Minutes

Gavi Alliance Evaluation Advisory Committee Meeting

15-16 March 2016
Radisson Blu Hotel, Maputo, Mozambique

1. Chair's report

1.1 The meeting commenced at 14.40 Maputo time on 15 March 2016. Rob Moodie, Evaluation Committee Chair, chaired the meeting. He reflected on the work that had gone into preparing the meeting, the visit which had taken place that morning to the Manhiça Health Research Centre and the Mozambique Full Country Evaluations dissemination meeting which would take place on 18 March and which had been scheduled to coincide with the EAC meeting so that EAC members could attend. In this context he regretted that there would not be a quorum for the EAC meeting. Following consultation with the Secretariat, and in particular in light of the events arranged around the EAC meeting, it had been agreed to go ahead with the meeting but any proposed decisions arising from the discussions would have to be circulated to the full committee for approval by unanimous consent, in line with the Gavi Statutes and By-Laws.

1.2 Participants had very much appreciated the visit to the Manhiça Health Research Centre where they had been presented with the preliminary results of the Mozambique PCV effectiveness study as well as the process evaluation of the routinisation of PCV in Mozambique.

1.3 Standing declarations of interest were tabled to the Committee (Doc 01a).

1.4 Committee members noted the minutes of its meeting on 18-19 March 2015 (Doc 01b) which had been approved by no-objection on 29 May 2015.

1.5 Committee members noted that it would not be possible to discuss Agenda Items 7 (Final assessment of Albania evaluation report) and 8 (Final assessment of AMC evaluation report) at this meeting as not all of the EAC members who had volunteered to review and assess the quality and usefulness of the reports had done so. The Chair expressed concern that this work was not being done in a timely manner and encouraged Committee members to volunteer to do the work only when certain that they could commit to doing so. It was noted that once the Secretariat has received sufficient information to compile a final review on the quality and usefulness of the reports these will be circulated to the full Committee for information.

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2. Update from Secretariat

2.1 Peter Hansen, Director, Monitoring and Evaluation, provided an update on the key work streams for the Alliance highlighting the relation with evaluation components, namely implementation of Gavi's 2016-2020 strategy and its indicators, the new Partners' Engagement Framework (PEF), the Data Strategic Focus Area (SFA), the measles and India strategies which were approved by the Board in December 2015, the ongoing review of Direct Financial Support (DFS) provided to countries, and work to further strengthen and streamline Gavi's framework for engaging countries.

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3. Gavi Full Country Evaluations

3.1 EAC members had a preliminary discussion on this item before being joined by the FCE consortium, specifically members from IHME, PATH and of the evaluation teams from Bangladesh, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia.

Overview and New Vaccine Introductions

3.2 Steve Lim, IHME and FCE Principal Investigator, presented an overview of the FCE project, reminding EAC members of the principles of the project and highlighting the streams of support evaluated in 2015. He presented an overview of new vaccine introductions in FCE countries (Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine, rotavirus vaccine and inactivated polio vaccine), excluding HPV vaccine, noting that Gavi FCE countries have experienced variable success in introducing and routinizing new vaccines, where dips in coverage were often linked to supply constraints.

3.3 Baltazar Chilundo, Investigator for the FCE work in Mozambique, presented information in relation to the routinisation of PCV and the introduction of rotavirus vaccine, measles second dose and IPV in Mozambique in 2015.

Health Systems Strengthening

3.4 Jasim Uddin, Principal Investigator for the FCE work in Bangladesh, provided an update on the evaluation of the implementation of the HSS grant in Bangladesh.

Discussion

- EAC members noted that there continues to be slow implementation of HSS grants in each of the four FCE countries due primarily to the complexity of the grant processes which were not taken into account in operational plans, and also due to limited in-country capacity where there is often a reliance on external technical assistance.

- EAC members noted other identified deficiencies in the design of the Gavi HSS grants. It was suggested that the recommendations presented are quite high level

and that it would be helpful if they could be presented in a way that they are more clearly actionable and also country specific.

