

Virtual PDVAC meeting on *WHO mechanisms to support manufacture of and Access to mRNA Vaccines in Low- and Middle-Income Countries*

5 November,

14.00 – 16.00 GVA

Concept Note

The Covid-19 pandemic has again highlighted that populations in regions without vaccine manufacturing capacity are last-in-line to receive vaccines in times of need. Today, only 4% of Africa's population is fully vaccinated. To address this stark and persistent inequity, WHO has initiated the establishment of technology-transfer hubs in regions that currently have no or limited vaccine manufacturing capacity. These hubs will be funded and mandated to establish new-generation vaccine manufacturing technologies, and to then transfer these technologies to existing and new manufacturers in LMICs (i.e., spokes). The first of these hubs, in [South Africa](#), will establish and transfer mRNA vaccine technology. This investment will empower countries to drive their own R&D agendas, thereby shifting the dialogue on global R&D priority setting, resulting in greater diversity of candidates in the pipeline that are truly built 'ground up', based on the realities and priorities of countries' needs.

In June of 2021, PDVAC expanded its remit to support the [COVAX manufacturing task force](#), including the evaluation of expressions of interest related to selection of regional hubs for vaccine manufacture and priority platform manufacturing technologies for technology transfer. PDVAC communicates its recommendation to WHO. PDVAC also provides, in the context of the Immunization Agenda 2030 ([IA2030](#)), and specifically strategic priority area 7 on [Research and Innovation](#), reviews of the outputs, workplans, and reports from the SP7 working group (WG) consultations on defining country and regional priorities. PDVAC will work closely with the SP7 WG to develop an integrated strategy on research and development priorities and targets for R&D in immunization, across all three levels (country, regional, global).

PDVAC will further expand in 2022 and will seek to recruit regional representatives who play a key vaccine-related technical, strategic and/or programmatic role. In particular, PDVAC is seeking to define a mechanism to partner with regions to define R&D priorities through a truly global approach, for example to collectively identify priority vaccine targets for the mRNA platform.

This will be in internal, fairly informal **PDVAC meeting** that **aims to:**

- Review the workstreams related to the WHO hubs and spokes to date, and anticipated future activities;
- Understand the role and expectations of PDVAC, as it relates to the work under the COVAX manufacturing task force (MTF) (workstream 3);
- Define the process for engaging PDVAC in future COVAX MTF-related activities, with respect to lead time, deliverables, communication;
- Discuss how PDVAC could support and partner with regional initiatives to identify priority vaccine targets for the mRNA platform and hubs; what role can PDVAC play?

Agenda

- Introduction of new members - **10 mins**
- Martin Friede: Overview of the WHO mRNA hub strategy – **20 mins**
- David Kaslow: An overview of the IA2030 SP7 remit and objectives **10 mins**
- Lindiwe Makubalo/delegate:: AFRO vaccine R&D strategic priorities and how the mRNA hub may shape these – **10 mins**

Discussion (1 hour, minimum):

- What principles can we formalize for engagement with PDVAC on COVAX MTF/WHO hub & spoke-related issues?
- What are the opportunities and potential mechanisms for improving engagement and partnership with regions on developing national, regional, and global R&D priorities?
- Is there a need to develop a priority pathogen list for WHO-supported mRNA hubs? If yes, what would be the process for that?
- What additional expertise is needed within PDVAC to support this remit?