



This Situation Report is jointly issued by PNG National Department of Health and World Health Organization once weekly. This Report is not comprehensive and covers information received as of reporting date.

Situation Summary and Highlights

- As of 20 December (12:00 pm), there have been 761 COVID-19 cases and nine COVID-19 deaths reported in Papua New Guinea. From the period of 14 to 20 December, there have been 36 new cases: 21 from West New Britain, 8 from East New Britain, 6 from New Ireland, and 1 from Western Highlands. The total number of provinces that have reported COVID-19 cases to date is sixteen.
- A multidisciplinary team from the NCC (surveillance, laboratory, clinical management, risk communication, community engagement clusters and provincial coordination) travelled to Milne Bay Province and Western Highlands Province to provide technical support for COVID-19 preparedness and response.

Upcoming Events and Priorities

- **Coordination:** The COVID-19 Summit has been rescheduled to take place from 25 January to 5 February 2021 at the APEC Haus in Port Moresby.
- **Surveillance:** The healthcare worker (HCW) survey has been completed, with over 400 responses received from 21 provinces. Data analysis is now underway, with a preliminary report to feedback to stakeholders planned for January. Additional planning and support for the current outbreak in West New Britain Province are underway.
- **Laboratory:** Technical support continues for testing and shipment of samples to Singapore through CPHL with backing from DFAT and WHO. Discussion in progress with Singapore laboratory for increasing support during the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021. A Memorandum of Understanding is being prepared for PNG IMR/ CPHL and Victorian Infectious Disease Reference Laboratory (VIDRL) for additional laboratory support. A concept note for Ag-RDT has been drafted for submission to MeSAC/MRAC for a request of emergency use of Ag-RDT in Western New Britain. Support will be provided to CPHL for the distribution of the COVID-19 laboratory commodities and COVID-19 EQA Proficiency Test panels. Handover of Ag-RDT is planned to NDoH from WHO on 22 December 2020.

Table 1. COVID-19 IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA¹

	New Cases (14 - 20 December 2020)	Cumulative Total
National Capital District	0	361
Western	0	204
West New Britain	21	124
East New Britain	8	13
Eastern Highlands	0	13
Western Highlands	1	10
Central	0	9
New Ireland	6	8
Morobe	0	6
East Sepik	0	3
Enga	0	3
Milne Bay	0	2
West Sepik	0	2
AROB	0	1
Hela	0	1
Southern Highlands	0	1
TOTAL	36	761

¹ As of 20/12/2020, 12:00 pm, PNG time

Table 2. COVID-19 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL UPDATE²

	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Global	74 299 042	1 669 982
Western Pacific	999 891	18 798

² WHO COVID-19 Dashboard as of 19/12/2020, 5:52 pm CET

- ❑ **Case Management and Infection Prevention and Control:** Updated IPC guidelines will be in the process for endorsement in the week of 21 December. COVID-19 clinical activities will be integrated into routine care. Support will be provided to incorporate COVID-19 screening with screening for other diseases such as malaria and TB. Feasibility of an emergency medical team is being established. A surge plan is being developed by the team to guide the provincial response team when there are unexpected number of cases reported.
- ❑ **Risk Communication & Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs):** Deployment to the provinces from NCC continues to provide technical support for the outbreak response. The Healthier Together campaign was aired on 20 December on NBC television, 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm for 1 hour and it will also be aired on EMTV on 27 December at 8:00 PM. NBC will also air a replay in the coming week. The report will be finalised on the survey on knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and practices on COVID-19.
- ❑ **Logistics and Supplies:** Support will be provided for CPHL for improving lab supply management. Final preparation for hand sanitiser shipment including dangerous goods declaration and packing and consignment to Air Niugini for provinces is underway. Laboratory supplies and reagents and additional supplies will be shipped out from the Air Niugini warehouse. After validation by CPHL, laboratory supplies and reagents will be sent to provincial laboratories from the week of 14 December. A plan is in place for cleaning up the warehouse, arranging the storage space and stocking for PPE, BIOMED, Lab supplies and other items. Physical inventory and warehouse management will be supported. A meeting will be held with the Head of Medical Facility and Equipment Branch and Port Moresby General Hospital CEO to discuss the implementation of the oxygen plant project.

