

WHO lists China's Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use

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The World Health Organisation (WHO) has listed the Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use, giving the green light for this vaccine to be rolled out globally.

The Sinopharm vaccine is produced by Beijing Bio-Institute of Biological Products Co Ltd, subsidiary of China National Biotec Group (CNBG).

“The addition of this vaccine has the potential to rapidly accelerate COVID-19 vaccine access for countries seeking to protect health workers and populations at risk,” said Dr Mariângela Simão, WHO Assistant-Director General for Access to Health Products. “We urge the manufacturer to participate in the COVAX Facility and contribute to the goal of more equitable vaccine distribution.”

The Sinopharm product is an inactivated vaccine called SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine (Vero Cell). Its easy storage requirements make it highly suitable for low-resource settings.

It is the also first vaccine that will carry a vaccine vial monitor, a small sticker on the vaccine vials that change color as the

vaccine is exposed to heat, letting health workers know whether the vaccine can be safely used.

WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) has also completed its review of the vaccine. On the basis of all available evidence, WHO recommends the vaccine for adults 18 years and older, in a two-dose schedule with a spacing of three to four weeks. Vaccine efficacy for symptomatic and hospitalized disease was estimated to be 79%, all age groups combined.