

Gavi – The Vaccine Alliance EVALUATION MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Evaluation of the operationalisation of Gavi's strategy through Gavi's policies, programmatic guidance, and use of funding levers

Business Owner: Programme Team, Strategy Team

Evaluation Title: Evaluation of the operationalisation of Gavi's strategy through

Gavi's policies, programmatic guidance, and use of funding levers

Study Evaluation Year: 2022 - August 2023

Evaluation Purpose: The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the degree to which the strategic intent within its programmatic policies is efficiently and effectively operationalised through its funding levers and the application process to enhance its potential contribution to delivery of national immunisation programmes' priorities.

Evaluation Key Objectives:

The principal objective of this evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of Gavi's strategy operationalisation model. The evidence generated by this evaluation will:

- Support identification of strengths and weaknesses in the strategy operationalisation model.
- Generate organisation level learning on the Gavi's strategy operationalisation model.

Gavi Secretariat
Overall Response
to the Evaluation

Gavi welcomes the recommendations of the evaluation. We agree with some of the findings, and are broadly aligned with the recommendations, a number of which are already being addressed. We thank the evaluators for their diligence in undertaking this very complex evaluation and for their timely insights which will inform our approach to operationalisation as part of the process to develop Gavi 6.0 which is currently getting underway.



Finding 1.8	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some key processes of strategy operationalisation were purposely slowed down, altered, or had dedicated personnel – including the PMO's management role - redirected, while other processes progressed.
Finding 1.9	Underlying capacity and operational challenges delayed the implementation of the operationalisation process and are still in the process of being resolved.
Finding 1.11	Coherence and timeliness in strategy operationalisation are also affected by misalignment between country applications and Gavi strategy timelines as well as the time needed for an internal cascading from a high-level strategy one-pager to operational changes
Recommendation 1 (Consider minimal changes to the strategic objectives for Gavi 6.0.)"	"Continue: For the development of Gavi 6.0, ensure that it continues on the same trajectory as 5.0/5.1, with only essential course corrections considering the delays in the operationalisation and implementation of Gavi 5.0 and key considerations around the capacity of the Secretariat to further adapt. With the substantial delays to operationalising Gavi 5.0, not least due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries are still reprogramming existing grants, applying for new grants, or undergoing a comprehensive FPP process reflecting Gavi 5.0 strategic shifts.
	With the significant strategic shifts in the updated Gavi 5.0/5.1 agenda still in the process of being operationalised in many countries, the next strategy would benefit from minimal modifications considering only those related to: - country context and priorities, e.g., building pandemic response capacities and refocusing on routine and zero-dose immunisation; - possible shifts in the external environment, e.g., addressing climate change or poly-epidemics; and - consideration of the Secretariat's ability to support countries.
	Ensuring limited changes will allow sufficient time for the Gavi 5.0/5.1 strategy with its recently approved changes and objectives, which are crucial to the core mission of Gavi, to be fully operationalised, while the outputs of the EVOLVE and Operational Excellence processes and the recommendations provided in the report can be acted upon



	without the upheaval of shifting strategic priorities.
	Furthermore, Gavi/Board should consider the trade-offs on the extent of detail and choice of strategic changes of introducing new focus areas, with the accompanying policy development, (individual or integrated) funding levers, programme guidance and organisational requirements. As part of a strategy operationalisation process or an overall business planning process, Gavi should investigate the opportunities and challenges in the upcoming five-year period and learn from them to determine the degree of evolution needed. "
Alliance Management Response (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)	Partially agree
If recommendation is rejected/partially accepted, indicate reasons	Management agrees that all changes to strategy should be weighed against the transaction costs they imply for countries, partners and the Secretariat. We expect that the core of the 5.1 strategy will remain highly relevant in Gavi 6.0 which is likely to continue to focus on key programmatic priorities such as reaching zero-dose children and introducing and scaling HPV and malaria vaccines. Gavi's focus on leaving no one behind with immunisation will remain a key driver of the new strategy aligned to IA2030 and the SDGs. However, part of the success of the Alliance has been its ability to adjust dynamically to new challenges and opportunities facing our implementing countries, donors and other stakeholders. Given rapid changes in the geopolitical landscape, it will be important that the Alliance's 6.0 strategy is fit for purpose. This will require the Alliance to consider how we support introduction of powerful new vaccines across different age groups, which will require significant new thinking and approaches; how we support countries to strengthen their pandemic prevention, preparedness and response capabilities; how we help countries to strengthen the resilience of their immunisation programmes in health systems in the face of climate change, fragility and other growing risks; and how we collaborate more closely with other financing agencies given many new vaccines will require more multisectoral / cross-programme collaboration.
Actions planned	Ensure highly consultative process with all stakeholders