National Transmission Assessment

3 – Large-scale community transmission

Despite low rates of testing nationally, over the recent weeks there has been a large increase in the number of new cases. Between 14 and 20 December, 36 newly confirmed cases have been reported nationally from four provinces (21 from West New Britain, 8 from East New Britain, 6 from New Ireland, and 1 from Western Highlands). Sixteen out of 22 provinces, including the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, have reported one or more cases since March 2020. Nationally, PNG remains in Stage 3 – large scale community transmission. In the past month, there have been increasing cases from West New Britain Province, with healthcare workers and community members impacted. With ongoing population movement, increasing mass gatherings, and low compliance to non-pharmaceutical interventions, increasing cases are expected, especially over the holiday period. Movement out of provinces with higher caseloads (NCD and WNB) to other provinces has led to sporadic cases and local clusters reported by other provinces. Testing in all provinces remains critically low, and there are large significant delays in receiving test results. This has implications for isolating positive cases and undertaking contact tracing, increasing the risk of larger outbreaks and widespread community transmission as population mobility increases. Testing needs to increase substantially to understand the extent of transmission. Importation from bordering Papua Province in Indonesia and incoming travellers from other countries reporting COVID-19 cases also remains a threat.

Epi Update COVID-19

Tests	Cases	Deaths	ICU Admissions
687	36	1	0
NAT Tests past 7 days	New cases past 7days	Deaths past 7days	ICU Admissions past 7 days
37361	761	9	9
Cumulative NAT Tests	Cumulative Cases	Cumulative Deaths	Cumulative ICU Admissions
0	23	6	unknown*
Imported Cases in past 28 days	Cases in past 7 days with no link	Active Clusters in the past 7 days	Active clusters with >3 generations

Health Service Provision COVID-19

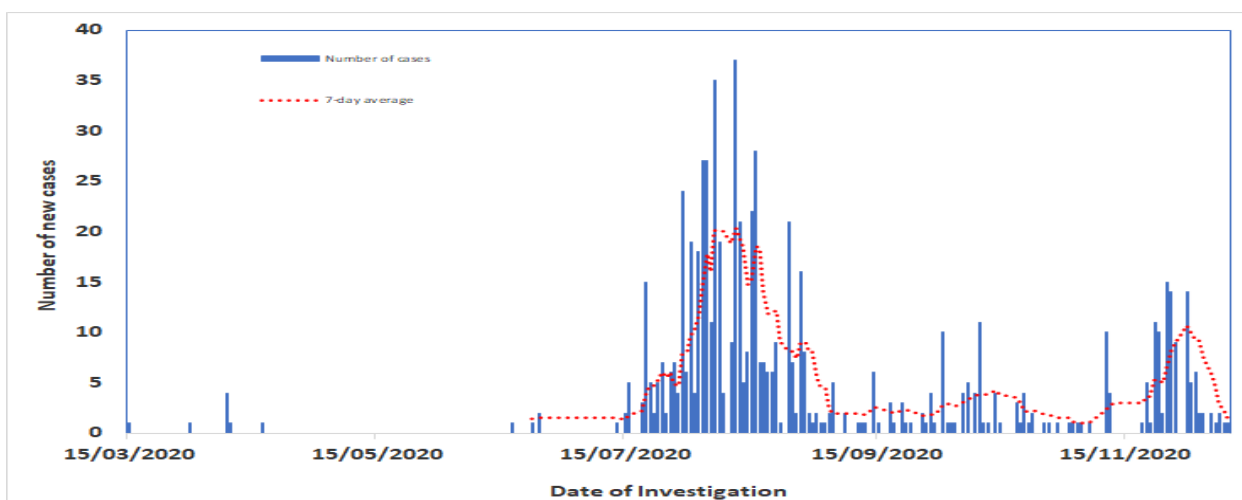
5116	8	3	93	339
Health care workers trained in COVID19 Case Management	Healthcare worker case reported past week	Hospitals admitting COVID-19 patients	ICU beds for COVID-19 patients	Non-ICU Hospital beds for COVID19 patients

