

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF FRAGILITY, EMERGENCIES, REFUGEES
POLICY

Agenda item: 07

Category: For Decision

Section A: Executive Summary

Gavi's Fragility, Emergencies, Refugees (FER) Policy, approved in 2017, provides programmatic flexibilities and higher funding to cater for the unique challenges that a growing number of countries in Gavi's portfolio are facing. This includes protracted conflict, exacerbated impact of climate change, health emergencies, and large influx of refugees.

Informed by an external evaluation and extensive consultations, the policy has been revised to align with the goals of Gavi 5.0, focusing on sustainably reaching zero-dose and under-immunised children. This paper presents the updated Fragility, Emergencies and Displaced Populations (FED) Policy for the Board's approval, highlighting the key changes in the revised policy.

While the external evaluation found the current policy was largely relevant, the revised FED policy addresses the policy issues identified in the evaluation. In particular, the revised policy has adapted the methodology to identify the list of countries experiencing chronic fragility and highlighted a long-term bespoke approach, using all Gavi's funding, programmes, and processes, to maintain and strengthen immunisation coverage in these countries. Gavi's role and ambition in acute emergencies is better articulated and support has been expanded from refugees to ensure provision of immunisation for displaced populations. As a result, the name of the policy is now changed to Fragility, Emergencies and Displaced Populations Policy.

At its meeting in May 2022, the Programme and Policy Committee (PPC) reviewed the proposed new policy, highlighting it provides better clarity, addresses issues that were previously missing, and strengthens the ability to be responsive in volatile contexts. The PPC commended the consultative process followed to review the policy, particularly the external, independent evaluation and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

With 40% of zero dose children concentrated in fragile settings, the FED policy is one part of Gavi's broader organisational response to cater for the unique challenges brought about by fragility and conflict. Operationally, a dedicated team focusing on fragile and conflict-affected countries has been created, with increased prioritisation, higher risk appetite and differentiated engagement. Efforts are also underway to cement partnerships with key humanitarian, civil society, and local actors, enabling integrated delivery of services to the most vulnerable populations.

Following approval of the policy, the Secretariat will develop detailed operational guidelines, working with country stakeholders, Alliance, and expanded partners.

Section B: Revised Fragility, Emergencies, Displaced Populations (FED) Policy

1. Policy review process

- 1.1 The purpose of Gavi's current Fragility, Emergencies, Refugees (FER) Policy is to increase the effectiveness of Gavi support in countries facing fragility challenges, emergencies, or hosting refugees. The FER policy provides flexibilities in certain Board-approved policies and processes. The current FER policy has been in place since 2017 and has undergone a review to align with the goals of Gavi 5.0 and reflect the operational realities.
- 1.2 The review process commenced with an external evaluation to assess the policy design, implementation, and outcomes. The review was guided by three key policy problem statements¹ agreed by the PPC in October 2021. Operational elements highlighted through the evaluation have been addressed alongside the policy review process, through other Gavi 5.0 operationalisation workstreams (Appendix 2).
- 1.3 Analysis and options were developed to address these policy problem statements. Internal and external consultations highlighted the risks and implications of different options. Consultations involved convening internal and Alliance-wide coordinating groups, discussions with country stakeholders, expert interviews with donors and partners (including humanitarian actors and CSOs) and a public consultation on the draft policy.

2. Key changes to the FED policy

- 2.1 Gavi 5.0 places an emphasis on leaving no one behind, with a critical focus on reaching zero-dose and under-immunised children. Conflict, insecurity, and fragility are major factors that affect zero-dose children's access to immunisation and health services, requiring targeted approaches.
- 2.2 As such, the revised FED Policy is one part of Gavi's broader effort and response in fragile and conflict-affected settings (Appendix 2). Through operationalising Gavi 5.0, a new tailored approach for countries identified as eligible through this policy is integrated into Gavi's programmatic focus, policies, and processes. A new team dedicated to supporting countries facing fragility and conflict has been established. Tailored country strategies are being developed, and there is a drive to build partnerships with humanitarian, civil society, and local actors.
- 2.3 The revised FED Policy has reflected these broader organisational shifts. A **rationale** has been added that places a stronger focus on equity including

¹ 1. Gavi's definition of fragility is misaligned with programmatic and operational realities, 2. Lack of agile responses and clear funding source in acute emergencies, 3. Challenges with fragility and/or vulnerable populations in former and never Gavi-eligible Middle-Income countries (MICs)

reaching zero-dose and under-immunised children with the full course of vaccines. **Principles** have been revised that prioritise timeliness of response, differentiation of engagement based on country contexts, and integration of immunisation with other essential services.