- The FCE team indicated that it is foreseen in the 2016 workplan that work will be done on breaking down the HSS process to look at where value is being added, or not, and that work is also being done on tracking the impact of some of the changes that Gavi has already made.

- EAC members recognised the usefulness of the results of this work for the ongoing review of direct financial support (DFS).

HPV vaccine

3.5 Steve Lim presented information on HPV vaccine implementation in 2014 and 2015, and it was highlighted that all FCE countries tested or are planning to test school-based delivery with a clear tension between the objectives of demonstrating sustainability of a delivery model and achieving coverage criteria for national introduction.

Discussion

- EAC members noted the key issues, the cross-country root causes and the recommendations presented by the FCE team. EAC members noted in particular that results seem to show that the one-year timeframe for the demonstration projects is unrealistic and that the pathway to national introduction of the HPV vaccine remains unclear to country stakeholders following the conclusion of the demonstration projects.

Programmatic and financial capacity and Technical assistance

3.6 Jessica Shearer, PATH, presented information on the programmatic and financial capacity of countries in the context of having to manage multiple grants and assessments which often leads to an administrative and management burden.

3.7 She highlighted some of the cross-country root causes of overburdened EPI programmes and indicated that during 2016 thought will be given to enablers which could be used to overcome some of the issues. She also presented information on the recommendations of the FCE team to lighten the burden for countries.

3.8 She presented information on technical assistance provided to countries and recommendations on how this could be better leveraged going forward. She also indicated that during 2016 work will be done to look at where technical assistance is being allocated in relation to what was requested in country proposals.

Discussion

- EAC members noted the richness of the findings of the FCE to date and acknowledged the challenge not only of refining the recommendations based on the evidence but of presenting the findings in a format which is balanced for a

variety of different stakeholders and then ensuring that the recommendations are appropriately considered going forward.

- EAC members noted that it is hoped that the final FCE 2015 report can be published in time for World Immunization Week and agreed that it should be flagged to the Gavi Board and PPC whenever the appropriate opportunity arises.

- EAC members highlighted the importance of engaging the countries in use of the findings of the evaluation, and in this context keeping the message simple, but focused with actionable recommendations.

- The Chair commended the evaluation teams and the Secretariat on their work and looked forward to receiving further updates on the project.

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4. Chair's Welcome and Overview of Day Two

4.1 The Chair welcomed participants to the second day of the meeting.

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5. Evaluation Update

5.1 Abdallah Bchir, Head, Evaluation, gave an overview of recently completed and ongoing evaluation activities in addition to the FCE work. He referred in particular to the completion of the outcomes and impact evaluation of the advance market commitment (AMC) for pneumococcal vaccines, the final report of which had been disseminated in early 2016 and which, along with the management response, could be found on the Gavi web site. He indicated that the final report of the evaluation of end of Gavi support to Albania has been shared with in-country stakeholders and dissemination is expected shortly. He referred to a number of country HSS grant evaluations as well as the HSS meta review for which final reports are available, and drew attention in particular to the evaluation of the Somalian HSS grant which had been carried out by the University of Zambia and was therefore a good example of successful capacity building from the FCE project.

Discussion

- EAC members welcomed the Secretariat suggestion to commission a peer review of the evaluation function of Gavi. The aim of such a review would be to inform the evaluation team on areas for improvement.

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6. Evaluation of Technical Assistance provided through the Partners' Engagement Framework

6.1 Abdallah Bchir, Head, Evaluation, outlined the purpose of this evaluation, as well as the process for finalising, approving and launching the request for proposals (RFP). 30 letters of interest had been received and 12 proposals submitted, six of which had passed a pre-screening process. An adjudication committee has been set up, comprising representatives from Alliance partners and independent individuals, and had looked at the six proposals in detail. The final recommendation put forward to the EAC was based on a unanimous assessment of the adjudication committee, taking into account the technical and financial criteria included in the RFP, and discussed by the committee during a teleconference.