	(countries, partners, donors etc.) to develop Gavi 6.0 that identifies all potential opportunities for incremental impact and weighs trade-offs (programmatic, financial, organisational) of each
Finding 1.7	Greater attention was given to the operationalisation of Strategic Goal (SG) 2, particularly the zero-dose agenda, than to SGs 1, 3, and 4; initially through the workstream design and later through the recalibration of Gavi 5.0 during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Finding 1.8	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some key processes of strategy operationalisation were purposely slowed down, altered, or had dedicated personnel – including the PMO's management role - redirected, while other processes progressed
Finding 1.9	Underlying capacity and operational challenges delayed the implementation of the operationalisation process and are still in the process of being resolved
Recommendation 2 (Establish permanent oversight and coordination of the operationalisation process and its resources)	"Develop and Introduce: The implementation of the operationalisation process was managed by a project management office (PMO) during the preparation of Gavi 5.0 under the leadership of the Deputy CEO with senior leads for each workstream. However, this was disbanded by the Executive Office as the pandemic required refocusing of strategies and reallocation of resources. Strategy operationalisation is a dynamic process that requires the highest level of continuous attention and, thus, for operational and accountability reasons, should be considered part of the scope of work of the Executive Office. The day-to-day operations could be managed by a permanent entity (rather than the ad-hoc PMO under 5.0) with the mandate and capacity to facilitate the operationalisation workstreams and coordinate the departments involved. This could be a unit, one responsible person, or a group of business owners. This entity will need to interface with many parts of the organisation and wider
	the Alliance, feeding back and responding to constraints that may prove challenging to implement. The necessary skills to include in such an entity are not only strategic, conceptual, and analytical skills but also operations



	management, organisational change management, and a solid understanding of the challenges of cascading strategy within layers and teams in the Secretariat, Alliance partners and ultimately, at country level. The responsible entity should be tasked to develop a detailed operationalisation plan to include the scope of work, performance framework, timelines, and participants for each workstream that relates to the key strategic and operational shifts required. It should furthermore detail a progress monitoring plan with defined indicators. The Executive Office should remain accountable for the entire operationalisation process, including resourcing and organisational management."
Alliance Management Response (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree)	Agree
If recommendation is rejected/partially accepted, indicate reasons:	Management agrees on the importance of an empowered lead entity for coordinating and driving strategy operationalisation with direct accountability to Secretariat senior leadership, systematic collaboration with relevant programmatic and operational teams within the Secretariat and partners, and the need for a robust and regularly monitored implementation plan. As laid out in the evaluation report, as a learning from the previous 4.0 strategic cycle, a similar PMO structure as recommended by the evaluations for 6.0 was put in place for operationalising Gavi 5.0 led by the Strategy, Funding and Performance (SFP) department. After a strong start it was unable to fully implement its intended function given the the shift of priorities after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and subesquent senior management decision to sunset the PMO. Subsequently, the capacity of the SFP team to coordinate and help accelerate key strategic-programmatic as well as operational initiatives has been built further, for example through the set up of an enterprise PMO to coordinate and drive the operational excellence agenda, and institutionalised PMO support to help drive the corporate "must win" priorities. It is expected that this capacity will be leveraged to facilitate and coordinate Gavi 6.0 operationalisation. While it will be important to ensure strong coordination and project management support for



