

# 2016 Full Country Evaluations – Alliance Management Response

## **What is the Full Country Evaluations (FCE)?**

Gavi has been recognised as a learning organisation and as part of the learning agenda since 2013, the Full Country Evaluations (FCE) have been one of the innovative ways it has been implementing this agenda. The FCE as a prospective evaluation, has allowed for continuous learning and offered a unique opportunity to better understand programme implementation and operational challenges as well as building evidence to achieve sustainable vaccine coverage and equity.

The aims of the FCE are to understand and quantify the barriers to and drivers of immunization program improvement, with emphasis on the contribution of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance in four countries: Bangladesh, Mozambique, Uganda, and Zambia. The final 2016 FCE reports and briefs are available at Gavi website:

<http://www.gavi.org/results/evaluations/full-country-evaluations/>

## **What is the FCE Alliance management response?**

This Alliance response is developed by Gavi Secretariat together with the Alliance Partners to provide contextual information on ongoing efforts and future actions identified to address the key cross-cutting findings and recommendations arising from the 2016 cross-cutting FCE report. While the recommendations were made based on observations in Bangladesh, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia, the Alliance management response is developed with an aim to improve our policies and processes which have relevance for all Gavi-supported countries.

Country-specific findings are disseminated and discussed separately with in-country partners and country-specific actions will be led by in-country stakeholders and are not included as part of this Alliance management response.

## **What is the process to prepare the Alliance management response?**

Relevant Gavi Secretariat teams and Alliance Partners were approached to;

- i. Respond to recommendations providing rationale for accepts/partially accepts or rejects the recommendation
- ii. Identify the actions to be taken;
- iii. Identify the team lead and timeframe for the implementation of the actions

Stream	Summary of main findings	Summary of recommendations	Alliance Response on Recommendations <sup>1</sup> Accepts/partially accepts/rejects	Key Actions <sup>2</sup>	Gavi Team Lead / Partner Agency <sup>3</sup>	Timing (MM/YY) <sup>4</sup>
New Vaccine Introductions	The underlying root causes for the variable success in routinization of new vaccines have <b>emphasised the importance of post-introduction monitoring and evaluation.</b>	<p><b>Gavi Secretariat, Partners and Country governments:</b></p> <p>1. Should enhance <b>post-PIE monitoring and evaluation of new vaccines</b>, particularly if routinization at the time of the PIE is noted to be suboptimal. This could include activities such as leveraging existing performance frameworks <b>and the JA process with explicit linkages to Targeted Country Assistance (TCA) as a mechanism for investigating and identifying solutions.</b></p>	<p><b>Partially accepts the recommendation.</b> PIE is already part of the M&amp;E framework for GAVI (a reporting requirement in the Guideline for Reporting and Renewals). The current status is <b>recommended</b> for most vaccines (and <b>mandatory</b> only for HPV demo/programme). It should be reported by the country through the country portal.</p>	<p>Whenever available ensure the analysis is included in the JA preparatory documents and presentations, including reporting on implementation of PIE recommendations with funds allocated through the grants. Include milestones on implementation of PIE recommendations in PEF TCA proposal from partners</p>	Monitoring, Data Systems & Strategic Information (MDS) / Country Support (CS) / Vaccine Implementation (VI)	Start 4 weeks in advance of JA.
		<p>2. <b>Strengthen the data-use culture and capacity</b> in EPI programs is needed to make enhanced monitoring and evaluation of new vaccines sustainable</p>	<p><b>Accepts the recommendation.</b> However, the challenge is on how to build capacity for data demand and use.</p>	<p>Gavi is always engaging with country and partners with this objective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and documents with recommended data analysis for EPI programmes.</li> <li>• Include TA for activities related to data use</li> </ul>	Monitoring, Data Systems & Strategic Information (MDS)	

<sup>1</sup> The **Alliance Response** should clearly indicate whether Management accepts, partially accepts or rejects the recommendations. Where relevant, include contextual information for recommendations that are *accepts/partially accepts*. If the recommendation is rejected, the **reason(s) for the rejection should be provided**.

<sup>2</sup> If management accepts the recommendation, **actions to be taken** should be mentioned in detail. This is the list of actions that the responsible team leads commit to take in a fixed amount of time and may include a narrative component. To support tracking of implementation of actions, propose to include tools to monitor the implementation e.g. JA, PEF MT, PPC, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Should indicate the responsible team lead; When more than one Secretariat team/partner is mentioned, **it should be clear which who is responsible for which action(s)**.

