

Memorandum

COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy - Negotiation priorities for future COVID-19 vaccine purchases

Date due to MO: 13 August 2021 **Action required by:** 13 August 2021

Security level: ~~Commercially Sensitive~~ **Health Report number:** HR20211824

To: Vaccine Ministers

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Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
Wendy Illingworth	Group Manager, Public Health Policy	9(2)(a)
Allison Bennett	Manager, System Enablers, Public Health System Policy	9(2)(a)

Action for Private Secretaries

N/A

Date dispatched to MO:

COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy - Negotiation priorities for future COVID-19 vaccine purchases

Purpose

1. This memo seeks your agreement to negotiation priorities for future COVID-19 vaccine purchases, s 9(2)(b)(ii) [REDACTED] to secure supply of COVID-19 vaccines for 2022 onwards.

Background and context

2. COVID-19 vaccine purchasing decisions to date have been made under the COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy (Vaccine Strategy) agreed by Cabinet in May 2020. The objective of the Vaccine Strategy was to secure access to sufficient quantities of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, in order to implement a preferred immunisation programme at the earliest possible time [CAB-20-MIN-0229 refers].
3. New Zealand purchased a portfolio of vaccines to manage the risk of vaccine development or supply failure. The portfolio is comprised of four advance purchase agreements with potential vaccine candidate suppliers, and a commitment to the COVAX Facility, which would enable access to COVID-19 vaccine doses for up to 50% of our population.
4. As the COVID-19 Immunisation Programme (the Programme) continues to be successfully rolled out, we are considering how the vaccine portfolio can be utilised to support future immunisation needs beyond 2021 for New Zealand and the Pacific.
5. To date, the Programme has been based solely around the Pfizer vaccine, and there will be enough doses of Pfizer vaccine available to vaccinate everyone in New Zealand who is eligible (currently 12 years of age and over) by the end of 2021, as well as supporting access to the vaccine in the Pacific. However, we acknowledge that there is almost certainly going to be a need for ongoing immunisation in 2022 (and possibly onwards) to continue to improve uptake:
 - a. as more population groups become eligible (paediatric groups for example) or more people age into the existing eligible groups
 - b. as more people become motivated to access vaccination (such as from relaxing border settings)
 - c. through ongoing work to improve access for hard-to-reach population groups
 - d. potentially providing a vaccine for people unable or unwilling to take an mRNA vaccine.
6. At this stage, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the general population will require booster doses or new generation vaccines to manage the threat of COVID-19 variants, however, management of the vaccine portfolio is required to manage the risks of potential future immunisation needs.

We expect additional COVID-19 vaccines will need to be purchased for 2022 onwards

7. The portfolio of vaccines will need to enable ongoing vaccination beyond 2022 in the context of the overall COVID-19 immunisation strategy to ensure that uptake is maximised and to best protect to health outcomes of New Zealanders, as well as supporting the Pacific.
8. In addition, there is the uncertainty around a number of ongoing risks, including the potential risks of decreasing immunity from the vaccines over time (and the need for booster doses), or the risk of vaccine-resistant variants of COVID-19 emerging, which could both impact the need for further vaccinations in 2022 and outyears.
9. We are seeking ongoing advice from the COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV-TAG) on the risks outlined above and have been liaising with international colleagues to understand approaches being undertaken by other countries such as Australia, Singapore and the United Kingdom.
10. We will need a sustained supply of vaccine across 2022 in order to support maximum uptake. We expect to continue to need an mRNA vaccine over the longer term, based on efficacy data and public perception.
11. While it is likely there will be some of the 10 million doses of Pfizer's vaccine not used in 2021, s 9(2)(b)(ii)
[REDACTED] (advice is being provided to Cabinet on 23 August 2021). This could mean the portfolio is lacking in a mRNA option from early 2022 onwards.

s 9(2)(b)(ii)
[REDACTED]

Negotiation priorities

17. The objective of any additional purchases is consistent with the original Vaccine Strategy (CAB-20-MIN-0229 refers), particularly the goal of securing access to sufficient quantities of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines for New Zealand and the Pacific in order to implement a preferred immunisation programme at the earliest possible time (if required).
18. The following priorities are a focus for an additional purchase:

Area/Issue	Ideal agreement
Doses and Scheduling	<p>Sufficient doses are available for New Zealand's and Polynesia's immunisation needs to support ongoing uptake and should a booster dose be required.</p> <p>Delivery scheduling reflects the expected needs of the Immunisation Programme in 2022 and outyears and places greater commitment on the supplier to deliver according to schedules.</p>

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Further advice will be provided to Cabinet on 30 August about future COVID-19 vaccine purchasing and seeking agreement for contingency funding to enter into agreements to secure additional COVID-19 vaccines in 2022 and onwards. This will be alongside consideration of the existing portfolio of vaccines.

PROACTIVELY RELEASED

Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

1.	note	that there is almost certainly going to be a need for ongoing immunisation in 2022 (and possibly onwards) to continue to improve uptake.	
2.	note	there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the general population will require booster doses at this stage.	
2	note	that the portfolio of COVID-19 vaccines will need to enable ongoing vaccination beyond 2022 to support ongoing uptake and to manage the risk of future immunisation needs (such as booster doses).	
2.	note	officials are providing advice to Cabinet on 30 August about future COVID-19 vaccine purchasing and seeking agreement to additional contingency funding to enter into agreements to secure additional COVID-19 vaccines in 2022 and onwards.	
3.	note	s 9(2)(b)(ii) [REDACTED]	
4	agree	that negotiations with Pfizer occur in parallel with advice being provided to Cabinet due to the time-sensitive nature of securing COVID-19 vaccine doses for 2022.	Yes/No
5	agree	to the negotiation priorities outlined in this paper to guide negotiations with vaccine suppliers for the supply of vaccines s 9(2)(b)(ii) [REDACTED]	Yes/No