	the business owners, the ownership of the business owners over key strategic shifts for 6.0 needs to be retained by ensuring their accountability for fully implementing and mainstreaming the shifts. The rationale for a new, permanent PMO for strategy operationalisation is less clear given that this is only relevant for the beginning of each strategy period and should conclude with the start of Gavi 6.0.
Actions planned	 Create roadmap to guide strategy operationalisation with clearly defined accountability for overall implementation and each specific sub-stream. Ensure this is supported by well-resourced PMO function and sufficient resourcing in each lead team and well-aligned to operational excellence efforts. Ensure regular review of progress against roadmap, monitoring of risks and agreed course correction as required
Finding 1.1	A conceptually well-structured and coherent process was put in place for translating strategic priorities into full operationalisation from the start of the Gavi 5.0 implementation period.
Finding 1.2	Through detailed ToCs, Gavi dedicated considerable effort to comprehensively conceptualize the causal pathways required to bring about change in programme/ policy intent at the country level. However, the timing and coordination of the ToC development did not lend itself to informing and guiding the design or prioritisation of Gavi's strategy operationalisation
Finding 1.3	Resources and managerial set up dedicated to carrying out the work varied by workstream – some workstreams (policy, monitoring & evaluation) had natural 'homes' where the workload was anticipated as part of a normal scope of work, some had access to external consultancy support (portfolio management and organisational review) and others were reliant on people taking on additional work.
Finding 1.4	The scope and scale of work varied by workstream, i.e., the programmatic approaches workstream had a particularly vast and relatively ambiguous scope without additional resourcing
Finding 1.5	Mechanisms were put in place to enable consultation with,



	and involvement of, external stakeholders in strategy operationalisation, with variation across workstreams
Finding 1.7	Greater attention was given to the operationalisation of Strategic Goal (SG) 2, particularly the zero-dose agenda, than to SGs 1, 3, and 4; initially through the workstream design and later through the recalibration of Gavi 5.0 during the COVID-19 pandemic
Recommendation 3 (Invest sufficient time and resources into the Gavi strategy operationalisation and the complementary organisational optimisation processes)	"Develop and Introduce" To operationalise the Gavi 5.0 strategy, a well-structured process was put in place to update the relevant aspects of the Gavi model (e.g., funding policies and levers, programmatic approaches, portfolio management processes, organisational design, and partnership model) before the start of the strategic cycle. The initially planned two-year process should have been sufficient to address the strategy's operationalisation and the underlying organisational and operational constraints. Unfortunately, these processes were interrupted when the Secretariat and countries had to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, diverting time and resources. This resulted in delays in operationalising the strategy across workstreams, with some elements, e.g., the full portfolio planning (FPP) process, only fully implemented in a few countries and may not be completed until the next strategic cycle. Post-pandemic preparation for the next strategic cycle should be able to improve further the strategy operationalisation process and implementation of Gavi 6.0 if adequate time, resources, and change management efforts are dedicated, and the organisational optimisation of the ongoing Operational Excellence process is leveraged and permanently embedded into the organisation"
Alliance Management Response (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree) If recommendation is	Agree
rejected/partially accepted, indicate	



reasons	
Actions planned	 Create roadmap to guide strategy operationalisation with clearly defined accountability for overall implementation and each specific sub-stream. Ensure this is supported by well-resourced PMO function and sufficient resourcing in each lead team and well-aligned to operational excellence efforts. Ensure regular review of progress against roadmap, monitoring of risks and agreed course correction as required
Finding 1.13	Stakeholders have doubts about the Secretariat's capacity to efficiently translate the strategy operationalisation design into implementation, especially considering the continued expansion of the portfolio.
Finding 1.14	Gavi has made a considerable effort in change management, targeted at strengthening internal structures and processes, including systematic communication on Gavi's operational model.
Finding 2.4	There has been progress in streamlining grant application, grant-making, and grant management processes. However, challenges remain, linked to the underlying complexity of Gavi, IT rigidities during the strategy operationalization phase and known issues with Secretariat capacity, operational management, and risk culture
Finding 2.9	There is a general lack of information on and understanding of the extent to which Gavi's strategic priorities are reflected comprehensively within and across the grants it provides
Finding 2.10	Gavi's model facilitates constructive negotiation during grant design and the agreement of mutual priorities between Gavi and countries and is doing that in a balanced manner that respects country ownership
Recommendation 4 (Empower staff to implement the strategy as appropriate to the country context by cascading decision-making authority throughout the Secretariat)	"Act Now" Country-facing staff need to have the authority to react more promptly to country requests and contexts. Responsibility for administering the range of Gavi funding levers rests with different Secretariat teams/departments, and it can be unclear who has decision-making authority. Therefore, it is necessary to determine decision-making authorities at the pertinent levels for all operationalisation instruments (funding levers, policies, application processes, etc.).



