

SUBJECT: PARTNERS' ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Agenda item: 06

Category: For Information

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Section A: Overview

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the progress of the implementation of the Partners' Engagement Framework (PEF).

2. Background

- 2.1 The PEF is the new way of planning, funding, operationalising and monitoring technical assistance (TA) to countries, by leveraging the comparative strength of partners, both existing and new, as well as funding activities of core partners for setting global norms and standards in immunisation. The new PEF architecture was approved by the Board in 2015 and entails a significant evolution from the previous Business Plan model in 2011-2015.
- 2.2 The PEF has progressed from design to implementation in 2016. This has been a major paradigm shift, and Alliance partners, particularly WHO and UNICEF, are working closely with the Secretariat to realise the spirit of the PEF, marked by strong country focus, transparency and accountability.
- 2.3 So far in 2016, the Secretariat and Gavi partners have worked under the guidance of the PEF Management Team (MT) to finalise roles, resources and accountability across Gavi partners. Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed and include the set of activities that partners will perform under the three key components of the PEF: 1) Foundational Support, 2) Targeted Country Assistance (TCA), and 3) Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs).
- 2.4 Following the signing of MoUs, WHO, UNICEF, World Bank and the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have started to implement activities and initiated restructuring of processes/structures within their organisations to

meet demands of the new model. All partners¹ reported their mid-year progress as of July 2016 against the TCA and SFA milestones as well as the key PEF functions that were committed as part of the MoUs, signaling a major effort in terms of tracking progress, particularly at country level.

Section B: Content

3. Targeted Country Assistance (TCA): A positive beginning

- 3.1 In 2016, there has been a positive progress on each of the four key pillars of TCA: country focus, differentiation, transparency, and accountability.
- 3.2 **Country Focus:** Over 50% of PEF resources to partners are now committed for country-level support through TCA and include strengthening of partners' country-level capacities through dedicated staff with the explicit aim to transfer skills for sustained performance in countries.
 - (a) Annual Joint Appraisals (JA) in countries have started to take hold and are serving as a useful vehicle to bring together all Alliance partners and country stakeholders, and collectively identify country needs for TA, in conjunction with other kinds of Gavi support including HSS and transition planning, etc. Countries now have a full view of the quantum of Gavi funding dedicated to TA including partner-wise allocations and accountability metrics. They are also being made aware of the upcoming opportunities to evaluate the quality and relevance of TA and make informed choices.
 - (b) Countries reviewed the progress reported by WHO, UNICEF, and CDC, the largest TA providers at country level, for the first six months of the year on TCA milestones during recent JAs and at Inter-Agency Coordination Committees (ICCs) meetings.
 - (c) In order for WHO and UNICEF to report progress for the first cycle ending July 2016, several internal shifts were required, including the direct transfer of PEF funding to countries (without passing through regional offices), strengthened dialogue between global HQs and country offices, and the design of new mechanisms to ensure timely reporting of country-level progress. Notably, WHO's Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals (IVB) department has been restructured to respond to the evolving needs of the programme and to engage more on country-level delivery of immunisation, with a focus on the 20 PEF priority countries.
 - (d) Recruitment of country-level staff by UNICEF and WHO has begun. Pace is variable between the two key partners and between regions and countries. Overall UNICEF has made more rapid progress. WHO expects to have most staff on board by the end of the year.

¹ Except the World Bank which was not required to report mid-year due to delayed signing of its MoU.

- (e) The new model has also entailed a proactive role by Gavi Senior Country Managers (SCMs) in coordinating JAs, TA design, and reporting on milestones.

- 3.3 **Differentiation:** In line with Gavi's aspiration to improve equitable coverage and reduce the number of under-immunised children in 68 Gavi-supported countries by 4 million over the next five years, the Alliance has embraced the principle of differentiation based on scale and severity of immunisation-related challenges. **Tier 1 countries** prioritised under PEF account for 71% of the under-immunised children in 68 Gavi-eligible countries, whereas **Tier 2 countries**, which account for another 13% of under-immunised children, face deep challenges and inequities warranting special attention. In total, Tier 1 and 2 countries account for 12.5 million of 14.9 million under-immunised children. When finalising the design of activities, milestones and budget under the PEF, these countries have received concerted attention and dedicated resources above and beyond what is provided for other countries, including significant strengthening of staffing at partner country offices. These countries will remain high on the radar and benefit from close and continuing engagement and oversight by the Alliance.
- 3.4 **Transparency:** Joint appraisals have enabled unprecedented transparency with countries and all other stakeholders participating in the dialogue and obtaining full visibility on the rationale, structure, funding, milestones and expected outputs of TA. A web-based Partner Portal has been introduced and the first milestone reporting captured through it for period ending July 2016 has allowed all partners to view each other's reports besides giving complete visibility to country stakeholders as well as the Secretariat.
- 3.5 **Accountability:** The PEF TCA includes a strong performance management process which is a key pillar of the new Alliance Accountability Framework. This process is composed of (a) specific milestones that partners are committing to reach through the TA that they provide to countries; and (b) 'PEF functions,' a set of outcome indicators, that partners commit to support across all countries. This PEF performance management process is a critical pillar of the new Alliance Accountability Framework alongside with Secretariat and countries' performance management processes. Linkages are being made between each component of the framework, with the aim of building a complete picture of performance at country level based on the status of PEF functions, TCA milestones, and Country Performance Frameworks.

