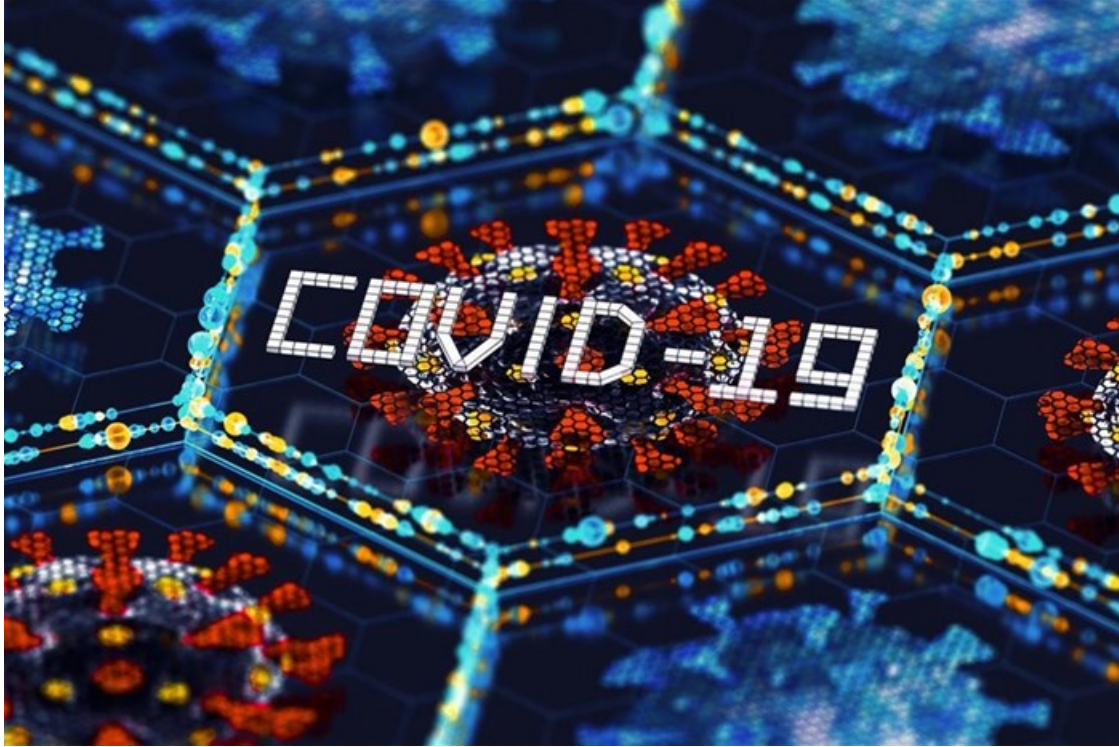


Tech and Covid: Streamlining the vaccination process through technology

By [Jessie Taylor](#), issued by [Topco Media](#)

1 Apr 2021



Managing the rollout

The global pandemic has created a fertile ground for new ideas to germinate, allowing medical advances and technological solutions to grow out of the crisis.

One such technological advancement is helping the South African government manage the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine.

The electronic vaccine data system (EVDS) allows South Africans to register online to receive their Covid-19 vaccination. Currently focussed on healthcare workers, the EVDS will ultimately be rolled out country-wide to facilitate the administration of vaccines.

Arming healthcare workers for the fight against Covid-19

The EVDS is a digital registration portal that collects basic information about those applying for a vaccination. This information is used to support the vaccine rollout by ensuring the correct number of vaccines are distributed to the vaccination sites at which they're needed, while also building a patient database to allow the government to monitor who has received their inoculation.

Only frontline healthcare workers are currently being vaccinated, as the government continues the rollout of the 160,000 doses received by Johnson & Johnson under the Sisonke Project.

At the launch of the EDVS on Wednesday, 3 February, Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize said more than 34,000 frontline workers had already registered. He said those who had registered included clinical and non-clinical healthcare workers from both the public and private sectors. Medical students and traditional workers will also be eligible to receive the

inoculations.

“If you’re working in a professional healthcare setting, you need to be registered. Anyone who touches patients, whether you are a porter, security guard or cleaner, and everyone who’s at risk, must register,” said Mkhize.

The registration process will also accommodate those who may not have digital access. Vaccination candidates who have not registered will not be denied vaccination, and they will be able to register at the vaccination sites.

“You’ll be registered at the vaccination site. It will just take a few minutes longer. However, we encourage healthcare workers to register because it will help us to know how to refine our current allocations and get enough vaccines to the right centres at the right time,” Mkhize added.

Building a digital vaccination database

The portal collects general personal details, including name and surname, and the system will automatically calculate the date of birth. The system also requires an email address and cellphone number, explains the health department’s acting chief operating officer (COO), Milani Wolmarans. Healthcare workers currently registering for the vaccine are also asked to fill in their information about employment and medical aid schemes.

Wolmarans has assured workers their data will be protected when they register for the vaccine, and that system has undergone penetration testing. The portal is managed through the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and is owned by the National Department of Health.

The EVDS will verify a person’s medical care worker status by checking against the employment data or other organisations that hire or regulate healthcare workers.

“Therefore, while it’s possible to register on the site if one is not a healthcare worker, the system will automatically prioritise verified healthcare workers for the period of phase one,” Mkhize explained.

Mkhize said it is very easy to register, takes less than one megabyte and about two minutes to complete the registration process.

The EDVS has been designed off the health department’s current health patient registration system, and manages over 59 million records. This has ensured that the system will not crash during the sign-ups and will allow for an integrated data management system.

This model marks the beginning of what Mkhize believes will be a complete vaccination health information system - from registration to certification.

“The system has been developed with the purpose of ensuring we lay a solid foundation for digital health information systems that inform the right national policies and interventions. The system can capture the relevant metrics of all South Africans that will be vaccinated and ensure they are contactable, and complete the certification process, such that they’re easy to obtain,” he said.

How does electronic vaccination data system (EVDS) self-registration work?

All Healthcare workers need to enrol at <http://vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za/>

They will be requested to submit the following information in three steps:

- identity number
- name and surname

- email and cellphone number
- employment information
- professional registration details
- details of medical aid scheme

After registering, healthcare workers will receive an SMS notification that they have registered, and appointment information will be communicated via SMS.

Electronic vaccination data system (EVDS) in a nutshell

The EVDS allows healthcare workers to register to receive inoculation against Covid-19. The information gathered through the registration process allows the Department of Health to identify the healthcare workers who are eligible for vaccination and prioritise the rollout of the dose. The system also allows for planning the supply of vaccines and allocation to the vaccination sites nearest the vaccination beneficiary.

The EVDS will also allow for communication with beneficiaries on their eligibility, site of vaccination and any follow-up vaccination appointments.

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