- 2.4 The revised FED policy distinguishes between three settings, chronic fragility, acute emergencies, and displaced populations. The **scope** has been broadened from refugees to a focus on displaced populations hosted in or moving to Gavi-supported countries. These population groups are key to realise the priorities of Gavi's zero dose agenda, with data showing that migrants, particularly those in vulnerable situations, are 50% less likely to be vaccinated than non-migrants². The revised policy will bring increased advocacy and attention to vulnerable populations, pushing governments to systematically include displaced populations in national planning. The PPC specifically welcomed widening the scope to displaced populations, noting the importance of working with relevant partners to reach these populations.
- 2.5 New **partnerships** based on each actor's comparative advantage is a critical pillar of the FED policy. The revised policy calls for active participation and increased accountability of key Alliance and expanded partners³. Partners' role in integrated service delivery is particularly important, predominantly where Gavi's model of engagement with National Governments is not suitable, and partners are needed to channel vaccines or Health Systems and Immunisation Strengthening support (HSIS)⁴ to systematically unreached and vulnerable populations.

Chronic Fragility: Revised methodology and approach

- 2.6 The **methodology** to classify countries experiencing chronic fragility has been modified to better reflect the relationship between fragility and the strength of a country's immunisation programme. The revised methodology is based on three inclusion criteria as seen in Figure 1 (Appendix 3 provides details on methodology). Countries that fulfil five out of six of the indicators across the first two inclusion criteria will be classified as fragile. A third inclusion criteria has been added to account for contextual factors that quantitative data might not capture, given data challenges and weak surveillance systems in fragile settings.
- 2.7 The list of countries classified as fragile will no longer be updated on an annual basis. Countries will remain classified for the strategic period to ensure greater continuity and predictability. The Secretariat will regularly monitor the evolving situation, ensuring any additional countries requiring differentiated support given their chronic fragility challenges are added to

² Rojas Venegas, Cano Ibanes, N. Khan 2022 Vaccination Coverage among migrants: A systematic review of meta-analyses

³ The policy defines expanded partners as UN, global health, non-government, civil society, community based and faith-based organisations, which are not part of the Vaccine Alliance.

⁴ This includes HSS (Health Systems Strengthening), EAF (Equity Accelerator Funding), Cold chain, & operational cost support for campaigns to reach vulnerable populations where governments are not willing or able to.

the fragility list. Countries classified as fragile as per the above classification will constitute countries in the Fragile and Conflict Segment⁵.

2.8 The PPC was supportive of the revised classification for Gavi eligible countries, particularly longer-term engagement, and increased flexibility in the methodology to cater for data challenges.

Figure 1: Gavi’s revised classification to measure chronic fragility

Inclusion Criteria	Indicators	Status quo	Classification under revised policy
1. Is the country globally recognised as experiencing fragility?	Quantitative 1. Fund for Peace Fragile States Index 2. OECD states of fragility 3. World Bank list of fragile & conflict-affected situations 4. Presence Humanitarian Response Plan		
2. Is the country facing immunisation programme performance challenges	Quantitative 5. Immunisation reach: DTP3 < average coverage across Gavi portfolio 6. Risk of outbreaks: 3 year trend in large disruptive VPD outbreaks		
3. Does the country face other contextual factors that limit progress: • governance • health system • resilience to global challenges	Qualitative • Analysis by alliance partners, country staff, SCMs • Recent reports/publications • Political situation		

No annual updating of list

2.9 Based on the needs and challenges faced in a country experiencing chronic fragility, the revised FED policy aims to enable adaptive and responsive support. This includes enhancing the responsiveness of programmes and reducing any additional administrative burden in Gavi’s processes.

2.10 The PPC questioned how the Secretariat will respond to countries that sit outside the fragility classification **facing subnational challenges**. Gavi 5.0 has placed subnational inequity at the heart of its strategy, and therefore various levers are available to support countries. The Equity Accelerator Funding (EAF) for example, provides dedicated funding to identify and reach zero-dose children found predominantly in three key subnational settings: fragile and conflict, remote rural, and urban areas. Further, as part of the EAF, the new multi-country approach with World Vision and the International Rescue Committee in the Sahel and Horn of Africa targets twelve countries that are at the epicentre of conflict, facing displacement across borders, chronic underdevelopment, and poverty. In addition, the creation of the High Impact Segment has provided additional technical and financial support to countries with large subnational challenges such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Pakistan, and Democratic Republic of the Congo. For countries with pockets of fragility in the Core Segment, such as Mozambique and Burkina Faso, the Secretariat will closely monitor the evolving situation, staying flexible to any changes needed in the fragility list.

⁵ Any new country classified as facing chronic fragility from the core segment will benefit from all support in the fragile and conflict segment.

