

UPDATE: First batch of Covid-19 vaccine arrives in SA

The first batch of one-million doses of the Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine from the Serum Institute of India (SII) arrived at OR Tambo International Airport on 1 February 2021.



SA health minister, Dr Zweli Mkhize.

President Cyril Ramaphosa and Deputy President David Mabuza, who chairs the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Vaccines were at the airport to receive the vaccine, along with health minister, Dr Zweli Mkhize; acting minister in the presidency, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni; Jaideep Sarkar, high commissioner of the Republic of India: and chief executive officer of Biovac, Dr Morena Makhoana.

“ South Africa's first batch of lifesaving [#COVID19](#) [#Vaccine](#) doses have officially touched ground!
[#ChooseVaccination](#) [#VaccineRolloutSA](#) [#WeChooseVaccination](#) pic.twitter.com/V8ztEmdSKo— Dr Zweli Mkhize
(@DrZweliMkhize) [February 1, 2021](#) ”

Biovac is a bio-pharmaceutical company that was formed in 2003 in a partnership with government and private investors to establish local vaccine manufacturing capability.

When they arrive, the vaccines will undergo quarantine and quality assurance processes which could take up to 14 days before they are distributed to all provinces.

“The scale of delivery is unprecedented in terms of the number of people who have to be reached within a short space of time. The aim of the vaccination programme is to achieve immunity across the population,” the Presidency said.

Government is coordinating the vaccine programme through the committee chaired by the deputy president, which is focused on procurement, distribution, actual vaccination, monitoring, communication and mobilisation.

Limited to SA citizens

Mkhize said in an SABC [interview](#) that the vaccine programme will be limited to South African citizens, as the government does not have the capacity to assist undocumented foreign nationals.

“No one will be forced to vaccinate. Actually, we will promote it, we will explain for people to know it’s beneficial and we would like people to take their own decision on that and when you take the vaccine you sign consent so it’s clear that you consented to it.

“All you need when you go is to show that you have got an ID. You are a South African registered voter. For those who are undocumented, we are not able to deal with that because at the moment we would like to be able to deal with people based on the SA registration. So at this point, we have no plan to deal with those that are not documented.”

“ *Vaccines arriving in South Africa today will be distributed through a three-phase approach. The first will cater for all frontline healthcare workers. [#VaccineRolloutSA](#) [#IChooseVaccines](#) [pic.twitter.com/7mFyl7OFpo](#)— Department of Health (@HealthZA) [February 1, 2021](#)* ”

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