The World Bank has approved $30 million in additional financing to Rwanda for the acquisition and deployment of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines.

This is the second additional financing for the Rwanda COVID-19 Emergency Response Project, bringing a total of $45.19 million in World Bank contributions to the country's national COVID-19 health response and vaccination campaign.

"Since the inception of the COVID-19 pandemic the Government of Rwanda has acted swiftly and decisively to save lives and mitigate the economic impact of the crisis with strong results on the ground. The World Bank is pleased to support the government, in collaboration with other development partners, to undertake one of the boldest public health campaigns of our times that aims to vaccinate 60 percent of the population by 2022," said Rolande Pryce, World Bank Rwanda Country Manager. "The vaccination program is a central piece of the government's comprehensive plan to save lives and facilitate full reopening of the economy, putting the country back on a path towards more inclusive and sustainable growth. We are privileged to partner in this effort."

The financing will also enhance development effectiveness by addressing emerging needs, such as improving access to oxygen therapy, screening for underlying chronic conditions and protecting essential health services. It will also bolster the capacity of the routine immunization system through investments in human resources, vaccine safety and monitoring as well as outreach activities and communications to sustain vaccine acceptance and uptake.

"The project design is informed by readiness assessments conducted jointly with other partners. The operation builds and leverages on Rwanda's strong childhood immunization program as well as pioneering work on the HPV and Ebola vaccines. With sustained political commitment, bold vision, and strong donor collaboration, Rwanda is off to a good start," said Miriam Schneidman, Lead Health Specialist, who led the preparation process. "Since the arrival of the first vaccines one month ago, it is encouraging to see that the country has vaccinated nearly 3 percent of the population with the first dose."

The World Bank has also mobilized a US$15 million grant from the Global Financing Facility to support and protect essential health and nutrition services which remain vulnerable to shocks during the ongoing pandemic. Once approved, the grant will complement Rwanda's ongoing COVID-19 response, and ensure that decades of progress in strengthening the health system will not be undermined by the

pandemic.

“Early investments in cold chain equipment has permitted Rwanda to access to all vaccines on the market; use of digital technologies is facilitating monitoring of adverse effects and provision of vaccination certificates; and strong communications will sustain public trust and vaccine acceptance”, said Amparo Gordillo-Tobar, Senior Economist and Task Team Leader of the project.

World Bank Group COVID-19 Response

The World Bank, one of the largest sources of funding and knowledge for developing countries, is taking broad, fast action to help developing countries respond to the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19. This includes $12 billion to help low and middle-income countries purchase and distribute COVID-19 vaccines, tests, and treatments, and strengthen vaccination systems. The financing builds on the broader World Bank Group COVID-19 response, which is helping more than 100 countries strengthen health systems, support the poorest households, and create supportive conditions to maintain livelihoods and jobs for those hit hardest.