

**SUBJECT:** COUNTRY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

**Agenda item:** 02h

**Category:** For Decision

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the June 2016 Board meeting, the Secretariat presented initial ideas to introduce a new approach for countries in the context of the new Health System and Immunisation Strengthening (HSIS) Framework.
- 1.2 The attached PPC paper provides an update on the design of this new approach, referred to as the Country Engagement Framework (“CEF”), which seeks to more efficiently channel Gavi support to countries, in a manner better suited to country needs and timelines, while assuring independent and rigorous review, and to optimise programming to achieve more equitable and sustainable immunisation coverage.
- 1.3 In October, the PPC was presented with implementation progress to date and was asked to consider certain flexibilities regarding mechanisms for providing independent recommendations on Gavi's investments. These adjustments, described in Section 7 of the attached paper, are designed to address some of the limitations of a Geneva and document-based review process and will allow further learning opportunities in 2017 as the new CEF approach is further refined. The PPC members welcomed the CEF approach being taken by the Alliance.
- 1.4 Lessons from the implementation of the proposed adjustments to the review mechanisms will be presented to the PPC at its next meeting in May 2017 before finalising any requests for changes to review processes for Board decision by the end of 2017.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Gavi Alliance Programme and Policy Committee recommended to the Gavi Alliance Board that it:
  - (a) **Approve** certain adjustments to the existing methods of reviewing and approving new Gavi support to facilitate and inform a learning agenda for an updated review and approval process, including:

- i. offering opportunities for review of new Gavi support on a country-by-country basis and outside of the existing IRC schedule;
  - ii. enabling IRC members and other impartial technical experts with local/regional expertise to serve in the capacity as independent reviewers as long as there is no conflict of interest;
  - iii. leveraging engagement of country stakeholders to provide input and immediately address issues flagged by the reviewers; and
  - iv. consider, for those counties with relatively smaller Gavi investments, the use of existing review mechanisms such as the HLRP (or the subset of IRC members of the HLRP) to provide funding recommendations on new as well as existing Gavi support.
- (b) **Note** the outcome of this process will allow a final design to be presented to the PPC and Board by end 2017.

#### **Attachment**

Appendix 1: Update on Country Programmes: Country Engagement Framework: Report to the PPC, 25-26 October 2016, Doc 03b

**SUBJECT:** UPDATE ON COUNTRY PROGRAMMES: COUNTRY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

**Agenda item:** 03b

**Category:** For Decision

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## **Section A: Overview**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 At the May 2016 PPC meeting, the Secretariat presented initial ideas to introduce a new approach for countries in the context of the Health System and Immunisation Strengthening (HSIS) Framework. This document provides an update on the design of this new approach, referred to as the Country Engagement Framework ("CEF"), which seeks to more efficiently channel Gavi support to countries, in a manner better suited to country needs and timelines, and to optimise programming to achieve more equitable and sustainable immunisation coverage.
- 1.2 A key element of the design of the CEF is to consider alternative mechanisms for providing independent recommendations on Gavi's investments which move away from some of the limitations of a Geneva and document-based review process.
- 1.3 Based on guidance provided, the Secretariat has started to work in new ways with a few selected countries to inform the design of CEF. Following this initial learning phase, the Secretariat will bring more complete findings for consideration at the May 2017 PPC meeting, including any requests for the PPC to make recommendations to the Board for decision. In the meantime, the Secretariat **seeks the recommendation of the PPC to the Board to approve certain adjustments to the existing Gavi review mechanisms to allow for learning opportunities as the new approach is designed.**

## **Section B: Content**

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 To access Gavi support today, countries, often assisted by an international consultant, develop separate Gavi proposals for each type of support (financial and vaccines), each with distinct budgets and workplans. The Independent Review Committee (IRC) then reviews each of these separately during panel meetings based in Geneva. Up to now, the application development process has not benefited from engagement with

a full range of Alliance stakeholders; is not differentiated (a 'one size fits all' approach); does not sufficiently leverage existing national cycles, processes and planning; and does not establish adequate links to available evidence for targeted funding priorities. In terms of time requirements, countries can spend three months or more developing their proposals, can wait an additional four to six months before an approval decision is made, followed by another few months for a disbursement – making it difficult for countries to predict when to expect financial and vaccine support from Gavi.

