2)(a)

#### *Programme Management*

The COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme is continuing to scope and progress the complex and multifaceted work programme. The COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation external Governance Group met for the first time on 28 October. This group is chaired by Dame Dr Karen Poutasi, and members include Dr Ashley Bloomfield, Bruce Plested, Carolyn Tremain, Dr Fa'afetai Sopoaga, John Whaanga, Murray Jack, and Ngāhiwi Tomoana. The first meeting focused on giving an overview of the vaccine purchasing strategy and the COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme.

#### *Engagement*

The Immunisation Implementation Advisory Group (IIAG) will next meet on 30 October 2020; key items for discussion include cold chain infrastructure, the Medsafe approval process, and an initial discussion on the vaccinator workforce.

In addition to the external Governance Group and the IIAG, work is underway to develop a wider external Stakeholder Network to enable effective information flows to and from the affected communities. The group will be made up of representatives from outside the health sector.

#### *Immunisation Strategy*

Officials are preparing advice for the Minister of Health on the COVID-19 immunisation sequencing framework (formerly referred to as the prioritisation framework). This advice will have a strong Te Tiriti o Waitangi and equity focus. This work will be informed by our discussions with the IIAG, as well as international and domestic evidence and guidance.

We have shifted from calling this the “prioritisation framework” to the “COVID immunisation sequencing framework” because we consider it is a more accurate way to describe how the COVID-19 immunisation programme will work. That is, as all people will be able to access a COVID-19 in due course, we are working through the best way to sequence the immunisation programme.

#### *Immunisation Programme implementation preparedness*

The Ministry has agreed in principle to partner with the Immunisation Advisory Centre to deliver workforce training and supporting information for COVID-19 vaccines. IMAC delivered an initial proposal, however the Ministry has sought a revised proposal with a significantly expanded scope, reflection of cultural competencies, and the principles of Te Tiriti.

## COVAX

Contact: Glenys Karran

Phone: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

Gavi will convene the first meeting of the COVAX Facility Shareholders Council on 2 November. The body will comprise representatives of all 92 self-financing participants, including New Zealand, and is intended to provide operational oversight of the self-financing mechanism. Gavi will use the meeting to update participants on which vaccine candidates will feature in the COVAX portfolio, including estimated dose volumes and timeframes for purchasing decisions. Ahead of the Shareholders Council meeting, MFAT met with COVAX Facility leads from Australia and the UK on 27 October to exchange views on next steps for the COVAX Facility. The UK saw that the Friends of the Facility had an ongoing role to play as a sounding board for Gavi on policy and operational issues, and to work together on policy solutions to complex issues like a secondary market for COVID-19 vaccines.

Separately, Canada, Italy and Spain have approved New Zealand’s request to join their constituency on the Gavi Board for the next five years, with immediate effect. New Zealand will have the opportunity to feed in to constituency positions ahead of the Gavi Board meeting in December.

Officials are engaging with Polynesian governments at working level to discuss next steps for provision of vaccines for their populations through New Zealand’s participation in the COVAX Facility (for the Realm) and through New Zealand’s bilateral advance purchase agreements (for all of Polynesia). As part of New Zealand’s support to the broader Pacific, officials are also engaging with the vaccine pillar of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Joint Incident Management Team (JIMT). Their work is expected to encompass support for immunisation planning and decision-making, operational guidance and training for vaccine introduction, public communications support, and monitoring of uptake and for adverse events following immunisation.

Officials are also working to coordinate with Australia to align and amplify messaging on vaccine access in the Pacific, including at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting (delayed to the beginning of December). Australia is scaling up its capacity to support vaccine roll-out in the Pacific and South East Asia (especially Indonesia and Timor Leste). Over three years, 6(b)(i) [REDACTED] has been set aside to support and service future immunisation preparedness activities, and an expanded, dedicated vaccines team is being established within the Centre for Health Security.

Canada and New Zealand Taskforce Chairs met for the second time on 22 October to discuss opportunities for cooperation on manufacturing for long-term pandemic preparedness, and to exchange notes on portfolio strategy and vaccine confidence. Both sides agree to meet again towards the end of November.

## Research, Science and Manufacturing

Contact: Justine Daw

Phone: 9(2)(a)

### *Infectious diseases research*

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted gaps in our knowledge of, and response to, infectious diseases, including New Zealand's current research capability and capacity. We have run the first of several facilitated virtual workshops with researchers across the country to scope the short, medium and long-term priorities and capability needs for infectious diseases research, with a view to minimise future impacts from infectious diseases in New Zealand. The workshops span four major themes: (a) long-term health effects of Covid-19, socio-economic perspectives and equitable outcomes; (b) anti-microbial resistance, animal and environmental health impacts on human health; (c) epidemiology, modelling, genome sequencing, bioinformatics and contact tracing technologies; and (d) diagnostics, therapeutics and immunisation. The outputs from the workshops will inform advice to Ministers about future infectious disease research needs in New Zealand.

### *Science advice*

The Taskforce's independent *Science and Clinical Review Panel* has completed two more science reviews of priority APA vaccine candidates in the reporting period, and progressed scientific documentation for other candidates to be considered for purchasing. We are preparing for three further science briefings in the next week (the first briefing for an eighth candidate, and second briefings for two existing candidates for which more information is needed to make purchasing recommendations to Ministers). The Panel is also preparing to support assessment of vaccine candidates to be offered via the COVAX Facility from mid-November (TBC), and provide science advice on 'portfolio balance' across the priority vaccine candidates, as invited.

## Communications

Contact: Karl Ferguson

Phone: 9(2)(a)

### *Communications planning*

We are working with the DPMC Covid-19 communications team to provide content for their 'Unite' communication channels ([www.covid19.govt.nz](http://www.covid19.govt.nz) etc) We expect interest in vaccines and vaccine purchasing to increase, and the content is designed to meet this need, providing information about the Government's overall vaccine strategy and approach, and addressing basic questions about vaccine science and safety. This will include a short video we commissioned and shot with STAG member, Dr Helen Petousis-Harris. We plan to publish the content in the week of 2 November.

At their request, and via MFAT, we are planning an engagement with members of the Canadian Vaccine Taskforce on communications planning and approach. This follows a meeting we had with communications leads from the Australian Vaccine Taskforce earlier in October.

### *Stakeholder engagement*

We have finalised the Terms of Reference for our joint Stakeholder Reference Group with MoH. Invitations to members will be sent out the week of 2 November.

### *Media management*

We continue to proactively contact journalists who have shown an interest in the COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy, to ensure visibility of the Taskforce's role in the vaccine procurement process. We are currently drafting responses to a journalist (Veronika Meduna) for an article she is writing for the New Zealand Listener.

## 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
TBC (Nov 2020)		COVID-19 Immunisation Strategy – November 2020 progress report	MOH

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