<sup>4</sup> Expected completion of implementation of action; there is flexibility in terms of changing actions that have been agreed upon in order to ensure relevance within a changing context

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				(dashboard/supervision/desk reviews/feedback included in micro-plans/workshops), and also to increase data demand (operational research, links with academic institutions).		
<b>Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine</b>	The <b>root causes for delay</b> in introduction were related to <b>concerns about financial feasibility and limited ownership</b> by the EPI program.	<b>Gavi Secretariat, Alliance partners:</b> Should provide clear guidance coupled with <b>strong TA to facilitate implementation of phased introductions</b> . This should include aspects ranging from introduction planning, monitoring and evaluation, and systematic processes for capturing learnings from phased introductions as well as from other countries.	<b>Accepts the recommendation. Reinforced TA (core and expanded partners)</b> in critical areas for successful implementation has been offered to countries. The areas of technical assistance identified are: 1. Decision making, 2. Application to Gavi, 3. Planning and preparation (micro-planning, training etc.), 4. Social mobilisation. 5. Vaccine delivery, monitoring and supervision and 6. Evaluation Countries validated the technical partners and the areas of TA needed for HPV. New expanded in-country TA partners (JSI, CHAI & JHPIEGO) on boarded to the HPV programme to ensure continuous technical support to countries.	Regional level workshops will be organised to provide capacity building, especially for micro-planning and social mobilisation.	Vaccine Implementation (VI) - Adolescent Platform	June 2018

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Health System Strengthening	The many complexities associated with implementation of HSS grants undermine its potential at all phases of the grant life cycle. These challenges diminish the predictability of Gavi HSS funds and, in some cases, the relevance of the design of the grant.	<p><b>Gavi Secretariat</b></p> <p>1. Ensure that HSS decision letters include <b>next steps, timing of those next steps, and responsibilities of various actors</b>, as well as the <b>PCA process and any conditions</b>. Decision letters should be made available in a <b>timely and accessible manner</b> by putting them on the <b>country portals</b> and Gavi website so that all relevant stakeholders have access.</p>	<p><b>Accepts the recommendations</b></p> <p>However, the key challenge remains the weak capacity of countries to lead the CEF process. Conflicting agenda also impacts country's ownership to the CEF process. SCMs are now responsible for fewer countries, and are supported by other technical members of the country team.</p>			
		<p>2. Ensure that SCMs, and other relevant teams and partners, have the appropriate technical capabilities, contextual knowledge, resources, and support they need to implement the CEF, as they will be required to increase their level and complexity of engagement as compared to their current role.</p>	<p><b>Accepts the recommendation</b></p> <p>Programming guidance and CEF process guidance has been developed and is being continuously improved to strengthen the CEF implementation. In addition PEF TCA process is improved and needed support at country level for the CEF process and requirements is being provided through partners.</p>			
		<p>3. Should <b>further invest in concrete and user-friendly tools and processes that support evidence-informed assessments of immunization bottlenecks</b>.</p>	<p>Programming guidance has been developed to guide countries and the use of the programming guidance during the CEF process should lead to evidence informed assessments and investments to address immunisation bottlenecks.</p>			

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Leadership and management	<p>The most actionable short-term root cause to suboptimal program management was the cumulative burden of Gavi and other partners' processes and requirements. The combined effect of those processes constrained EPI programs' ability to stay on top of day-to-day program needs.</p>	<p><b>Gavi Secretariat, and Partners</b> Should <b>coordinate and align their country missions</b> to avoid burdening EPI programs and in-country partners. The Secretariat should <b>explore potential synergies between JA, PCA, audit, and other similar processes.</b></p>	<p><b>Accepts the recommendation</b> Noting that Audits, PCAs and JAs are now better aligned through the CEF framework. Root cause for suboptimal programme management – as assessed from the Joint Appraisals, other partner assessments and the PCA is the lack of/inadequate capacity and political economy issues at country level including over attendance of Programme Staff at training events/workshops leading to poor day to day management. In this regard, HSS programmes have languished over the years with poor absorption rates, poor compliance of annual financial management &amp; audit requirements and high risk. Having said that,  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audits, PCAs and JAs are aligned through the CEF framework indicating clearly the timing of each intervention. The PCA scoping is also being shaped by findings from other reviews such as JA and audits in order to leverage that knowledge and minimise duplication.</li> </ul> </p>			

