

COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force

Attributions

1. PURPOSE

(1) The COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force (the “task force”) is responsible for advising the Government of Canada on vaccines against COVID-19, by relying on its expertise in developing and marketing vaccines.

2. MANDATE

(2) The mandate of the task force is to provide advice to the Government of Canada on COVID-19 vaccines, which may include the following items:

- prioritize vaccine projects seeking support for activities in Canada;
- attract to Canada non-Canadian companies that have developed vaccines with significant potential, or establish partnerships with them;
- optimize the tools needed to develop vaccines (e.g., animal trials and models);
- effectively coordinate R&D and the supply chain for COVID-19 vaccine projects;
- find solutions for national manufacturing of the most promising COVID-19 vaccines;
- identify opportunities to enhance business connectivity globally to secure access to vaccines with key commercial sponsors.

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1. Structure and composition

(3) The task force is composed of a maximum of 18 members, including the 2 co-chairs and the 4 ex-officio members.

(4) The task force must include vaccine and immunology experts as well as industry leaders with a proven capacity for vaccine development and marketing.

(5) The task force will provide advice to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry and the Minister of Health.

(6) The Deputy Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, the Deputy Minister of Health Canada, the President of the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Chief Science Advisor are ex-officio members of the task force.

(7) Task force members are appointed in a personal capacity and not as representatives of organizations.

(8) The task force may, at its discretion, consult other experts in the field as needed.

3.2. Confidentiality and conflict of interest

(9) Task force members must sign confidentiality and conflict of interest agreements. Also, if at any time a member is aware of any potential project in which he has a personal financial interest, he must disclose that interest to the co-chairs and to the Government of Canada representative, who has the right to ask the member concerned to abstain from discussions related to that project.

(10) The task force must ensure that the advice received from other experts in the field does not result in any conflicts of interest, and that there is full disclosure to the Government of Canada representative about any potential real or apparent conflict of interest, when it becomes known.

(11) Documents or information obtained during the task force's mandate must be used only to accomplish the tasks and the mandate of the task force. Task force members must maintain the absolute confidentiality of any documents or any information obtained during a task force meeting, unless prior authorization to disclose it is obtained in writing from the Government of Canada representative.

(12) In their relationships with the media and in public forums and one-on-one conversations, members must show sensitivity and discretion in any statements concerning the activities of the task force, and must abstain from disclosing any information shared with or by task force members.

3.3. Timelines and deliverables

(13) The task force is in place for at least 12 months, and that period may be extended at the discretion of the Government of Canada; the members meet as required.

(14) The task force must establish its own schedule of meetings to respect the directions and timelines set by the designated Government of Canada representative.

(15) The advice formulated by the task force, and any related products that the members provide to the Government of Canada remain the property of the individual members and are held in complete confidentiality by the Government of Canada.

(16) Decisions respecting advice provided are made by a consensus. Consensus is achieved to the extent that all participants are prepared to support the result or to use it as the basis for subsequent discussions. The result must show how divergent points of view were taken into account and indicate what was agreed and what was not. Ex-officio members may participate in discussions, but do not participate in decision-making concerning the provision of advice by the task force.

4. PROCEDURAL PROVISIONS

4.1. Responsibilities of members

(17) All participants must:

- agree to act in "good faith" in all aspects of the process;

- commit to in-depth exploration of the issues, by seeking solutions in a climate that encourages problem-solving;
- agree to try to share information in good faith on issues related to the collaborative decision-making process.

(18) The co-chairs are responsible for:

- approving the meeting agenda before meetings, in partnership with the Secretariat;
- encouraging the active participation of all the members;
- keeping track, between meetings, of the progress achieved on action items;
- establishing and chairing sub-task forces, if applicable;
- chairing task force meetings.

(19) Each member of the task force is responsible for:

- keeping up to date on information and the evolution of discussions;
- participating in every meeting to the best of their ability.

4.2. Secretariat

(20) Government of Canada officials are at the disposal of the task force for administrative and technical support. The main role of the Secretariat is to coordinate and support the task force. This includes:

- preparing and distributing the agenda for meetings;
- developing and monitoring the work plan;
- organizing and facilitating meetings.

The Secretariat must make every reasonable effort to gather data and information and draft documents to help the task force fulfill its mandate.

4.3. Technical and background information

(21) The Secretariat, provided by the government, lends its support by taking notes during meetings and disseminating information.

(22) The Government of Canada must strive to provide any information that is requested, unless it is covered by Cabinet confidentiality or privacy restrictions, within the limits of the budget and the government's staffing authority.

(23) Documents intended for the task force are password protected and provided to the Secretariat through a secure file sharing site.

(24) Data or any information of a provisional or sensitive nature must be treated as such by both the task force and the Government of Canada.

4.4. Meetings

(25) Meetings take place as needed, at the discretion of the co-chairs. Meetings must be held by teleconference to respect physical distancing requirements and to avoid non-essential travel.

(26) To ensure the efficiency of meetings, before each meeting the Secretariat must send all participants an agenda, a record of decisions taken at previous meetings, background information to the extent possible, and a clear statement of objectives for the meeting.

(27) All meetings should be conducted according to the following ground rules:

1. Meetings must begin promptly at the time indicated in the agenda.
2. Meetings must be chaired so as to:
 - ensure that time is allocated for discussion of each agenda item;
 - ensure a balance of points of view and discussions on all subjects;
 - provide all members with an opportunity to participate equally in the discussion on a subject.
3. Meetings will be chaired in turn by the two co-chairs, based on the calendar established in the work plan.
4. The meeting chair must ensure that the manner in which each subject on the agenda is dealt with is clearly summarized following the discussion.
5. The chair of the meeting is responsible for facilitating meetings. However, members can send recommendations to the chairperson and to the Secretariat concerning other ways to facilitate the meetings.

(28) Meeting minutes must be prepared and distributed in a timely manner, under the direction of the Secretariat.

4.5. Public communications and media

(29) The following procedure must be followed with respect to public communications:

- the Secretariat is the government spokesperson for all media requests;
- media releases must be approved by consensus before dissemination;
- in the event that members wish to respond to media requests, they must express themselves based on their personal point of view and not that of the task force;
- audio and visual recordings are not permitted during task force meetings.

4.6. Withdrawal process

(30) Any member who intends to withdraw from the task force is asked to notify the co-chairs and the Secretariat as soon as possible. The member continues to be bound by the mandate and powers of the task force, particularly with respect to the confidentiality of shared information.