

Message title: The NRC will host the Secretariat of the new COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force

Hello,

The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, and Anita Anand, Minister of Public Services and Procurement, today announced several Government of Canada actions to ensure future procurement of vaccines and therapies against COVID-19, including the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force. The group provides advice to the Government of Canada on the Canadian COVID-19 vaccine strategy by emphasizing investments aimed at supporting the development and production of a vaccine in Canada.

To do this, the Task Force is drawing on the knowledge of its members: experts in vaccinology and immunology and industry leaders with a proven ability to develop and market vaccines. Their initial recommendations have led to:

- Two agreements between PSPC, Pfizer and Moderna with the goal of reserving millions of doses of experimental COVID-19 vaccines; and
- Investment that could reach \$56M under the Strategic Innovation Fund to support clinical trials of an experimental COVID-19 vaccine developed by Variation Biotechnologies Inc. (VBI), a company that received advisory and financial support from the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP) for its R&D, and that is working with the NRC to develop its experimental vaccine.

More than \$3M in support for the Nova Scotia company IMV Inc. was also announced, to advance the clinical development of its experimental vaccine to prevent COVID-19 infection. The support is supplemented by assistance in the form of advisory services and R&D funding of more than \$600,000 from IRAP. IRAP also provided significant financial support to IMV under the Innovation Assistance Program, which allowed the company to preserve jobs and continue its activities despite the pandemic.

The Task Force, which reports to the ministers of Innovation, Science and Industry and Health, is supported by a secretariat based at the NRC. It is a great honour for the NRC to contribute to such an important initiative, and I am delighted that Roger Scott-Douglas has agreed to act as Secretary under the direction of co-chairs Joanne Langley, Professor of Pediatrics and Community Health and Epidemiology at Dalhousie University and head of the Infectious Diseases Division, and J. Mark Lievonon, former President of Sanofi Pasteur Limited.

Roger has solid experience in managing major political and transformational issues with multiple stakeholders, including the Red Tape Reduction Commission, the review of Treasury Board Secretariat programs, the General Review of Public Policies (in France) and Service Canada's Implementation team.

"I am honoured to be asked to direct the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force Secretariat. I'm also privileged to be working with experts in vaccinology and immunology and with industrial and governmental leaders in both the Task Force and the Secretariat," Roger says.

The Secretariat includes members of the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Health Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, and of the

NRC, in particular, members of the Office of the Secretary General, NRC IRAP, and the Human Health Therapeutics Research Centre.

The NRC employees who are part of the Secretariat are Paul McVeigh, Rénaud Gilbert, Wangxue Cheng, Marita Kerr, Purni Narayanan and Nishma Kassam. Sofie McCoy-Astell provides communications support. Steve Bent, Angela Chatterton and Julia Doering are also part of the Secretariat and are on secondment from other departments.

Serge Bijimine has fully accepted his role as Secretary General of the NRC while Roger takes on this new role, for which he has postponed his retirement.

I am grateful to Roger and his team for having taken on this vital task and I know that they will have your full support when they engage with key groups in our organization.

Kind regards,

Iain