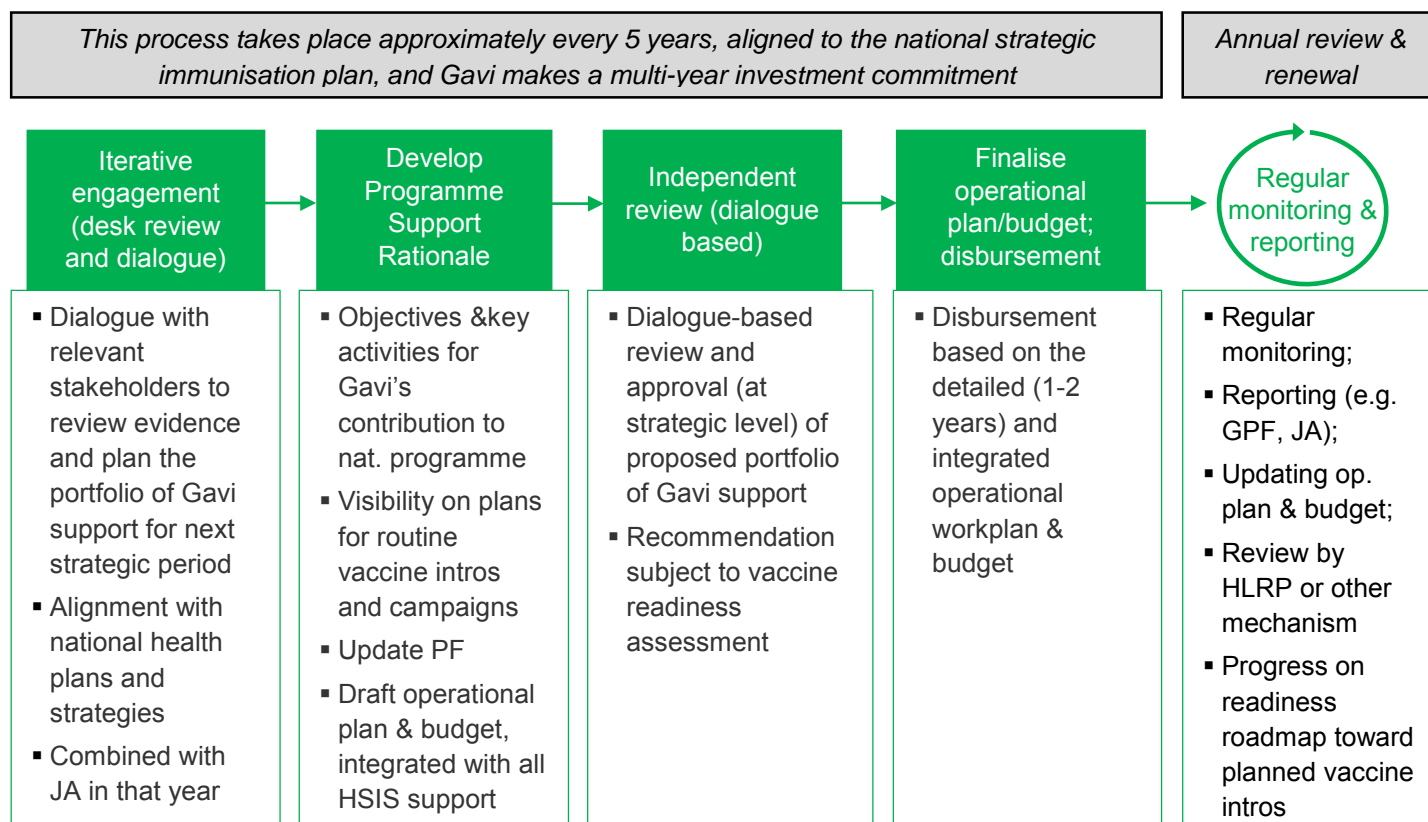
2.2 In turn, to successfully implement the HSIS Framework and make Gavi investments more effective and efficient, CEF focuses on:

- (a) **Strengthening in-country engagement and dialogue** across in country stakeholders and with partners, shifting away from the dependence on consultants, and ensuring a holistic approach to priority setting and programming of Gavi support (HSS, VIG, Ops, CCEOP, NVS)<sup>1</sup>;
- (b) **Differentiating review mechanisms** to help the Secretariat move away from a “one size fits all” approach, inflexible timelines and a purely Geneva-based review; and
- (c) **Increasing the engagement of Alliance partners** in supporting country level implementation and regular monitoring (to ensure better delivery of results and enhanced accountability).

