

Saudi Arabia commissions COVID-19 testing kits

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA (27 April 2020) - A strategic agreement enabling the testing of 9 million people for COVID-19 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been signed with a Chinese company.

The agreement, for a total value of SAR 995 million, was concluded with the National Unified Procurement Company "NUPCO" and the People's Republic of China, represented by BGI Group.

It is the first of its kind and will supply a record 9 million COVID-19 testing kits, as well as the related equipment and supplies. In addition, 500 hundred experts, specialists and technicians will be provided to carry out these tests.

The agreement was signed according to the directives of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. It followed a phone call between His Royal Highness and Custodian of the two Holy Mosques, King Salman and the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping.

Dr. Abdullah Al Rabeeah, Advisor – Royal Court and Head of the National Negotiation and Procurement Committee for COVID-19 Supply and Readiness said, "This agreement includes establishing six large regional laboratories in a number of areas in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. One mobile laboratory will have a production capacity of 10,000 tests daily – a number which can be doubled".

The contract also includes carrying out 50,000 test per day to diagnose COVID-19 cases, as well as comprehensive community testing. Also included is the analysis of the genetic mapping of a number of samples in the Kingdom and analysis of the community's immunity mapping of 1,000,000 samples.

“These activities will have the greatest impact in supporting the management of the country’s plans to combat the COVID-19 pandemic”, explained Dr. Al Rabeeah.

“The signing of this strategic agreement confirms the strength of long-standing Saudi-Chinese ties and the determination of the leaders of these two strong countries to respond quickly to protect the global community.”

This important agreement is an addition to the Negotiating and Purchasing Committee’s award to a number of companies from the United States, Switzerland and South Korea to purchase additional quantities of reagents and tests to bring the number of targeted tests to 14.5 million, or nearly 40% of the Saudi population.

The Negotiating and Purchasing Committee has also confirmed it is sourcing as quickly as possible from leading specialized international companies large quantities of devices, medicines and medical supplies necessary to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee will coordinate efforts with the Ministry of Health and other health sectors to provide extra medical beds in hospitals, as well as field beds. It will also provide the workforce necessary to operate the project in parallel with the large expansion witnessed in these sectors during these difficult circumstances.

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