	There is a need to define a new vision for delegating authority, which empowers teams with the skills, capabilities, clear designation to, and accountability for, taking specific strategy alignment or operationalisation decisions. Staff should feel safe in their decision-making delegation grounded in reducing the layers of decision-making. They could start focusing on signing off on straightforward decisions with lower risk. This evaluation supports several sub-recommendations of the EVOLVE project, which require the Secretariat to: - Review the roles and responsibilities of country-facing staff vis-à-vis higher-level management Develop a change management approach to ensure simpler and faster decision-making Continue to work (under EVOLVE or the overall Operational Excellence process) on addressing risk aversion, defining, among others, what risk appetite means for individuals with decision-making abilities and developing appropriate guidance for staff accordingly.
Alliance Management Response (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree)	Agree
If recommendation is rejected/partially accepted, indicate reasons	
Actions planned	Review, codify and operationalise decision-making matrix for grant management guided by ambition to delegate decision-making authority wherever feasible and agreed risk appetite and robust monitoring proc Implement delegation of Approval Requests (AR) to support to countries from CEO level to country-facing leadership levels
Finding 1.5	Mechanisms were put in place to enable consultation with, and involvement of, external stakeholders in strategy operationalisation, with variation across workstreams.
Finding 1.6	There was an effort to consult with partners however, while some priorities important to external stakeholders have been operationalised, others have not been as well-



	addressed
Finding 2.5	Core Alliance partners play a critical positive role in strategy operationalization, which varies to some extent across countries according to the context and country capacities of government and Alliance representative staff.
Finding 2.7	The Gavi Secretariat and wider Alliance work in a range of ways to ensure that Gavi's strategic priorities are reflected in country grant applications and priorities. Evidence suggests that some ways of working are more influential than others.
Finding 2.8	A range of contextual factors at country level influence strategy operationalization and affect the extent to which Gavi's strategic priorities are reflected in Gavi grant designs
Finding 2.10	Gavi's model facilitates constructive negotiation during grant design and the agreement of mutual priorities between Gavi and countries and is doing that in a balanced manner that respects country ownership.
Finding 2.11	Gavi's strategy and funding levers have been highly targeted towards overcoming barriers to reach zero-dose and missed communities, which is increasingly reflected as a priority within Gavi's grant support (but to varying degrees and not in all countries
Finding 2.13	Early observations from a new approach for civil society and community engagement suggest that it is helping to increase the budget allocation to CSOs, and especially local CSOs, through multiple funding levers
Finding 2.14	Mechanisms and processes to ensure that support can be provided to fragile states, in emergencies, and to displaced populations are increasingly being utilized
Finding 2.15	Co-financing is considered one of Gavi's key successes, with the vast majority of countries agreeing to meet co-financing requirements and most doing so, despite global and national economic shocks, including as caused by the COVID-19 pandemic
Recommendation 5 (Encourage wider engagement of stakeholders in the operationalisation process, specifically country and Gavi	"Act Now": The involvement of partners was tailored according to the operationalisation workstream needs but some of the inputs provided were not taken forward in operationalisation, and mechanisms to enable continued involvement of and accountability to external stakeholders varied by workstream. Eventually, the pandemic became a limitation