### 3. Approach to early learning (June 2016 – April 2017)

- 3.1 The Secretariat began testing CEF with a set of five 'early learning' countries in 2016 following the Gavi Board approval of the HSIS Framework in June. To maximize learning, CEF has differed for each early learning country as summarised in Annex A.
- 3.2 For **Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone** where the Board doubled HSS grant ceilings in late 2014 in the aftermath of the Ebola outbreak, CEF provides a tailored process and increased focus on shaping investments through active coordination across partners to advance national resilience and recovery plans. For **India**, where the Board's India Partnership strategy brings up-front visibility on the type of support to be provided, in-country dialogue including with IRC members, and tailored approaches enable further programming and discussions on the high level results expected during this key period of transition.
- 3.3 Other countries are planning investments with Gavi, consistent with the new HSIS Framework, through the streamlined steps of CEF (see Annex B for a country example). These experiences have already helped shape how CEF can be phased-in to **additional countries**, prioritising those requiring new HSS support in 2017 or needing to reprogramme an existing HSS grant. The request from such countries is anticipated to include new vaccine support, VIGs, Ops and CCEOP as envisioned in the HSIS Board decision,

<sup>1</sup> Health System Strengthening, Vaccine Introduction Grant, Operational Support for Campaigns, Cold Chain Equipment Optimisation Platform, New Vaccine Support



in accordance with their priorities for the subsequent approximately 5-years. The consolidated request for Gavi's support would be captured in a single, succinct Programme Support Rationale (PSR).

- 3.4 Based on these continued learnings and consultations, the Secretariat will develop a more stable design and architecture proposal to discuss with the Board by the end of 2017.

#### 4. CEF process steps

- 4.1 The process steps for the new CEF approach in early learning countries are outlined in the figure above. Ultimately, this will be differentiated according to different types of country situations (e.g. high impact, high risk, low capacity and fragile environments).

#### 5. Experiences so far (June-Sept 2016)

- 5.1 The CEF approach to date has received largely **positive reactions** from governments and in-country partners. In particular, the iterative discussions across stakeholders, building upon the Alliance joint appraisal model, have and referring to national strategies and existing information (e.g. immunisation programme reviews, effective vaccine management assessments (EVMs)) have prompted a clearer understanding of the drivers of equitable coverage, capacity gaps and areas for **strategic investments**. The Alliance's participation in early in-country planning processes has resulted in greater harmonisation and transparency across governments and partners, leading to a better understanding of gaps and targeting of available domestic and other donor funding. The replacement of the current,

separate proposal forms, with a consolidation of all types of Gavi support into one document has provided a **portfolio view of support** and visibility into the complementarities of Gavi's investments. The tailored review process has included useful in-country engagement and has allowed Gavi to support countries on a rolling basis outside **inflexible IRC meeting schedules**.

- 5.2 However, the new process has also revealed some **challenges**. In particular, this model calls for **strong national leadership, effective Alliance engagement** (leveraging the Partners' Engagement Framework (PEF)), and **strengthened country capacity**. To ensure this, CEF, in conjunction with other Alliance processes and tools (e.g. Joint Appraisals (JAs), Programme Capacity Assessments (PCAs)), will need to anticipate and progressively address limitations due to weak capacity. There is also need for more **clarity on the most effective documents** and use of the country's multi-year immunisation plan (cMYP) as a basis for discussions on the country's immunisation ambition. In preparing the CEF to date, the cMYP has, for example, served as a key reference document but the actual reliance on it by countries and partners in the dialogue and for strategic planning has been limited. Further, CEF will demand **significantly greater time** from across the Secretariat and Alliance partners, in particular if seen in conjunction with the introduction of other processes, such as the PCAs and country risk matrices. Finally, an independent expert review will remain important in Gavi's funding model, but some form of **differentiation and tailored processes** will be needed to decrease the transaction costs associated with cycles of IRC clarifications and resubmissions.

