

# *Roadmap for mass anti-Covid-19 vaccination in Cuba explained*

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Havana, March 24 (RHC)-- By mid-year, 70 percent of the Cuban population will be immunized against the SARS-Cov-2 virus as part of a vaccination strategy by population groups, scientists and health authorities explained Tuesday.

The roadmap to be followed began with phase III of the clinical trial of Soberana 02, the project of the Finlay Vaccine Institute, which involves 44 000 volunteers in eight municipalities of Havana.

That stage is followed by the trial of the vaccine candidate Abdala, the proposal of the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, which tests efficacy in three eastern provinces, with 48,000 subjects. The incidence rate is high in this area.

In addition to these studies, there are two intervention studies to evaluate efficacy in risk groups, the first of which is progressing since Monday with Soberana 02 in Havana with 150,000 volunteers, to which another 120,000 will be added shortly in the eastern part of the country with Abdala.

Each stage will be carried out gradually, explained Ileana Morales, director of Science and Technology of the Ministry of Public Health, on the radio program Mesa Redonda.

The rest of the healthcare workers and those in the biopharmaceutical industry who were not included in these previous studies will also be added, until there are more than 400,000 throughout the country.

Depending on each locality's epidemiological situation, it will be extended to other population groups in a broader trial in which the two candidates Soberana 02 and Abdala will be present to reach 1.7 million people.

At the same time, groups such as those over 60 years old, vulnerable will be included. It is expected that between July and the beginning of August, more than six million Cubans will already be immunized.

For Ileana Morales, it is a challenge to vaccinate a large part of the population by the middle of the year, which is a unique experience, she stressed.

Each step undergoes rigorous examination by the regulatory authority, and once authorized, emergency vaccination will be carried out for the rest of the population.

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