



## PHAC Media Lines

### COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility

**Issue:** Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, has teamed up with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the World Health Organization to create a pooled procurement mechanism for the purchase of COVID-19 vaccines called the COVAX Facility. This will pool the resources of countries to make advanced purchase agreements for a number of promising vaccine candidates. The Facility will include both low- and lower-middle income countries, whose purchases will be financed by official development assistance, and upper-middle and high-income countries who will self-finance their own purchase of vaccine doses for domestic use through the Facility.

On September 18, the Government of Canada formally expressed interest in joining the COVAX Facility. On September 25, Prime Minister Trudeau announced that Canada would contribute approximately \$440 million to the COVAX Facility. Of this amount, \$220 million will provide Canada with the option of purchasing sufficient doses for 20% of its population. The other \$220 million will finance the procurement of doses for low and middle-income countries through the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (COVAX AMC). Canada had previously provided an initial contribution of up to US\$25 million to the COVAX AMC.

#### **Key messages:**

- Ensuring Canadians' access to vaccines and antivirals is a top priority. The Government of Canada has announced more than \$1 billion in support of a national medical research strategy to fight COVID-19, which includes vaccine development and the production of treatments. There are currently several candidate vaccines in research and development, and it is not possible to determine which ones will be successful in preventing COVID-19 infection.
- The Government of Canada is supporting multiple organizations that are working at unprecedented speed to develop candidate vaccines.
- Through this announcement, the Government of Canada has committed \$220 million to the COVAX Facility, securing Canada's choice options to purchase doses for 20% of Canada's population. Today's announcement also provides equal funding to procure doses for low- and lower-middle-income countries through the Advance Market Commitment.
- By joining this initiative, Canada is contributing funds towards collective efforts to develop a safe, effective and accessible COVID-19 vaccine for 172 participating economies across the world.
- Through this mechanism, Canada will secure additional options for vaccine doses for use domestically. This approach complements the bilateral arrangements Canada has in place with vaccine manufacturers and diversifies our investment in potential supply.
- Canada is committed to global collaboration to end this pandemic. The COVAX Facility is designed to support rapid, fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all participating countries to slow the pandemic. Its pooled vaccine procurement mechanism offers a unique multilateral response to a complex global problem.

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- Supporting other countries in their fight against COVID-19 and other infectious diseases is an investment to protect Canada and Canadians.
- The Government of Canada looks forward to ongoing engagement with this coalition of international organisations and economies.
- Canada continues to monitor and support emerging science, and is committed to ensuring that our domestic efforts and international contributions are supported by the best available evidence, and aligned with global efforts.
- The Government of Canada is closely monitoring vaccine development efforts—domestically and internationally—and will work quickly to negotiate advanced purchase agreements with vaccine manufacturers to secure supply for Canadians as soon as it is feasible.

#### Questions and Answers:

##### **Q1. How many countries will support the COVAX Facility?**

As of August 24, 2020, 172 countries submitted expressions of interest to COVAX Facility, including 92 countries that could be supported by the COVAX Advance Market Commitment. This represents interest from governments representing more than 60% of the world's population. To date, the UK, Japan, the EU and Canada, among other countries, submitted non-binding commitments to join the Facility as self-financing countries. Japan and several other countries have confirmed their participation through binding commitments, and the EU has committed up to €400 million to COVAX.

##### **Q2. What is the goal of COVAX?**

The goal of COVAX is to deliver two billion doses of safe, effective vaccines that have passed regulatory approval and/or the World Health Organization (WHO) prequalification by the end of 2021. These vaccines will be delivered to all participating countries, proportional to their populations, initially prioritizing the most vulnerable populations in each participating country, such as health care workers, then expanding to cover 20% of the population. Further doses will then be made available based on a country's needs, vulnerability and COVID-19 threat. The COVAX Facility will also maintain a buffer of doses for emergency and humanitarian use, including dealing with outbreaks before they become uncontrolled.

##### **Q3. What is COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC)?**

In June 2020, Gavi [launched](#) the COVAX AMC, whose aim is to provide financial support beyond one country's own national interests to ensure low and middle-income countries have access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines. The AMC serves as a financing instrument incentivizing vaccine manufacturers to produce sufficient quantities of eventual COVID-19 vaccines to ensure access for developing countries. The Gavi COVAX AMC has already raised close to \$641 million USD against an initial target of US\$2 billion from high-income donors as well as the private sector.