4. **Expanded Partners for Targeted Country Assistance: Progress so far**

- 4.1 Based on the needs identified at the country level, the Secretariat has started to contract a broader set of 'Expanded Partners' who provide hands-on support to countries to complement the TA provided by core partners. Example of recent contracts set up with Expanded Partners include:

- (a) **John Snow Inc.** in Guinea to build capacities of the newly recruited staff for routine EPI management; and enhancing capacity for vaccine supply chain;
- (b) **VillageReach** in Mozambique for supporting improvement of EPI management, and the national data system; and
- (c) **REPAOC** in Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger and Central African Republic for supporting Gavi CSO platforms and supporting their engagement in immunisation. This is in addition to **Catholic Relief Services** for support to CSO platforms in 21 countries to strengthen the platforms to be sustainable and able to take part in Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) implementation and immunisation delivery services.

4.2 Progress in this work with Expanded Partners has been somewhat slow as some of the TA is for new areas, e.g., Financial Management, and due diligence is necessary before bringing untested partners on board.

5. Update on Strategic Focus Area

5.1 Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs) are programmatic areas identified in the new 2016-2020 strategy that are critical to reach the objectives of sustainable coverage and equity and call for innovative approaches beyond standard HSIS programming approaches. The PEF includes specific investments in these areas at global and regional levels to ensure accelerated progress beyond business as usual. Work has already begun in the areas of: 1) Supply Chain, 2) Data, and 3) Sustainability (see Appendix A for more detail) and would further evolve in 2017.

6. Review by the PEF Management Team

6.1 The PEF MT met on 27-28 September to conduct an in-depth review of the first cycle reporting by partners on performance metrics on TCA; SFAs (data, supply chain and sustainability); and Foundational Support; and to make recommendations to the CEO on further disbursements (see Appendix A). Some of the key observations are as below:

- (a) PEF Functions metrics have served to align all Alliance partners to collectively focus on key program accelerators at the country level, which if not addressed may pose major programmatic risks in areas of: 1) country planning, management and monitoring; 2) supply chain and vaccine management; 3) data; 4) vaccine implementation; and 5) programmatic and financial sustainability.
- (b) TCA milestones are country-specific and help link TCA investments with tangible, time-bound activities, and though a good start, would need to remain dynamic, open to refinements and directly relate to country Performance Frameworks, most of which are in place now.

- (c) The PEF MT recognised the effort being made by partners to focus on country-level actions and systematic reporting, including challenges around aggregating information for all countries at the global level for PEF Functions (see Appendix B). It noted some impressive trends, e.g., reporting on vaccine stocks, yielding critical information to help adjust shipment of vaccine doses to obviate over/under-supply, and progress on multi-dose vial policies. It was decided to further refine the PEF Functions and indicators as well as introduce reporting, from country level upwards, along the lines of the TCA milestones for the next reporting cycle.
- (d) It was agreed that together the PEF Functions, TCA deliverables and Performance Frameworks would comprise the country-level accountability metrics and will be reviewed bottom-up, starting at country level and leveraging JAs for Alliance-wide discussion.
- (e) The PEF MT acknowledged the partners' support for the new model and the significant changes that are being operated in a short amount of time. The PEF MT also noted the delays in recruiting the new staff and in initiating activities in some countries. However, considering the short timeframe since the signing of MoUs, the PEF MT recommended to disburse part of the remaining 25% based on careful assessment of needs of each partner.
- (f) As next steps, the PEF MT also agreed to further brainstorm on how a performance based funding approach could be developed for the 2017 funding.

7. Next steps:

- 7.1 **2017 PEF process:** Based on lessons learned from the 2016 PEF process, this coming year will focus on further harmonisation of TA provided in each country. Partners will be submitting one joint proposal per country, as opposed to the proposal per partner that was received for 2016. Additionally, more attention will be paid to the milestones that will be defined for each programmatic area and will be extended to countries from all three Tiers. The focus will be more on linking TA with data driven understanding of needs and refining of milestones rather than the level of budget. Reporting will take place on a biannual basis – mid- and end-year – via the Partner Portal with full visibility on what all partners have achieved in each country, including Expanded Partners.
- 7.2 **TA evaluation:** The Steering Committee of the TA evaluation approved the inception report in August 2016. Deloitte is currently working on the core phase of this independent prospective evaluation (2016-2020) that aims to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the TA provided through the PEF in Tier 1 and Tier 2 countries. Stakeholders at the country, partner and Secretariat levels will be asked to participate in the first 360° online survey as well as interviews in December 2016. From 2017 onwards, 360° surveys would be semi-annual, aligned to each cycle of reporting. This

evaluation is a key part of the Gavi learning agenda and will help to closely monitor the implementation of TCA at the country level and to be prepared to course-correct and learn wherever necessary. Preliminary results will be shared on a timely basis with relevant groups, including the PEF MT.

7.3 PEF has come a long way. Further progress would depend on:

- (a) Countries taking advantage of the additional leadership opportunities that PEF presents; and
- (b) The Alliance continuing to move away from institutional positions towards a shared approach.

Appendices (available on myGavi):

Appendix A: PEF Management Team pre-read material

Appendix B: List of PEF Functions