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# Russia Not on Track for Mass Coronavirus Vaccination by Year-End – The Bell

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**Yevgeny Sofiychuk / TASS**

Russia will likely miss its self-imposed timeline for mass vaccination against the coronavirus because of insufficient production capacity, the business news website The Bell reported Tuesday.

Authorities have vowed to vaccinate a sizable part of Russia's population by the end of 2020, but developers are reportedly facing issues with scalability and quality control. As a result, manufacturers expect hundreds of thousands instead of the promised tens of millions of vaccine doses by year-end.

"We can't stabilize the vaccine, no one yet can," The Bell quoted an unnamed executive at one of four Russian manufacturing partners of Moscow's Gamaleya research institute as saying. The institute developed Sputnik V, the world's first registered coronavirus vaccine.

Batches of vaccines often don't meet Gamaleya's quality standards and launches of cell-growing vessels known as bioreactors are "generally unsuccessful" when scaled up, an unnamed source familiar with the process told The Bell.

"It usually takes a year to set up mass production of this scale, and here we are trying to make it within weeks," said Anton Gopka, general partner at the biotech and healthcare investment firm ATEM Capital.

**Related article**: Russia's Coronavirus Vaccine Faces Production Problems, Putin Says

President Vladimir Putin acknowledged issues with vaccine production last week, saying "there are certain problems linked to the availability or lack of the necessary equipment." Reuters reported around the same time that some of Moscow's clinics have paused clinical trials of the vaccine after using up all the allocated doses.

The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), which has promised to invest $50 million into Sputnik V, told The Bell that it expects to reach the manufacture of between 7 million and 10 million vaccine doses by January at the latest.

"Bioreactor launches are going well," RDIF said. "The main production task is to scale the process and use larger volumes of bioreactors."

The scientists are "working around the clock" and "get irritated" at the Russian officials' public promise of imminent mass production of the coronavirus vaccine, The Bell cited one of its sources as saying.

Record numbers of Russians have been infected and killed by Covid-19 over the past month after a summer lull, as authorities continue to raise hopes that a mass vaccination campaign will bring the numbers down.

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