##### **Q4. Which vaccine candidates will Canada have access to?**

The COVAX facility offers the largest actively managed portfolio of vaccine candidates globally that includes nine candidates so far, with more to be added. The existing portfolio includes:

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Inovio, Moderna, CureVac, Merck/Themis, AstraZeneca/University of Oxford, University of Hong Kong, Novavax, Clover BioPharma, and University of Queensland/ CSL.

**Q5. How will our participation in the initiative work?**

Canada has elected to participate in this initiative through an optional purchase model, which provides flexibility to ensure vaccines obtained through COVAX are aligned with our bilateral vaccine portfolio. Canada is in ongoing dialogue with Gavi to ensure that our preferences are represented in Gavi's negotiations with manufacturers.

**Q6. How much will each vaccine cost?**

Gavi's initial estimate suggests that the all-in average price of vaccines in the COVAX portfolio for self-financing economies will be \$10.55 USD per dose, although it is possible that some vaccines available through the Facility could be more or less expensive. At the \$10.55 USD price point, coverage of 20% of Canada's population through COVAX would total approximately \$160 million USD.

***Input from GAC***

**Q7. How has the Government of Canada supported Vaccine Development and Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations?**

As part of Canada's global response, on April 5, 2020, the Government of Canada announced a \$40 million investment in the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) for COVID-19 vaccine development.

Further, on May 4, the Prime Minister pledged the alignment of over \$850 million of Canada's domestic and international investments to the Coronavirus Global Response, to help researchers and develop solutions to test, treat and protect people, and to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

Recently, on June 27, the Government of Canada committed an additional \$120 million to support the activities of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, including a further \$20 million for CEPI.

**Q8. Why is the Government of Canada supporting GAVI?**

Supporting Gavi is a high priority for Canada, given the organization's strong track record for saving the lives of children and protecting people's health by increasing the use of vaccines in vulnerable countries.

In May 2020, Canada pledged \$600 million to the third replenishment of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Canada's support will help Gavi to immunize hundreds of millions of children around the world against deadly diseases, such as measles, diphtheria and typhoid. Additionally, Canada's support will help to strengthen health systems, including improving vaccine supply chain and storage, establishing and maintaining data systems, strengthening management of

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immunization programs, and promoting immunization. Stronger health systems will help countries better respond to COVID-19.

**Q9. Is the \$600 million pledge to Gavi separate from the \$850M pledged by the Prime Minister to support Canada's domestic and international investments to the Coronavirus Global Response?**

The \$600 million pledge to Gavi is separate from the \$850 million pledged by the Prime Minister to support Canada's domestic and international investments to the Coronavirus Global Response. The pledge to Gavi was for Gavi's Third Replenishment and to support the 2021-2025 Strategy. This strategy was planned and approved prior to COVID-19. Gavi's expected work on COVID-19 will require additional funds which will be sought in addition to the funding raised for the upcoming strategy. The \$600 million will help to ensure the ongoing routine immunization of children in Gavi-supported countries.

**Q10. If Gavi vaccine is teamed up with CEPI and we already funded CEPI, did we defacto fund Gavi?**

Funding for Gavi and CEPI is kept separate. CEPI funding will support the R&D and manufacturing, while Gavi AMC funding will support procurement, distribution and health systems strengthening (e.g., training, cold chain storage where needed). By working together, CEPI and Gavi can ensure "end-to-end" vaccine manufacturing, procurement, and delivery for participating countries in the COVAX Facility, including the COVAX AMC.

**Q11. Criticism has been levelled at the Government of Canada for engaging in "vaccine nationalism" by engaging in bilateral advance purchase agreements at the expense of greater contributions to multilateral, global solutions, such as the COVAX Facility. How do you respond?**

Canada is committed to global collaboration to end this pandemic and reconfirms that objective through our \$220 million commitment today. The Facility is an example of how multilateral cooperation can allow us to accomplish together what none of us could accomplish alone.

The COVAX Facility is designed to provide timely access to vaccines for all participants, using an equitable allocation framework to share scarce doses across countries so that all participants achieve a measure of protection.

Canada's participation in this multilateral initiative is complemented by the bilateral arrangements Canada has in place with manufacturers, supporting diverse investment across a number of potential candidates. The bilateral agreements also ensure ready supply for as many Canadians as possible, recognizing that the Facility cannot provide full coverage for any participants' population.

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