## 6. Upcoming priorities and focus (through 2017)

- 6.1 While the HSIS Framework provides a critical anchor for CEF design work, two important areas in particular require further development: 1) how, or based on what criteria, should Gavi determine whether a country is sufficiently prepared to receive vaccine doses for a new introduction or a campaign for vaccines for which they are eligible during the 5 year timespan of the commitment under the PSR; and 2) how the Alliance might evolve the review mechanism for approving new country support for a country (financial as well as vaccines as reflected in the country's PSR) while safeguarding the independence of the review.
- 6.2 **Accessing new support for vaccines through a readiness roadmap:** Under CEF, Gavi support to countries (including NVS, VIG, HSIS, CCEOP and OPs) is anticipated to be endorsed for a 5 year timespan through the PSR. Yet, under this model vaccine campaigns and introductions approved in the PSR can be years away, requiring that countries' readiness to introduce routine vaccines, switch products, or conduct a high-quality campaign will be monitored and assessed routinely up to the time of introduction. CEF is reviewing current approaches that assess a country's readiness for vaccine introductions, while ensuring robust decision making processes, high quality planning, timely disbursements and vaccine procurement and strong management of risks. This is in its early stages of design, building upon fifteen years of Alliance experience and leveraging



existing tools, some vaccine-specific, to assess countries' readiness. Processes, tools and associated roles **and responsibilities will be developed in consultation with partners and** countries and be available in 2017.

- 6.3 **Constraints with the current review and decision process:** As discussed above, a more flexible mechanism for ensuring review that retains its independence, arranged according to country timing needs and involving country stakeholders, could help reduce transaction costs and delays. The following Board-approved measures<sup>2</sup> are in place today to “guarantee the integrity and consistency of an open and transparent programme funding process<sup>3</sup>”:
- (a) **For new support, three IRC meetings per year** in Geneva for a desk review of proposal submissions for all types of new support (each submitted separately);
  - (b) **For existing support, three High Level Review Panel (HLRP) meetings per year** consisting of Alliance partners, the Secretariat and three IRC members meet three times a year to renew existing support based on the assessment of performance as reported through annual joint appraisals and performance frameworks.
- 6.4 Building upon the HSIS Framework, the Secretariat would like to explore the means of providing an **independent review of the full portfolio of Gavi support, the PSR**, for a country's new strategy cycle. Such a review is anticipated, as part of the CEF design, occurring every three to five years aligned with the country's strategic planning cycle.
- 6.5 To the extent possible, different types of review mechanisms have been planned with the early learning countries in line with current Board decisions and the Programme Funding Policy. However, to learn through employing more tailored and differentiated approaches under CEF, the Secretariat seeks approval for certain flexibilities such as those noted in the table below. It therefore asks the PPC to consider agreeing to the recommendations set out under Section C below.

Current constraints		Illustrative flexibilities requested
<b>Timings of reviews</b>	<b>Fixed timings</b> for review restrict countries to Gavi timelines which are not always aligned to specific country needs.	Offering opportunities for review of new support on a country-by-country basis and <b>outside the existing IRC schedule</b> .
<b>Definition of independence</b>	The narrow definition of a member's <b>independence</b> precludes them from	Enabling <b>IRC members and other impartial technical experts with</b>

<sup>2</sup> Per the key elements of Gavi's grant application, monitoring and review systems, Board-2013-Mtg-1-Doc 2

<sup>3</sup> Per the Gavi Alliance By-laws and Terms of Reference for the IRC

Current constraints		Illustrative flexibilities requested
	reviewing a country of where they are a national or where they have significant professional or personal ties.	<b>local/regional expertise</b> to serve in the capacity as independent reviewers as long as there is no conflict of interest
<b>Minimal country engagement</b>	Without open sessions to provide input to the review, countries often face <b>delays associated with clarifications</b> .	Leveraging <b>engagement of country stakeholders</b> to provide input and immediately address issues flagged by the reviewers.
<b>Minimal differentiation</b>	The mandate and scope of the review and approval remains the <b>same for all countries</b> regardless of the risk and impact profile which misses opportunities to differentiate.	Consider, for those counties with relatively smaller Gavi investments, the <b>use of existing review mechanisms</b> such as the HLRP (or the subset of IRC members of the HLRP) to provide recommendations on new as well as existing Gavi support.

