



## **Terms of Reference for the Independent Review Committee**

### **1. Purpose**

1.1 Under the GAVI Alliance By-Laws, the Independent Review Committee (IRC) is an independent, impartial group of experts that serves to guarantee the integrity and consistency of an open and transparent funding process.

### **2. Composition**

2.1 Selection of IRC members shall be conducted in an open and transparent manner and based on publicly available criteria and they will be appointed in accordance with the GAVI Alliance By-Laws.

2.2 The IRC membership shall:

- a) be representative of a wide range of expertise relevant to GAVI-supported programmes, including in the following areas: routine immunisation programmes, especially at country level, management of campaigns, delivery of health services including child and adolescent health, health systems strengthening and management, epidemiology and disease control, cold chain and logistics, financial and budget analysis, and gender and equity;
- b) consist of technical experts knowledgeable on the developing country context and relevant issues, including in a variety of fields related to immunization and health systems, and who have practical experience working in or with developing country governments, civil society, and other partners in those contexts.
- c) be geographically diverse, with a male and female representation consistent with GAVI's Gender Policy and Guidelines on the GAVI Alliance Board Gender Balance.

2.3 IRC members shall be appointed for a term of up to 3 years. This term may be renewed for another period of up to 3 years. Upon reaching the second term limit IRC members will not be eligible to serve on the IRC for at least 1 year. During their term IRC members may be called upon to serve on the IRC for review of country plans or requests for extensions for which he or she has specific relevant skills. IRC members shall receive an honorarium and reasonable costs for their participation in each IRC session shall be in accordance with GAVI's policies.

### **3. Duties and responsibilities**

3.1 The IRC advises the GAVI Alliance Board on whether to fund country plans and programmes – both for new vaccine support and health systems strengthening support.

3.2 The IRC will review new country plans and requests for extensions of existing programmes in accordance with policies adopted by the GAVI Alliance Board. The aim of the IRC review is to make a recommendation as to whether a country plan will likely achieve (i.e. on a balance of probabilities) the proposed results and contribute to GAVI achieving its mission and strategy, taking into account the justification of the introduction decision, soundness of approach, country readiness, feasibility of plans, system strengthening and sustainability, economic and financial considerations and public health benefit of the investment in line with GAVI mission.

3.3 IRC members are responsible for upholding the integrity and independence of the IRC. IRC members are required to disclose any affiliations, current consultancy contracts, connections or links that may affect their independence in assessing country plans or proposals. While in-depth knowledge of a country is considered an asset there are circumstances where it may be perceived to affect a member's independence.

3.4 Specifically, IRC members will:

- a) not be employees of Alliance partner agencies;
- b) not review country plans from GAVI eligible countries of which they are a national, have significant links with (e.g. residency for a considerable period) or where they have recently done or are engaged to do significant work that relates to the type of programmes GAVI supports; and
- c) not have taken part in any preparation processes.

3.5 In an annual declaration of interest form IRC members will be requested to declare any facts relevant in the context of the requirements in Sections 3.3 and

3.6 At each meeting the Chair will request the IRC members to declare whether they have any additional conflicts of interests in addition to their standing declarations of interest. The Chair shall determine, in consultation with the Secretariat and the affected member, whether, and if so, to what extent, a member with a conflict of interest shall be able to attend or participate in the specific sessions discussing the relevant countries.

3.7 IRC members are covered by the requirements of the GAVI Alliance Conflicts of Interest and Ethics Policies and are required to submit annual confidentiality and declaration of interest statements.

## Chair and Vice-Chair

3.8 In concurrence with the PPC Chair, the Chief Executive Officer shall designate an IRC Chair for a period that is normally not more than two consecutive years.

3.9 In concurrence with the PPC Chair, the Chief Executive Officer shall also designate an IRC Vice-Chair for a period that is normally not more than two consecutive years ensuring that the Vice Chair term does not end in the same year as the term of the IRC Chair.

3.10 The Chair of the IRC, and in his or her absence the Vice-Chair, shall be responsible for:

- a) Leading the plenary session discussions on country plans and extension requests submitted by countries and reviewed by IRC members.
- b) Facilitating consensus among different reviewers on the recommendations for individual country plans and extension requests.
- c) Consolidating the relevant issues raised in the plenary sessions.
- d) Leading the preparation of the recommendations on country programme grants for the GAVI Board.
- e) Leading the process of formulating policy recommendations to the PPC as reflected in the IRC Consolidated Review Reports.
- f) Present the IRC Consolidated Review Reports and report of the High-Level Review Panel on processes and outcomes to the PPC once a year.
- g) Providing other services in relation to the IRC review process as needed.
- h) Participating in the Grant Review Panel that assesses requests for continued funding of existing programmes.

3.11 Each year, the IRC Chair in consultation with the Secretariat shall request two IRC members to participate in the work of the High Level Review Panel for the duration of that year.

## **4. Operations**

### Meetings:

4.1 It is expected that the IRC will meet three times a year based on a schedule to be determined by the Secretariat, taking into account the calendar of meetings of relevant Board Committees and the Board.

4.2 The IRC members attending a meeting shall be divided into smaller review teams that will be assigned specific country plans or extension requests.

4.3 During the IRC meetings, GAVI Secretariat staff and staff from partner agencies may be invited to attend an open session during which they would share their assessment and information relevant for its review. For selected countries, the

EPI Manager and others as appropriate may be invited to attend the open session and provide input as required by the IRC.

4.4 After receiving all input and discussing the presentations by the review team assigned to each country, the IRC will have the option to deliberate on their recommendations in a closed session.

4.5 Feedback and communication of recommendations to the GAVI Secretariat and partners will take place in an open session at the end of the review period.

4.6 In instances where the number of applications to be reviewed is large and are deemed to require a longer time period, the IRC can convene in two parallel sessions.

#### Review:

4.7 The IRC shall review applications for all types of new support as well as requests at the end of a country's strategy and planning cycle for the next cycle, and make recommendations on funding to the GAVI Alliance Board.

4.8 The IRC review shall consider the information available to countries within applicable guidelines and information provided to countries and shall consist of the following steps:

- a) Review country requests for support and supporting documentation, such as Health Sector Plans, costed immunisation comprehensive Multi Year Plans (cMYPs), Mid Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs), WHO/UNICEF Joint reporting Forms (JRFs), and Financial Management Assessments
- b) Provide the GAVI Alliance with final reports and recommendations of support for each country reviewed;

4.9 The IRC shall consider country plans and requests for renewal of such country plans holistically, especially assessing linkages and continuity between programmes. The IRC takes into account reports on country performance from the High-Level Review Panel and any other country-specific reviews in making its recommendations.

#### Reporting:

4.10 At the end of each review session, the IRC will prepare the following:

- (a) One report for each country whose application was submitted and reviewed by the IRC.

The report will specifically make one of two possible recommendations:

- I. Recommended for Approval – plus comments on areas the IRC deems deserving of special attention by the country, GAVI Secretariat or partners.

II. Not recommended for Approval – plus the key reasons why the IRC did not consider the country’s application ready to be approved at this sitting.

(b) The IRC also prepares one overall consolidated report which will include a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the applications submitted, any recommendations to the Board and Alliance Partners on GAVI programmes and policies, including in relation to the grant application and review processes (the “IRC Consolidated Review Report”). Once a year, the IRC Consolidated Review Report(s) shall be submitted to the PPC.