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of the efforts being made to coordinate and align Gavi missions, there are plans to integrate Monitoring Reviews by the second line of defence into Joint Appraisals.</li> <li>SCMs also ensure there is a good planning discussed jointly with the country and partners. Alignment with country's planning and processes is also taken into account.</li> </ul>	The Secretariat is developing a protocol on Monitoring Reviews and their integration into Joint Appraisals.	Programme Capacity Assessment (PCA)	09/2017
	Implementation of the PCA in Uganda and Zambia, suggested that it was a <b>top-down approach that was perceived by country stakeholders to contribute to delays</b> , particularly in obtaining funds from Gavi for HSS implementation.	<p><b>Gavi Secretariat</b></p> <p>1. Should <b>improve the country ownership of PCA recommendations</b>. This could be facilitated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selecting PCA consultants that are familiar with both country and Gavi contexts so recommendations are contextually appropriate;</li> <li>Using the PCA debrief (and/or other discussion venues such as the JA) as an opportunity to present PCA findings and to jointly develop recommendations with country stakeholders; and</li> </ul>	<p><b>Accepts the recommendation</b></p> <p>Noting that the Country is always consulted prior to finalisation of the PCA recommendations, to take account of feasibility, ownership and fiduciary responsibility; and that relevant experience has always been a requirement in selecting PCA contractors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contractor selection is mainly based on their understanding of Gavi context and country specifics. The contractors currently being used for PCAs have prior PCA or similar experience and experience working in the specific countries for either Gavi and/or other donors.</li> </ul>			

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing the PCA report with country stakeholders in a timely manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the end of every PCA in-country visit, an exit meeting is held to validate key findings which is an opportunity for the PCA team and the country to explore feasible and optimal actions to address the findings. In addition, prior to agreeing the Grant Management Requirements, a dialogue process is undertaken with the country both through Video Conference and on site.</li> <li>PCA reports are shared with the country &amp; other stakeholders as a complement to the Grant Management Requirements. The PCA reports are not shared publicly as they might contain potentially sensitive information.</li> </ul>			
		<p>2. Should ensure that the timing and design of the PCA is aligned with other Gavi activities in country so the PCA findings can inform HSIS proposals, JA discussions, and PEF-TCA requests.</p>	<p><b>Accepts the recommendation</b> Noting that the design of the PCA for each country is always informed by prior assessments available to Gavi. The planning of PCAs is aligned with key Gavi processes, particularly the Country</p>	<p>Going forward, the PCA planning will be better aligned with the CEF, other Gavi processes(e.g. Programme Audits and others) and also countries processes</p>		

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			Engagement Framework (CEF) process to ensure that identified capacity gaps are factored into the design of programmes and technical assistance requests. In this regard all PCAs have been planned and prioritised over a three year period.			
Technical assistance	Some phases of the PEF process, particularly the PEF Management Team prioritization and funding of TCA activities, suffer from limited country ownership and transparency.	<b>Gavi Secretariat</b> 1. Should <b>use the theory of change developed for the ongoing Gavi TA to guide a discussion during the JA</b> on the intended outputs, outcomes, and impacts of TA, including TA funded through the PEF-TCA.	Technical Assistance needs are being discussed with country stakeholders and partners during JA. The TCA proposal is discussed at the ICC and signed off by an authority from the Ministry of Health.	A periodic review of country level performance of TCA would be facilitated by the SCM in addition to JA discussions	Country Support (CS) & Partners' Engagement Framework (PEF)	
		2. Should <b>require TCA providers to outline their explicit approach to capacity building and skills transfer</b> , define how to measure progress in capacity building, and <b>hold TA providers accountable for capacity building by having them report on these measures/indicators.</b>	<b>Accepts the recommendation</b>	Responding to the Deloitte Baseline assessment of TCA, traditional partners will highlight their approach to capacity building.  Ensure better alignment between JA recommendations, PEF TCA proposal and Grant performance Framework	Partners' Engagement Framework (PEF) & Country Support (CS)	Q1 2018
		3. Should <b>provide country stakeholders with a menu of TA approaches and systematically compiled map of TA providers.</b>	<b>Accepts the recommendation</b> This recommendation is addressed in the 2017-2018 TCA guidance and though the JA preparation	N/A	N/A	N/A