## Section C. Recommendations

### 7. Recommendation

7.1 In order to learn more extensively throughout 2017 and design a well-informed proposal that addresses some of the limitations of current review processes, the Gavi Alliance Programme and Policy Committee is requested to recommend to the Gavi Alliance Board that it:

- (a) **Approve** certain adjustments to the existing methods of reviewing and approving new Gavi support to facilitate and inform a learning agenda for an updated review and approval process, including:
- (i) offering opportunities for review of new Gavi support on a country-by-country basis and outside of the existing IRC schedule;
  - (ii) enabling IRC members and other impartial technical experts with local/regional expertise to serve in the capacity as independent reviewers as long as there is no conflict of interest;
  - (iii) leveraging engagement of country stakeholders to provide input and immediately address issues flagged by the reviewers; and



- (iv) consider, for those counties with relatively smaller Gavi investments, the use of existing review mechanisms such as the HLRP (or the subset of IRC members of the HLRP) to provide funding recommendations on new as well as existing Gavi support.
- (b) **Note** the outcome of this process will allow a final design to be presented [to the PPC and] Board by end 2017.

## **Section D. Risk implication and mitigation<sup>4</sup> and financial implications**

### **8. Risks and mitigation**

- 8.1 There is a risk that as Gavi experiments with alternate review mechanisms (including relocating it to the country and with stakeholder participation), the **independent role of reviewers** could weaken. However, technical experts will be carefully selected, briefed and supported to uphold this independence and prevent any undue influence during their assessment.
- 8.2 There is a risk that as Gavi reinforces the role of the Secretariat to play an integral part of more deliberate and pro-active targeting of Gavi investments (during country dialogue), this could erode the **impartiality of Secretariat staff**. CEF is consistent with greater stewardship and grant management by the Secretariat, supported by recent Board decisions. Communications with country stakeholders will emphasise that additional engagement does not imply endorsement by Gavi. Operational guidance for the SCM and the line management roles within the Country Programmes Unit will ensure the safeguarding of grant oversight functions.
- 8.3 Differentiation of the review process could also put the **consistency** of today's current model at risk. While shifting away from a 'one size fits all' approach, CEF process steps will maintain an adequate level of objective scrutiny to guide robust funding decisions by the CEO and Board. Essential information and reporting requirements across the portfolio will still apply.
- 8.4 There is a risk that as more stakeholders engage in dialogue-based processes, this could dampen the voice of governments, unintentionally undermine national ownership, or influence priority-setting in favor of various **institutional interests**. As called for in the HSIS Framework, these CEF process will leverage government-led management and coordination mechanisms where possible; and Gavi will work to improve the effectiveness of country coordination mechanisms (such as the Interagency Coordination Committees [ICCs] and Health Sector Coordination Committees [HSCCs]) that will also be required to discuss and endorse the final support request prior to Gavi approval.

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<sup>4</sup> This section should be read in conjunction with the risks specified in the HSIS Framework (Appendix 1 of June 2016 HSIS Report to the Board)

## 9. Financial implications

- 9.1 As of yet, the precise **financial implications** of CEF are unclear. For example, the in-country reviews, although happening only every three to five years, are likely to be more expensive than Geneva-based reviews. This may be balanced by decreased frequency of review by each country (what would have been four or five separate review processes will be considered in a single 2-4 day process). Reviews of shorter duration or supported remotely by fewer expert reviewers (determined sufficient on a risk differentiated basis) may also help off-set any increase associated with an in-country model.
- 9.2 More informed financial considerations will be brought forward to the Board for consideration with any final design proposal.

### **Annexes (available on myGavi)**

Annex A: CEF mapping of HSIS framework, country examples & learning agenda

Annex B: CEF process for Guinea