



COVID-19 VACCINE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION WEEKLY REPORT

Week ending:	23 October 2020	Priority:	Routine
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	2021-1111

	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 Health		
Rt Hon Winston Peters Minister of Foreign Affairs		


 Dr Peter Crabtree
 General Manager Science, Innovation and International
 23 / 10 / 2020


 Maree Roberts
 Deputy Director-General, Systems Strategy
 and Policy
 23/ 10 / 2020

Minister's comments:



IN CONFIDENCE

COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy Implementation

Weekly Report

Week ending 23 October 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)

Overall progress summary

Science reviews: 6 science reviews completed, 2 more scheduled

Provision of Heads of Terms/supply agreements by vaccine developers: 5 drafts received, 2 more expected this week

Negotiations with vaccine suppliers: 6 in active discussion, 1 definitive agreement underway (following agreement on Heads of Terms).

Progress this week

We have begun engaging with two new suppliers, in addition to the 6 we have already been negotiating with, and are expecting to receive draft heads of terms in the coming week. This takes the total number of pharmaceutical companies we are actively engaging with to 8.

We have been working closely with Bell Gully (our external legal counsel) on several advanced negotiations, and we hope to conclude these shortly. We expect to provide Ministers with further advance purchase agreements for consideration and agreement in the first half of November. Important concessions we have achieved include securing more doses for New Zealand, earlier delivery time frames, better payment terms (eg reducing the amount paid upfront at risk) and narrower indemnities than originally offered.

In some cases, we are seeking further scientific briefings where new clinical trial information is available, especially for candidates which are early stage, and/or where we have some concerns about effectiveness and/or the likelihood and severity of side effects.

Immunisation Strategy and Programme (MOH)

Contact: Mathew Parr

Phone: 9(2)(a)

The Ministry will this week begin purchasing the consumables required to deliver a vaccine. There is a global shortage of most items, and given the timeframes in which consumables need to be delivered, the Ministry will seek to utilise emergency procurement rules to directly approach the relevant suppliers.

Following sign off from the Ministers of Health and Finance on the National Immunisation Solution business case, the focus has been on developing the overall roadmap and ensuring the right capability is engaged to support the delivery of the project.

Work is underway to develop the COVID-19 Vaccine prioritisation framework or immunisation sequencing that will underpin the COVID-19 Immunisation Strategy. The Ministry met with the Immunisation Implementation Advisory Group on 16 October and received helpful feedback on the key parameters for the prioritisation framework, including proposed problem definition, assumptions, principles, and objectives for the prioritisation framework under a range of scenarios. Their feedback related primarily to how Te Tiriti o Waitangi and equity considerations were incorporated into the framework. The Ministry are working through the feedback this week and are due to meet with the IIAG again on 30 October to discuss how their feedback has been incorporated and its impact on our thinking.

COVAX

Contact: Glenys Karran

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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. The first meeting will be a chance to finalise the Shareholders Council Terms of Reference and operating procedures, and elect co-Chairs and representatives to the Shareholders Council Executive Committee.

Gavi will also 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. MFAT met on 20 October with Gavi to discuss the detail of how purchasing through the COVAX Facility will work, and agencies are considering principles to guide decisions whether to opt in or out of candidates in the COVAX portfolio.

Science and Manufacturing

Contact: Justine Daw

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Science advice

The Taskforce's independent Science and Clinical Review Panel has completed two more science reviews of priority APA vaccine candidates in the past week, bringing the total to date to seven. Three 'consensus documents' and associated 'summary statements' on each APA candidate have been completed to date, drawing on commercially-privileged information provided by the developer/supplier, as well as wider scientific information (e.g. trial registration data, early research data, and peer-reviewed research publications). Three further sets of completed documents are expected by early November to inform officials' advice to the Taskforce (and subsequently Ministers) on vaccine purchase decisions. The Panel is also gearing up to undertake similar assessments 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.

Communications

Contact: Karl Fergusson

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Communications planning

We are working with MFAT on a communications plan for the Pacific. This will include input from MoH's Immunisation Programme communications team, and is complementary to the overall Communications and Engagement strategy that we have developed.

We have purchased survey results from market research agency Horizon (in association with the School of Population Health at University of Auckland), which will provide a useful baseline when identifying attitudes and sentiment towards COVID-19 vaccines. Related to this, we have further refined the research brief with Te Pūnaha Matatini, so that we can monitor on-going trends in vaccine hesitancy and acceptance.

Stakeholder engagement

Work on the Stakeholder Reference Group is progressing. We have agreed a draft Terms of Reference and membership list with MoH. An invite from Ashley Bloomfield and Peter Crabtree is being prepared to send to prospective members next week. We expect to schedule the first meeting for the group in November. We are also working with other agencies (Education, DIA, MSD etc) to schedule Task Force related briefings during November using existing, Covid related stakeholder forums.

Media management

We are proactively contacting 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 actively working with Dr Helen Petousis-Harris and other STAG members to identify their needs for responding to media. We are aware of upcoming media appearances by several members of the STAG, including in a New Zealand Listener article and an appearance on RNZ's/Newsrooms 'The Detail.' We are working with a journalist from North & South Magazine to provide content for a vaccine related feature.

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