country-facing staff)	on such engagements. Thus, it is recommended that
to an any vacanty cramy	external stakeholders' involvement be made more
	systematic (in terms of requirements and timing of
	involvement, and process in case of concerns or
	contradicting views) through participation and consultation
	during strategy development, operationalisation, and
	implementation, to facilitate discussions of strategic
	relevance and ensure that implementation of strategic
	directives is aligned with context, capabilities, and country
	needs. This includes a more deliberate and transparent
	process of engagement that provides reasons for taking up and not taking up partners' inputs.
	and not taking up partners inputs.
	Besides the Alliance partners, there is a need for more and
	wider consultation with countries and country-facing staff
	within the Secretariat. With the expansion of the Partners'
	Engagement Framework, local civil society organisations
	with a broader country contextual experience should be
	included in such consultations.
	Furthermore, Secretariat country-facing staff need to be
	engaged earlier and more intensively in the
	operationalisation process to ensure acceptance and
	feasibility of its outcomes and to facilitate the translation of
	the proposed policies and guidance into the design and
	implementation of country grants.
	The assumption underpinning this recommendation is that
	multi-stakeholder engagement at multiple levels and stages
	throughout the strategy, development, operationalisation
	and implementation phases will facilitate discussions of
	strategic relevance and ensure that strategic directives are
	aligned with context, capabilities, and country needs. It will
	also create the ownership necessary to achieve a defined level of accountability among all partners. "
Alliance Management	Partially agree.
Response (Agree,	
Partially Agree,	
Disagree)	
If recommendation is	Management agrees with the need for systematic,
rejected/partially	predictable and transparent consultation with countries,
accepted, indicate	partners and country-facing Secretariat staff as part of both
reasons:	strategy development and operationalisation. There was



	significant consultation in operationalising 5.0 but, as noted, this can be strengthened further for operationalising Gavi 6.0. It is, however, important to weigh the implications of expanding consultations too broadly - both in terms of the time this requires from the stakeholders consulted and in terms of enabling operationalisation to proceed at pace. For example, many country-facing Secretariat staff were engaged in the early stages of operationalising Gavi 5.0 and there were concerns this was placing an excessive burden on staff members. It is also important to note that views and inputs during consultations across very large teams such as country-facing teams can be contradictory, and ensuring significant engagement with the leaders of these teams - and not just their teams - is critical to bring a consolidated perspective and ensure ownership. The inputs from Alliance partners during consultations can also be contradictory given the size of such organisations and the various internal perspectives - strong leadership from Alliance partners will be important to help the Secretariat arbitrate inputs. Equally, while management agrees on the importance of consulting local CSOs on relevant workstreams, attempting to do so across all Gavi geographies would have high transaction cost and take very significant time. There may be an opportunity for the Secretariat to better leverage core Alliance partners at country level to consult with and collect input from other country stakeholders. In summary, while fully agreeing on possibility to ensure a process even more consultative than for 5.0 operationalisation, trade-offs will need to be taken into account to find a balanced approach.
Actions planned	1.Ensure systematic consultation of countries, partners and country-facing Secretariat staff and their leaders in development of Gavi 6.0. 2. Create roadmap to guide strategy operationalisation with clearly defined accountability for overall implementation and each specific sub-stream. Ensure this is supported by well-resourced PMO function and sufficient resourcing in each lead team and well-aligned to operational excellence efforts.
Finding 1.10	The design intent under the portfolio management workstream was to simplify and streamline portfolio management processes. However, despite the FPP



	process, there continue to be separate grant application processes and proliferation of funding levers with varying management arrangements. These factors have threatened the establishment of a coherent operationalisation model.
Finding 1.13	Stakeholders have doubts about the Secretariat's capacity to efficiently translate the strategy operationalisation design into implementation, especially considering the continued expansion of the portfolio.
Finding 2.1	Gavi's policy framework, systems, processes, and ways of working are highly complex and challenging to communicate.
Finding 2.4	There has been progress in streamlining grant application, grant-making, and grant management processes. However, challenges remain, linked to the underlying complexity of Gavi, IT rigidities during the strategy operationalization phase and known issues with Secretariat capacity, operational management, and risk culture.
Recommendation 6 (Simplify and streamline funding levers and related guidance, tools, and processes)	"Act Now" It was found that a significant cause of complexity within the business model related to the expansion of funding levers over the Gavi 4.0 and 5.0 strategic periods. This expansion was driven mainly by a desire to promote strategic priorities that were new, elevated or had additional or earmarked financial resources to support implementation, such as EAF. The number of funding levers with accompanying sets of policies, guidance, flexibilities, application, and implementation modalities has been confusing for countries and the Secretariat country-facing staff that support them. A reduction in the number of levers should not be purely a numerical exercise but instead based on a thorough review of: - what would be most impactful to achieve the strategic objectives of both countries and Gavi; - separate versus integrated funding lever trade-offs; - flexibilities of the funding sources; and - the ability of the different teams to manage various funding levers. This should consider streamlining the different funding lever business owners across the departments. "
Alliance Management Response (Agree, Partially Agree,	Agree



