

COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force

ALLOCATIONS

1. OBJECTIVE

(1) The COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force (the “Task Force”) is mandated to advise the Government of Canada on COVID-19 vaccines, based on its expertise in vaccine development, marketing and production. The allocations are divided into four sections, which state the objective, mandate, governance structure and procedural provisions of the Task Force.

2. MANDATE

(2) The Task Force’s mandate is to advise the Government of Canada on COVID-19 vaccines, and to:

- prioritize vaccine projects seeking support for activities in Canada;
- attract to Canada non-Canadian companies that have developed promising vaccine candidates, or partner with them;
- optimize the tools needed to develop vaccines (e.g. tests and animal models);
- effectively coordinate R&D and the supply chain for COVID-19 vaccine projects;
- find solutions to manufacture the most promising COVID-19 vaccines in Canada;
- explore means of enhancing business connectivity globally to secure access to vaccines with key commercial sponsors.

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1. Structure and membership

(3) The Task Force will have up to 18 members, including 2 co-chairs and 4 ex-officio members.

(4) It will include experts in the fields of vaccines and immunology, as well as industry leaders with a proven ability to develop and market vaccines.

(5) The Task Force will advise 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, the President of the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Chief Science Advisor will be ex-officio members of the Task Force.

(7) The members of the Task Force are appointed in a personal capacity and not as representatives of the organizations for which they work.

(8) At its discretion, the Task Force may consult other experts in the field as needed.

3.2. Confidentiality and conflict of interest

(9) Task Force members will be required to sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement. In addition, if, at any time, a member is made aware of a potential project in which he/she has a personal financial interest, the member must disclose this interest to the co-chairs and to the Government of Canada representative, who has the right to ask the member to officially recuse himself/herself or to abstain from participating in discussions concerning the project.

(10) The Task Force will make sure that advice received from other experts in the field does not result in a conflict of interest, and that there is full disclosure to the Government of Canada representative of any known potential, actual or apparent conflict of interest.

(11) The documents and information obtained during the Task Force's mandate shall be used only in the fulfilment of the Task Force's duties and mandate. Task Force members will keep strictly confidential all documents and information obtained during Task Force meetings, unless they have the prior written authorization of the Government of Canada representative to disclose them.

(12) In their relations with the media, in public forums and in their conversations with other Task Force members, members shall show sensitivity and discretion in all statements concerning the Task Force's work, and shall abstain from disclosing any information shared with or by the Task Force members.

3.3. Schedule and deliverables

(13) The Task Force shall be in place for at least 12 months, subject to extension at the discretion of the Government of Canada; members shall meet as needed.

(14) The Task Force shall establish its own meeting schedule in order to abide by the guidelines and deadlines indicated by the designated representative of the Government of Canada.

(15) The advice provided by the Task Force and all related products submitted to the Government of Canada will remain the property of the individual members and will be kept strictly confidential by the Government of Canada.

(16) Decisions based on the advice provided will be made by consensus. Consensus will be reached if all participants are willing to support the result or to use it as the basis for further discussion. The outcome will demonstrate how divergent points of view were taken into account and indicate what was agreed upon and what was not. Ex-officio members can take part in discussions but will not participate in making decisions concerning the Task Force's advice.

4. PROCEDURAL PROVISIONS

4.1. Members' responsibilities

(17) All participants:

- agree to act in “good faith” in all aspects of the process;
- commit to examining the issues in depth, seeking solutions in a climate conducive to problem solving;
- agree to make an effort, in good faith, to share information about the consensus-based decision-making process.

(18) The co-chairs are responsible for:

- approving the agenda prior to a meeting, in collaboration with the Secretariat;
- encouraging the active participation of all members;
- monitoring the progress made on measures to be taken between meetings;
- creating and chairing sub task forces as needed;
- chairing Task Force meetings.

(19) Each Task Force member is responsible for:

- keeping up to date with the information learned and with the progress of discussions;
- taking part in each meeting to the best of their ability.

4.2. Secretariat

(20) Government of Canada public servants will be made available to the Task Force for administrative and technical support. The Secretariat will be based at the National Research Council Canada. The Secretariat's main role will be to coordinate and support the Task Force's work. This includes:

- preparing and distributing meeting agendas;
- developing and monitoring the work plan;
- organizing and facilitating meetings.

The Secretariat will make every reasonable effort to collect data and information and to draft documents in order to help the Task Force carry out its mandate.

4.3. Technical and background information

(21) The Secretariat's staff, provided by the government, will support the Task Force by taking notes during meetings and disseminating information.

(22) The Government of Canada will make all the necessary efforts to provide all the information requested, except if such information is covered by confidentiality restrictions relating to cabinet deliberations or privacy, in keeping with the government's human resources budget and powers.

(23) The documents handed over to the Task Force will be protected by a password and made available to the Secretariat via a secure file sharing site.

(24) Any preliminary or sensitive data or other information will be treated as such by both the Task Force and the Government of Canada.

4.4. Meetings

(25) Meetings will take place as needed, at the co-chairs' discretion. Meetings will be held by teleconference in order to comply with physical distancing measures and avoid non-essential travel.

(26) In order to ensure that meetings are effective, the Secretariat will, before each meeting, send all participants an agenda, a report on the decisions made at previous meetings, contextual information if possible, and a clear statement of the objectives of the meeting.

(27) All meetings will be conducted in accordance with the following basic rules:

1. Meetings will begin at the time indicated on the agenda.
2. Meetings will be chaired with a view to ensuring:
 - that time is allocated for discussion of each item on the agenda;
 - a balance of views and balanced discussion on all topics;
 - that all members have an equal opportunity to participate in discussions on a topic.
3. Meetings will be chaired in turn by the two co-chairs according to the schedule set out in the work plan.
4. The meeting chair will make sure that the way in which each topic on the agenda is treated is clearly summarized at the end of the discussion.
5. The meeting chair will facilitate the meetings. However, members will be able to make recommendations to the chair and the Secretariat concerning other ways of facilitating meetings.

(28) Meeting summaries will be drafted and distributed in a timely manner, under the Secretariat's direction.

4.5. Public communications and the media

(29) The following procedure will be followed for public communications:

- The Secretariat will be the government's spokesperson for all media requests.
- Press releases will be approved by consensus before being issued.
- If Task Force members wish to respond to media requests, they will express their personal point of view and not that of the Task Force.
- Audiovisual recordings will not be authorized in Task Force meetings.

4.6. Withdrawal process

(30) Any member who wishes to withdraw from the Task Force will notify the co-chairs and the Secretariat as soon as possible. This member will continue to be bound by the Task Force's mandate and allocations, in particular with respect to the confidentiality of the information shared.