* Case investigations are ongoing

Epidemiology

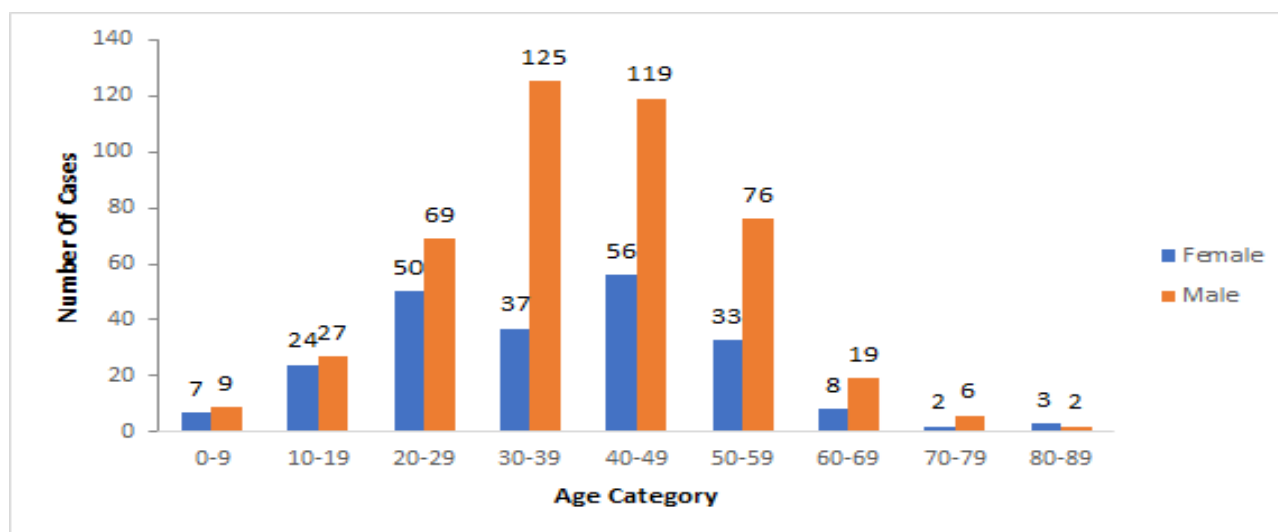
- As of 20 December (12:00 pm), there have been 761 COVID-19 cases and nine COVID-19 deaths reported in Papua New Guinea. From the period of 14 to 20 December, there have been 36 new cases: 21 from West New Britain, 8 from East New Britain, 6 from New Ireland, and 1 from Western Highlands. Additional contact tracing and testing are ongoing for unlinked cases.

Figure 1. Epidemiological Curve of COVID-19 Cases in Papua New Guinea, 15 March to 20 December 2020



- The majority of the confirmed cases are male. Ages range from 1 to 87, with the majority of cases aged between 20 and 60 years.
- The disparity between males and females could be due to employment status, movement and male-dominated industries affected, health-seeking behaviour and access to testing.

Figure 2. COVID-19 Cases by Age-Group and Sex in Papua New Guinea, 15 March to 20 December 2020



- Just over half (56%) of confirmed cases were asymptomatic during the presentations for swabbing (Figure 3). Contributing factors to the high proportion of asymptomatic cases could include health-seeking behaviours in Papua New Guinea, lack of reporting of past symptoms, lack of probing question about symptoms during swab collection, and testing early during the pre-symptomatic stage. Of the symptomatic cases, the most common symptoms were cough or fever (Figure 4).

Figure 3. The proportion of Symptomatic and Asymptomatic COVID-19 Cases in Papua New Guinea at Time of Swabbing, March to 20 December 2020