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			documents shared with SCM in advance of JA.			
Programmatic and financial sustainability	Decisions to apply for Gavi support are <b>not always undertaken with a full assessment of the implications on financial sustainability</b> . In 2016, observed that Gavi FCE countries had <b>challenges in meeting co-financing requirements</b> , as well as <b>concerns regarding the overall fiscal health</b> of immunization programs.	<b>Gavi Secretariat, Partners and Country governments:</b> 1. Should <b>ensure more scrutiny of financial sustainability considerations in decision-making, particularly in Phase I (preparatory) transition countries</b> . Further checks and balances can be established as part of existing entities, e.g., NITAG and ICC.	As part of the 2015 review of Gavi's transition policies, the Board recognized the importance of engaging countries on discussions around the sustainability of Gavi's investments from an early stage.	Relevant templates, forms and guidance (e.g., CEF guidance, Joint Appraisal templates) have been or are currently being updated to better capture financing-related aspects regarding the decision-making process for new vaccine introductions Ensure more technical support for implementation of functional NITAGs		
		<b>Gavi Secretariat,</b> 2. Should <b>expand its fragile state policy</b> by considering the application of the country-tailored approach and/or other emergency flexibilities to countries experiencing severe macroeconomic crises (e.g., Mozambique).	This recommendation is addressed by the June 2017 Board approved Fragility, Emergencies and Refugees policy <b>Fragility-</b> Policy identifies countries facing fragility based on three international classifications of fragility- Fund for Peace Fragile States Index, OECD States of Fragility, and the World Bank harmonised list of fragile situations. These lists take into account economic challenges a country faces – as well as political, environmental and social	N/A	N/A	N/A

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			<p>instability, as well as public sector management and social inclusion.</p> <p><b>Emergency:</b> Due to the dynamic nature of Emergencies, the policy has a broad definition which also includes macroeconomic crisis. Flexibilities are decided in consultation with Alliance partners and Country Governments on a needs based basis</p>			
	<p>Noted <b>short-term consequences of the increased reliance of funds flow through non-governmental systems on country ownership</b> and flag potential consequences for long-term programmatic and financial sustainability should this trend continue.</p>	<p><b>Gavi Secretariat</b> Should <b>formally assess whether it is actually more efficient in the short term to channel funds through partners versus government systems, and the long-term consequences of this trend on country ownership and sustainability.</b></p>	<p>Gavi's intent and preference is to use country systems wherever possible. The decision to channel funds through Alliance Partners is mainly due to concerns of misuse of Gavi funds and/ or weak country fiduciary systems. In such instances, Gavi will only disburse funds to government systems after any misused funds are reimbursed in full and financial systems are strengthened as outlined in Grant Management Requirements developed after PCAs. Suitability of country financial systems is assessed through the PCA process.</p> <p>Gavi has in the case of Bangladesh, allowed for a bifurcated proposal on request from the country, with one portion starting earlier by</p>	<p>The Secretariat will continue to incorporate capacity building and transition plans in those countries where funds are disbursed through Alliance Partners with an aim to eventually channel funds through government systems.</p>		

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			going through UNICEF and WHO, and a second portion going to the SWAp once that is ready.  In general, as per Gavi board decision Gavi follows the recommendations of country based risk assessments and this does sometime determine the fund flowing through Alliance partners.			
	There is <b>limited evidence that countries are planning or preparing for entering into the accelerated transition phase and limited guidance from Gavi on what countries should be doing in the pre-transition phase</b> to ensure a smooth transition.	<b>Gavi Secretariat, Partners and Country governments:</b> 1. Should <b>undertake earlier dialogue, including clearer guidance and processes for Phase I transition countries that could be implemented as part of the CEF.</b>	Accepts the recommendation. Earlier engagement with countries is key.	Transition assessments are being done earlier before the country enters into the transition period to identify key bottlenecks for a successful transition and provide necessary support. Multiyear projections for co-financing requirements are also shared with countries on a yearly basis for planning /budgeting purpose as well as for advocacy.		
<b>Alliance processes and requirements</b>	Gavi changes are numerous and frequent. The Secretariat and partners must be aware of how these	<b>Gavi Secretariat</b> 1. Should continue to <b>include country participation</b> in Gavi-/global-/regional-level policy development and design processes.	<b>Accepts the recommendation</b> Country consultations are a key step in the policy development process and Gavi will continue to include country participation.			

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	changes appear at the country level.	2. Should <b>slow changes to policies and guidelines</b> and ensure new policies/guidelines are monitored and evaluated so that Gavi and countries can learn from one year to the next.	Policies are reviewed at the request of the Gavi Alliance Board usually every 4-5 years. Changes may be made in response to lessons learned or new priorities. Feasibility and simplicity are important principles considered in every policy review.	The Secretariat will continue to carefully balance these principles with the need for and urgency of changes in policies and guidelines. The Secretariat will also continue efforts to strengthen communication of policy changes and the approach to monitoring the implementation of policies, starting with the monitoring of flexibilities under the new Policy on Fragility, Emergencies and Refugees		