Discourse)	
Disagree)	
If recommendation is rejected/partially accepted, indicate reasons:	
Actions planned	 As part of Gavi 6.0 design, engage the Board on Gavi's operating model in 6.0 including, at a strategic level, on the structure of its funding levers Identify opportunities to better align funding levers and integrate related tools prior to 6.0, as part of the EVOLVE project redesign of Gavi's end-to-end grant management processes
Finding 1.11	Coherence and timeliness in strategy operationalisation are also affected by misalignment between country applications and Gavi strategy timelines as well as the time needed for an internal cascading from a high-level strategy one-pager to operational changes.
Finding 2.2	The Full Portfolio Planning process seeks to address some of the longstanding issues with the Gavi model.
Finding 2.3	The potential benefits of Full Portfolio Planning have not yet been realized.
Finding 2.6	The IRC is an important part of the strategy operationalization model, although its recommendations are not always addressed due to challenges cited by countries in responding to comments and recommendations. Furthermore, the systems and processes for tracking and following up on recommendations were described by many as inadequate.
Recommendation 7 (Regularly review and expedite the FPP approach)	"Continue" One of the developments with the most potential arising from the operationalisation of Gavi 5.0 has been the development and early implementation of the FPP process. While iterations of this grant planning modality existed in previous strategic periods, it was significantly updated and scaled up for Gavi 5.0. Countries appreciate the integration of the different funding levers, the simplified application form and process, and the extended duration of the subsequent grant. However, some elements require review to optimise the process, such as the intensive preparation of the application and the need for



specific funding lever applications to continue to exist outside of the FPP process. Furthermore, few countries have engaged in the process as it only started in 2022, with the first grant disbursements in early 2023. It will be several years before all countries have grants based on the integrated FPP process.

A further review of the FPP process could help ensure the effective use of limited resources, and expediting its roll-out should be considered for the remainder of Gavi 5.0/5.1 and well into Gavi 6.0. This could be best achieved by:

- Ensuring that there are clear mandates and responsibilities within the Secretariat, with accountability to the Executive Office and Board, for the regular review and adoption of the FPP process.
- Continuing with an adaptive approach to the FPP, learning from what is working and what is not throughout its rollout while ensuring that countries are not continually sent revised guidelines, tools, and processes.
- Integrating previously reduced funding levers through the FPP to ensure it works for holistic planning (see Recommendation 6).

Consider simplifying the FPP process and grant application materials further where possible, such as by revisiting the format and requirements of application forms, updating the FPP checklist, reducing criteria and streamlining data requirements and providing clearer guidance and frameworks for countries to use in their strategic development process.

- At the same time, recognise the FPP's remaining complexities and coordination challenges, new developments, emerging health challenges and evolving country needs and reflect those as necessary in updated FPP programmatic guidance.
- Comprehensively communicating the FPP to countries via guidance documents, webinars, and workshops to inform countries about the changes, their benefits, and the expected outcomes. Clearer communication would also help countries better understand the value of participating in the FPP and motivate them to engage in the process.
- Where possible harmonising FPP processes with other global health initiatives and partners to improve coordination, strengthen synergies and reduce potential



Alliance Management Response (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree)	duplication. In practice, this may mean coordinating the timing of FPP processes with partners and increasing engagement, particularly for HSIS support and other areas with common objectives. - Continuing to invest in capacity building and technical assistance to help countries navigate the FPP process through enhanced training programs, workshops, mentoring support, and knowledge-sharing platforms. - Continuing to promote a culture of learning and knowledge sharing on the FPP process. This may include peer learning and knowledge sharing among countries that have successfully conducted the FPP process and aligned their grant applications with the strategic periods. Agree
Actions planned	Continue to review, refine and update Gavi's application kit and FPP guidelines based on country and staff feedback, lessons learned and emerging needs Systematically build capacity of partners and countries to undertake FPP and apply for Gavi support Deploy TA as required to support FPP processes Design a revised approach to funding requests for medium and longer term
	The Full detailed version can be assessed by request to the Gavi Secretariat