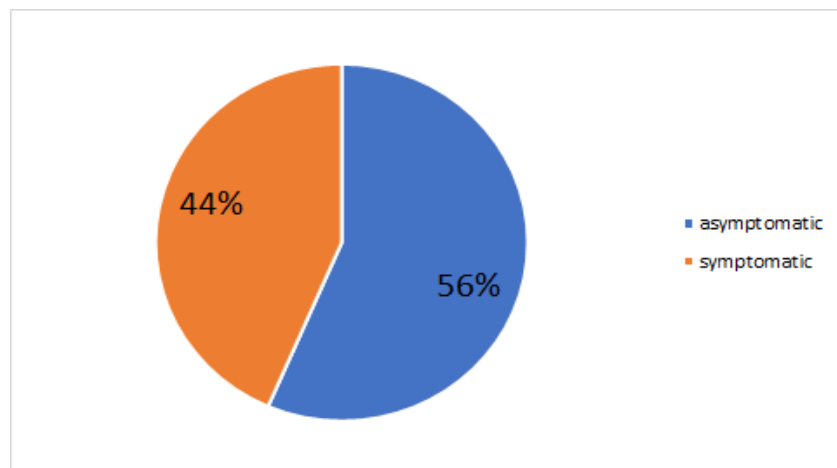
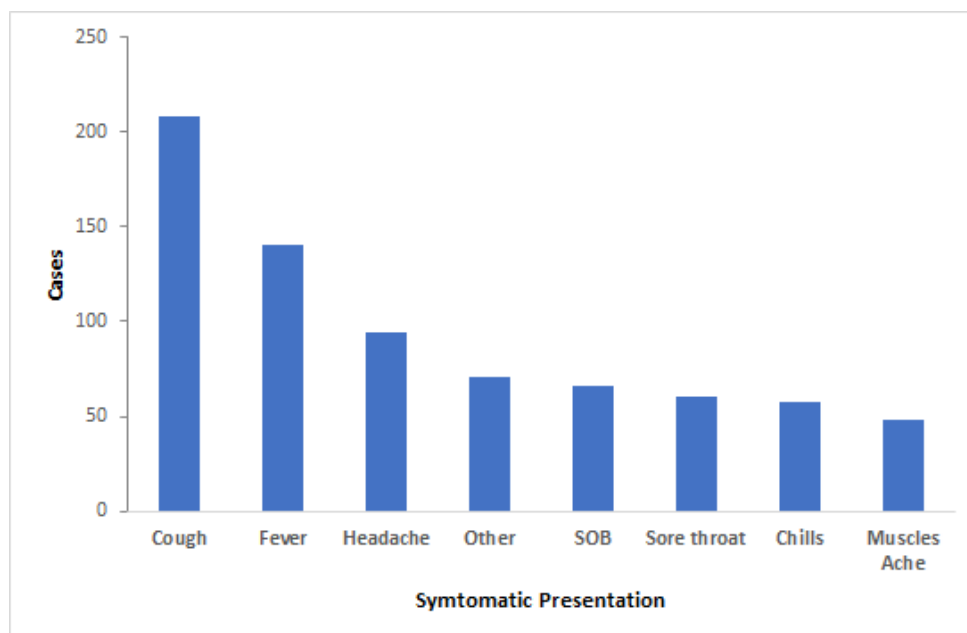


Figure 4. Symptoms on Presentation of COVID -19 Symptomatic Cases in Papua New Guinea, 15 March to 20 December 2020



- As sample collection and testing are low, there is a need to increase testing across all provinces. Work is being undertaken with the provinces, including the introduction of the antigen rapid diagnostic test, training of extra swabbers and a survey of barriers to and enablers of swabbing amongst healthcare workers, to address this aim.
- For the period of 14 to 20 December, the COVID-19 National Hotline received 2,056 calls. Of these, 41 (about 2%) were health-related calls. Thirty-two (32) of these were referred to Rapid Response Team/PHA. As of 20 December, the Hotline received a total of 145,098 calls. Of these, 4,828 (3.3%) were health-related calls. A total of 1,602 calls were referred to Rapid Response Team/PHAs.
- Papua Province in Indonesia is continuously reporting COVID-19 cases in areas that border Sandaun and Western Provinces. While the border is officially closed, traditional border crossing continues, and the threat of case importation remains high. As of 20 December, Papua Province has reported a total of 5,748 confirmed cases and 98 deaths among people who confirmed to have COVID-19 by RT-PCR (data accessible at <https://dinkes.papuabaratprov.go.id/>).

Table 3. Persons Screened by Point of Entry

Total Number of Travelers Screened before SOE (until 22 March)	29,387	
Total Number of Travelers Screened during SOE (23 March – 16 June)	3,788	
Total Number of Travelers Screened after SOE (17 June – 19 December)	Air	11,277
	Sea	671
	Land	6
	Total	11,954

Strategic Approach

National and Provincial Public Health Response

- The Pandemic Response Coordination Group and the Health Operations Team continue to meet regularly at the National Control Centre.
- A working group was established in NCC to provide support in responding to the COVID-19 outbreak in West New Britain.