Acute Emergencies: Clarified role and processes

- 2.11 The revised FED policy clarifies **Gavi's role in acute emergencies** (Appendix 4). Gavi's unique comparative advantage in pandemic preparedness, including strengthening country health systems to increase the efficiency of routine immunisation programmes and reach missed communities, is vital in averting outbreaks. However, immunisation is an essential service that must be continued in emergencies, along with other lifesaving interventions.
- 2.12 Therefore, immediately following an emergency, Gavi funded stockpiles for Cholera, Yellow fever, Meningococcal, Measles and Ebola prevents the spread of an outbreak. During an emergency, dedicated support enables the continuity of routine immunisation services. In the aftermath of an emergency, recovery efforts aim to not only restore but strengthen routine immunisation services and catch up missed children. The revised FED policy will continue to play a vital role in strengthening Gavi's Pandemic Preparedness toolkit, set out in more detail in Doc 06.
- 2.13 Responding to emergencies requires flexible and agile policies and processes to deliver assistance within days. Gavi's response to DRC Ebola outbreak in 2018 and COVID-19 vaccine Delivery Support (CDS) contain important lessons on how the model can be flexible in periods of emergency, including when the Board waives certain requirements. Based on these learning, the Secretariat is developing a **revised operational approach** to enable Gavi to better respond in acute emergencies where timeliness is key.
- 2.14 This approach is grounded in better defining and operationalising Gavi's risk appetite, including continuous monitoring of country risks, establishing minimum preparedness actions to be ready when an emergency occurs, identifying triggers to declare the level of emergency for Gavi and assigning greater accountability within the Secretariat to ensure CEO/DCEO approval is fast tracked, and disbursement is quick.
- 2.15 An **Emergency Declaration Team**⁶ will be set up following the approval of the revised policy, to declare the level of an emergency for Gavi based on the severity of threat posed to routine immunisation. This will determine the speed of response. A process has also been laid out for internal consultations and agreement to consider waiving the requirement of independent review of applications. These waivers would be reported to the PPC and to the Audit and Finance Committee (AFC).
- 2.16 PPC members were supportive of the steps being taken to ensure timely, agile, and fast track approvals and disbursements in emergencies. PPC members recommended to incorporate learnings from the COVAX Humanitarian Buffer in the operationalisation of the policy, drawing on why it had a limited uptake and what can be done better. The PPC recommended

⁶ The Emergency Declaration team will compose of Managing Director, Country Programmes and Managing Director, Finance & Operations, advised by the Head of Risk and Director of Fragile and Conflict Countries

to ensure alignment with organisations such as WHO and OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) in the declaration of emergencies, and the Secretariat will continue to work closely with these organisations during emergencies⁷

3. Financial implication of the revised FED policy

- 3.1 Learnings from the policy review have shown challenges are not in access to additional finances, rather better use of existing finances. The first point of call for requests under the FED policy is reprogramming existing funds. There is thus no additional financial implication of the revised FED policy.
- 3.2 Where necessary, additional vaccines, HSIS Support and PEF TCA (Partners' Engagement Framework Targeted Country Assistance) will be provided from existing Board approved envelopes with no increase in the overall forecast expenditure. The Secretariat will regularly review implementation of the FED Policy and seek further guidance from the PPC and AFC if delivery of programmatic objectives requires additional funding.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 Following the Board approval of the policy, the Secretariat will update its operational guidelines, standard operating procedures, templates, and approaches to improve Gavi's ability to respond effectively and in a timely manner to chronic fragility, acute emergencies, and displaced populations. Internal, Alliance and expanded partners will be consulted in the development of the operational guidelines to ensure they are fit for purpose.
- 4.2 Regular monitoring of the flexibilities extended and timelines for disbursement will be conducted to analyse Gavi's response, surface additional bottlenecks and continuously improve (ToC (Theory of Change) and monitoring framework in Appendix 1).
- 4.3 Any flexibilities or waivers to co-financing requirements relating to this policy will be presented as part of the revised Co-financing Policy.

Section C: Actions requested of the Board

The Gavi Alliance Programme and Policy Committee **recommends** to the Gavi Alliance Board that it:

- a) **Approve** the revised Fragility, Emergencies and Displaced Populations Policy attached in Annex A to Doc 07;
- b) **Grant** the Gavi Secretariat Emergency Declaration Team⁸ the authority to waive the requirement for independent review for new funding as per the

⁷ Any trigger to convene the Emergency Declaration Team will align with existing emergency declaration grading mechanisms that are used by WHO and the UN Global Health cluster

⁸ The Emergency Declaration Team is composed of MD Finance & Operations and MD Country Programmes, however in decisions requiring waiving independent review, the Director of Strategy, Funding & Performance will also be part of the decision making, given their role as second line of defence for Gavi's review process.

Programme Funding Policy. This will be only in time-sensitive situations, with the objective to swiftly disburse funding in acute emergencies on a no regrets basis, noting that the framework including guardrails under which the Emergency Declaration Team can waive the requirements for independent review will be defined by the Secretariat in the operational guidelines, along with requirements for retrospective reporting to governance bodies including the Programme and Policy Committee and the Audit and Finance Committee.

Annexes:

Annex A: Revised Fragility, Emergencies, Displaced Populations Policy

Additional information available on BoardEffect from PPC May 2022

Appendix 1: Theory of Change and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Appendix 2: Organisational Changes from Gavi 5.0 for fragile and conflict countries

Appendix 3: Chronic fragility classification methodology and scenario analysis for Gavi eligible countries

Appendix 4: Gavi's role in acute emergencies, and case studies