

GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE EVALUATION OF HSS GRANTS

1. Why should countries conduct an evaluation of their HSS grant?

Independently evaluating Gavi HSS grants is important to ensure learning and accountability. These evaluations allow countries, Gavi, national and international partners to learn from experiences intended to strengthen health systems. Evaluation findings, results and recommendations can be used at country level to strengthen future HSS applications and health system strengthening activities and can be used by Gavi to inform opportunities for improvement of the design and implementation of future Gavi support.

2. When should countries begin planning for and conduct an evaluation of their HSS grant?

- Countries should begin planning and discussing the evaluation (scope, timing and budget required) when preparing their HSS applications. It is essential that countries include a budgeted plan for all evaluation activities as part of their applications—the budget required can be included in the request for Gavi funds, or it can be financed through other means available to the country.
- At a minimum, Gavi requires that countries plan and budget for an end-of-grant evaluation of their HSS grant.
 - Based on Gavi experience to date, the average cost for an end-of-grant evaluation is \$100,000. This figure will of course vary based on the size of the grant to the country.
 - As stipulated in these guidelines, countries should provide justification if they have not planned and budgeted for an end-of-grant evaluation.
 - For an end-of-grant evaluation, it is ideal to plan commissioning this within a timeframe that will enable the findings, lessons learned and recommendations to be used to inform the preparation of the country's next HSS application and/ or future health system strengthen activities. This often equates to countries commissioning their end-of-grant evaluation early in the last year of implementation of their grant.
 - It is advised that the evaluation be conducted before the end of the HSS grant – e.g. for a country with a 5-year Gavi HSS grant, an end of grant evaluation conducted during year 4 will better inform the next Gavi HSS application, and NHSP and cMYP development.
- Countries are also encouraged to plan for a mid-term evaluation.
- Countries are actively encouraged to consider innovative evaluation approaches and conducting a prospective evaluation over the duration of their HSS grant.

3. What are some of the key steps/ processes that should guide an HSS grant evaluation?

- Countries are strongly encouraged to ensure they have a fair, impartial and competitive procurement mechanism for the selection of an evaluation group to conduct the evaluation.
- Once the evaluation group has been selected, it is strongly recommended to form a Steering Committee to oversee the evaluation. This Committee can help ensure the quality and eventual usefulness of the evaluation. The Gavi Secretariat evaluation team is ready to be involved as members of such Committees.
- An important final step to consider is the presentation and sharing of evaluation results, findings and recommendations. It is often helpful to budget a final workshop/ high-level meeting for once the evaluation has been completed to discuss findings, results and recommendations with key stakeholders, implementers and decision-makers

4. What are the key principles countries should consider for their HSS grant evaluations?

Countries are strongly encouraged to refer to the Gavi Evaluation Policy and apply the principles laid out in the Policy, including independence, impartiality, sensitivity and stakeholder participation, among others.

	<p>Gavi's Evaluation Policy is available at: www.gavi.org/about/governance/corporate-policies/evaluation/</p> <p>Further guidance and best practice on carrying out evaluations:</p> <p>WHO's guidance document of M&E of national health strategies is available at: www.who.int/healthinfo/country_monitoring_evaluation/1085_IER_131011_web.pdf?ua=1</p> <p>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) principles on evaluations are available at: http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm</p>
---	--

5. What is the recommended scope of HSS grant evaluations?

- Countries are encouraged to include grant design, implementation and results in their evaluation scope.
- The evaluation should consider the entire results chain, from inputs to impact.
- A country's performance framework is key to the evaluation. In HSS grant evaluations, the whole results chain, from inputs to impact should be independently assessed. Baselines are essential to enable tracking of progress over the life-course of the HSS grant. Evaluators will consider progress made against the targets proposed in your performance framework and seek to understand the reasons for failing to meet, meeting or surpassing these targets.

6. What are some key evaluation questions that should be included in HSS grant evaluations?

Gavi strongly encourages countries to include the following set of questions, or a version of the below that is suitably adapted to a country's needs and circumstances, in their HSS grant

evaluations. This will help Gavi maximise learning across HSS grants and allow a synthesis of findings from across different countries.

Grant design and implementation

- To what extent, and in what ways, were clear linkages to immunisation outcomes demonstrated in the design of the grant?
- To what extent, and in what ways, have CSOs been actively involved in the design and implementation of the grant?
- To what extent, and in what ways, has the grant addressed issues of equity and gender, including gender-based barriers to increasing immunisation coverage among girls and boys?
- To what extent were the monitoring and evaluation framework and associated plans sound and fit-for-purpose, and to what extent has implementation of monitoring and evaluation activities been effective?
- To what extent does the design of the HSS grant reflect pursuit of innovation?

Disbursements

- To what extent has Gavi disbursed funds as planned?
- To what extent have funds been fully utilised in a timely manner by the country?

Management/ support

- To what extent has management of the grant by the lead implementing agency and other entities involved been effective?
- To what extent has the management/ support provided by the Gavi Secretariat and Gavi partners been effective?

Results

- To what extent has the grant effectively addressed bottlenecks to immunisation identified in the original proposal and subsequent analyses?
- To what extent has the grant achieved its stated objectives and targets?
- To what extent has the HSS grant contributed to outcomes in the country's national health strategy?
- What have been the positive and negative unintended consequences of the HSS grant?

7. What kind of methodology is recommended for HSS grant evaluations?

- As previously stated, Gavi actively encourages countries to use innovative evaluation approaches and methods.
- Experience to date has been that HSS grant evaluations often adopt a mixed-methods approach, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative methods.

- In countries where Gavi HSS support is being used to support activities in only a select number of districts, it could be feasible to consider developing a counterfactual to assess the impact of HSS support.
- A key part of all evaluations is the review of relevant documents. In view of this, countries should document as much as possible in relation to the design, rationale, implementation, management and results of the HSS grant as it is being implemented.

8. Is technical assistance available from the Gavi Secretariat for HSS grant evaluations?

- Yes – if requested, the Gavi Secretariat can help countries develop their terms of reference, acting as members in countries' Steering Committees and the review and provision of feedback on draft tools and evaluation reports, among other things.
- The Gavi Secretariat has sample HSS grant evaluation terms of reference as well as further recommended reading material available upon request.

Countries that would like to receive further advice and technical assistance from the Gavi Secretariat for their HSS grant evaluations should contact their relevant Gavi Senior Country Manager.