COVID-19 Prevention and Control

- The healthcare worker (HCW) survey has been completed, with over 400 telephone interviews completed to date with HCWs from 21 provinces.
- The e-HDF is being promoted to ensure all incoming passengers can complete the e-HDF before entry to the country. The form is available at <https://www.pnghdf.info/>. An ongoing discussion is underway to integrate e-HDF and quarantine monitoring with tracking devices and mobile applications.
- Technical support was provided to Milne Bay and Western Highlands PHAs through the inter-cluster provincial visit by NCC team comprised of representatives from surveillance, laboratory,

clinical management, risk communication and community engagement clusters. NCC/NDoH endorsed the National Guidelines for Clinical Management of COVID-19 and SOP for temperature screening for dissemination.

- A list of health facilities conducting swabbing for COVID-19 has been compiled (Annex B).
- COVID-19 laboratory response plan was drafted.
- Using the updated training modules prepared with technical support from WHO, the district-level training is continued under the NDOH PNG COVID-19 Emergency Response Project financed by World Bank and with the technical backing by UNICEF and WHO. Training is yet to be completed in Eastern Highlands, Hela, Milne Bay, Morobe, Western, East Sepik, West Sepik, East New Britain, West New Britain, New Ireland and AROB. The training was put on hold in November 2020 because of the nationwide polio campaign but resumed in early December 2020 and will continue into 2021.

Table 4. Number of Healthcare Workers and Programme Managers Trained under NDOH PNG COVID-19 Emergency Response Project Financed by World Bank and with technical support by UNICEF and WHO as of 13 December 2020

	Province	Number of Batches Completed	Number of Individuals Trained		Province	Number of Batches Completed	Number of Individuals Trained
1	Western Highland	3	72	8	Eastern Highland	1	32
2	Jiwaka	3	65	9	Southern Highland	3	43
3	Simbu	3	64	10	Gulf	1	21
4	Central	3	54	11	Milne Bay	2	38
5	Hela	1	18	12	Oro	2	44
6	Morobe	8	124	13	Western	2	80
7	Madang	2	85	14	Manus	1	25
TOTAL NUMBER OF BATCHES		35		TOTAL NUMBER OF TRAINED INDIVIDUALS		765	

Table 5. Number* of Health Care Workers Trained by Province

	Province	Total		Province	Total
MOMASE REGION			NEW GUINEA ISLANDS REGION		
1	Madang	431	12	ARoB	37
2	Morobe	549	13	East New Britain	236
3	East Sepik	92	14	Manus	89
4	West Sepik	200	15	New Ireland	320
HIGHLANDS REGION			16	West New Britain	328

5	Eastern Highlands	146		SOUTHERN REGION	
6	Enga	112	17	Central	330
7	Hela	99	18	Gulf	51
8	Jiwaka	138	19	Milne Bay	132
9	Simbu	64	20	NCD	269
10	Southern Highlands	410	21	Oro	78
11	Western Highlands	851	22	Western	154

*Trained under WHO training and NDOH PNG COVID-19 Emergency Response Project

Table 6. Number of Facilities and Beds for COVID-19 as of 13 December 2020

Health Facilities	Number of Provinces	Number of Facilities OR Beds	Provinces that Reported
Pre-triage facilities	20	>120	ARoB, Central, EH, ENB, ES, Enga, Gulf, Hela, Jiwaka, Madang, Morobe, MB, NCD, NI, Oro, SH, Simbu, WS, Western, WH, WNB
Quarantine facilities	13	223	ARoB, EH, ENB, Enga, Hela, Jiwaka, Madang, Manus, Morobe, NCD, SH, Simbu, WH
Isolation facilities	17	271	ARoB, EH, ENB, Enga, Hela, Jiwaka, Madang, Manus, Morobe, MB, NCD, SH, Simbu, WS, Western, WH, WNB
Intensive Care Unit	16	93	AROB, EH, ENB, Enga, Gulf, Hela, Madang, Manus, Morobe, MB, NCD, SH, Simbu, WS, Western, WNB

Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARoB), East Sepik (ES), East New Britain (ENB), Eastern Highlands (EH), Milne Bay (MB), National Capital District (NCD), New Ireland (NI), Southern Highlands (SH), West New Britain (WNB), Western Highlands (WH), West Sepik (WS)

Communication, Community Engagement and Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (Social Measures) – NIUPELA PASIN

- Technical support was provided on areas related to risk communications to the inter-cluster mission to Western, ARoB, West New Britain and NCD/ Central Provinces.
- Package of information materials for health workers, 'Protecting yourself at work from COVID-19: Resource materials for healthcare workers' is now being printed for distribution to the provinces.
- A preliminary result of the survey on people's knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and practices on COVID-19 was presented to the Health Operations Meeting on 18 December 2020 by the RCCE Cluster Lead (NCC) and WHO.

- The virtual art festival on Healthier Together campaign aired on 20 December 2020 on NBC Radio featuring various artists of PNG. The campaign also featured Niupela Pasin champions and also COVID-19 facts.
- Between 19 November and 11 December 2020, ADRA, Touching The Untouchable (TTU) and World Vision supported by UNICEF, trained 219 influential leaders in RCCE training of community change agent in five provinces (Central, Hela, Manus, Southern Highlands and Western New Britain) in Highlands, New Guinea Islands and Southern regions.

Table 7. Monitoring of NPIs Implemented in Papua New Guinea

Province	District	Date	Male	Female	Total
West New Britain	Hoskins	19 November	22	19	41
	Talasea	20 November	22	19	41
Central	Kairiku-Hiri	8 December	8	9	17
Southern Highlands	Mendi-Munihui	9 December	13	16	29
Manus	Lorengau	9-10 December	25	26	51
Hela	Komo-Magarima	10-11 December	18	22	40

Table 8. Monitoring of NPIs Implemented in Papua New Guinea

Social Measures	Monitoring Status					
	Date first implemented	Date last modified	Implementation		Partial lift	Lifted
			Geographical (national or sub-national)	Recommended or Required	Lifted for some area	Lifted for all areas
Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette	16 January*	3 October	National	Required		
Wearing Face Masks	29 July	3 October	Sub-national**	Required		
School Closure	23 March	17 August	Sub-national	Required		√
Workplace Closure	23 March	3 October	National***	Required		
Mass Gatherings	23 March	3 October	National	Required		
Stay at Home	23 March	3 October	Sub-national****	Required		√
Restrictions on Internal Movement (within the country)	23 March	3 November	National	Required		√
Restrictions on International Travel	14 February	13 November	National	Required	√	

* First social media post done; ** In National Capital District; in public transportation (including Central Province) and aircraft, ***Only selected type of establishments; **** Curfew in NCD between 12 to 5 am

Logistics and Supplies

- WHO encourages partners to utilise the COVID-19 Supply Portal accessible at <https://covid-19-response.org/>. The Portal is a purpose-built tool that assigns orders to purchase agencies that can execute and process them.
- WHO procured 20,000 Ag-RDTs and shipped to the country. A handover is planned to NCC on 22 December.
- Apart from the ongoing provincial logistics assessments in several provinces, there are continuing discussions with the National Department of Health on the integration/transition of the COVID-19 supplies into the routine supply chain, options for longer-term storage and alignment with the Medical Supplies Reform Master Plan.
- CPHL has undertaken validation for draft distribution plan for laboratory supplies and reagents.
- Inventory has been carried out for supplies at Air Niugini warehouse. After approval from NCC on a distribution plan, supplies will be shipped to provinces for further pre-position supplies for December 2020, and January and February 2021.

ANNEX A – Quality Requirements for COVID-19 Medical Products

(Source: NDOH Circular No. 38/2020 Attachment)

Quality Requirements for COVID-19 Medical Products

Registered pharmaceutical importers, wholesalers and exporters are required to submit the following quality documentation in advance of importation. These technical documents must be current and in coloured copies of the original documents. The technical documents also be must be stamped and signed appropriately and must be legible and written in English.

Medicines:

1. Letter of authorisation from the manufacturer in the country of origin where the product will be sourced.
2. Certificate of Good Manufacturing Practice of the manufacturer.
3. Certificate of Pharmaceutical Product or evidence of registration by the mutual drug regulatory authority from the country of origin.
4. Certificate of Analysis of the Batch of the Product to be imported
5. Specimens of Product Labels or a clear coloured photograph of the Product to be imported.
6. The total quantity of the Product to be imported.

Medical Devices:

1. Letter of authorisation from the manufacturer of the medical device in the country of origin.
2. Quality Management System Certification: ISO: 13485: 2016 from the manufacturer of the Medical Device in the country of origin and Product Schedule.
3. Specimens of Product Labels or Product Brochure/Catalogue, including Medical Device Specifications.
4. The total quantity of the medical device to be imported.

ANNEX B – List of Health Facilities Conducting Swabbing for COVID-19

This list is undergoing further verification.

New Guinea Islands Region

AROB		East New Britain Province	
North	Buka Hospital	Gazelle	Kerevat District Hospital
Central	Arawa District Hospital	Kokopo	St Mary's Hospital Butuwin Urban Clinic
South	Buin Health Centre	Pomio	Warangoi Health Centre
		Rabaul	Rabaul Urban Clinic
Manus Province		New Ireland Province	
Manus	Lorengau Provincial Hospital	Kavieng	Kavieng Provincial Hospital Lemakot Health Centre
		Namatanai	Kimadan Health Centre Namatanai Health Centre Simberi Health Sub Centre Konos Aid Post
Western New Britain			
Talasea	Kimbe Provincial Hospital		

Momase Region

East Sepik Province		Madang	
Ambunti-Drekikir	Ambunti Health Centre Drekikir Health Centre Saussia Health Centre	Madang	Yagaum District Hospital Madang PHA
Maprik	Maprik District Hospital	West Sepik	
Wewak	Wewak Town Clinic	Vanimo Green	Vanimo Provincial Hospital Old Weather Station Triage
Yangoru-Saussia	Yangorru Health Centre Kubalia Health Centre		
Morobe			
Bulolo	Bulolo District Hospital Mumeng Health Centre Wau Health Centre Buang Health Sub Centre	Lae	ANGAU Base Hospital Malahang Health Centre Buimo Urban Clinic Milfordhaven Urban Clinic Flores International Hospital
Finschafen	Braun District Hospital	Huon Gulf	Morobe Health Centre Salamua Health Centre
Kabwum	Kabwum Health Centre	Menyamya	Menyamya Health Centre
Markham	Mutsing Health Centre Wampar Health Centre	Nawae	Boana Health Centre Bumayong Health Sub Centre
Tewai-Siassi	Wasu Aid Post		

Highlands Region

Eastern Highlands Province		Enga Province	
Daulo	Asaro Health Centre	Kompiani-Ambum	Kompiani District Hospital
Goroka	Eastern Highlands Provincial Hospital	Lagaip-Porgera	Laiagam District Hospital
Kainantu	Kainantu District Hospital	Wabag	Wabag Provincial Hospital Sopas Urban Health Centre
Okapa	Okapa District Hospital	Wapenamanda	Mambisanda Health Centre
Jiwaka Province		Simbu Province	
Angalimp – South Wahgi	Nazarene General Hospital Kindeng Health Centre	Chuave	Chuave Health Centre
North Wahgi	Nondugl Health Centre Fatima Urban Health Centre	Karimui- Nomane Kundiawa-Gembogi	Kilau Health Centre Kundiawa Provincial Hospital
		Sinasina-Yonggamugl	Koge Health Centre
Southern Highlands Province		Western Highlands Province	
Ialibu-Pangia	Ialibu District Hospital	Mt Hagen	Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital
Mendi-Munihu	Mendi Provincial Hospital	Mul- Baiyer	Bukapena Health Centre
Nipa-Kutubu	Nipa Health Centre	Tambul- Nebilyer	Togoba Health Centre

Southern Region

Central Province		Gulf	
Abau	Moreguina Health Centre	Kerema	Kerema Provincial Hospital
Kairiku- Hiri	PAU		
NCD		Western	
Moresby North East	Pacific International Hospital Gordons Urban Health Centre	North Fly	Kiunga Health Centre Tabubil Hospital
Moresby North West	Tokarara Urban Health Centre Port Moresby General Hospital	South Fly	Daru Provincial Hospital
Moresby South	Badili Urban Health Centre Kaugere Foursquare Lawes Road		

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