Discussion

- Wieneke Vullings, who had been a member of the adjudication committee, informed participants that the process had been quite thorough and that she was personally quite happy with the recommendation being put forward. The Committee had noted with interest the sizeable disparities in the budgets proposed in the different proposals.

- Participants noted that this would be the first time that Gavi would be working with on an evaluation project with the company recommended and that there could be some risks associated with this.

- It was also noted that as the company has its own offices in some of the countries which will be part of the evaluation it will not be country partners as such that will be involved there.

- Participants noted that as with other evaluation projects, a contract will be put in place for the inception phase and following the advice given by EAC members, some pre-conditions will be included in particular in relation to teams who will be working on the project.

- It was agreed that it would be useful for the EAC to explore having a presentation from the company at the end of the inception phase. Following discussion it was also agreed that it would not be inappropriate for EAC members to be included in the project Steering Committee.

- Finally, EAC members noted that, as had been indicated at the beginning of the meeting the decision in relation to this item would be circulated to the full committee for approval by unanimous consent, in line with the Gavi Statutes and By-Laws.

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7. Final assessment of Albania evaluation report

7.1 As indicated at the beginning of the meeting this item was not discussed.

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8. Final assessment of AMC evaluation report

8.1 As indicated at the beginning of the meeting this item was not discussed.

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9. Results of the Health system strengthening (HSS) meta-review

9.1 Abdallah Bchir, Head, Evaluation, reminded EAC members that in 2014 they had advised Gavi to conduct a meta review of completed country HSS grant evaluations to identify common issues, and that during their meeting in March 2015 had approved the objectives and scope of the meta-review.

9.2 The meta-review, carried out by CEPA (Cambridge Economic Policy Associated Ltd.), had been conducted based on HSS evaluation reports from 14 countries. Dr Bchir presented the key findings and recommendations for Gavi and informed EAC members that these were being taken into consideration in the ongoing review of the direct financial support (DFS).

Discussion

- The Chair, who is a member of the DFS Steering Committee, indicated that at a recent meeting of the group it had been pointed out that while some of the grants included in the meta-review were quite old, there was a general sense that the overall findings are still relevant for reprogramming.

- It was agreed that it would be useful to share the findings of the meta-review with the Gavi Board and that this would be done by the EAC Chair in his report to the Board in June, and that rather than sending them the full report it would perhaps be referenced in the DFS paper being prepared for the PPC and Board, and put on myGavi as an annex to the paper.

- EAC members present noted that one of the challenges now for the evaluation team is that a number of evaluation activities in relation to HSS grants had been planned before the DFS work started, and that as any proposed changes in relation to the DFS work will only be implemented in 2017, with ongoing grants expected only transitioning to the new system in 2018, it might be wise to postpone some of the planned activities. The evaluation team is already involved in discussions in relation to the design of evaluation activities in the context of the DFS review. EAC members felt that it would indeed therefore be preferable to be judicious and deprioritise any future HSS evaluations which have not already been planned, and to discuss this issue further once there is more clarity.

- The Secretariat indicated that when an evaluation framework for the DFS review is presented to the EAC it will include a proposal on how the different elements will be evaluated.

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10. Gavi Evaluation Workplan 2016 & 2017

10.1 Alba Vilajeliu, Programme Officer, Evaluation, presented an overview of the evaluation workplan for 2016 including continued work on the FCE, the evaluation of technical assistance provided through the Partners' Engagement Framework, country HSS end-of-grant evaluations, a review of HPV country reports, and assessment of follow up of previous evaluation findings and an assessment of the Gavi evaluation function.

10.2 She also presented an overview of the preliminary evaluation workplan for 2017, highlighting in particular that EAC input would be required on possible continuation of the work being carried out within the context of the FCE as the current contract runs to the end of 2016. She invited EAC members to advise on whether or not an evaluation of the process and results of grant application, monitoring and review (GAMR) should be conducted in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

Discussion

- EAC members present agreed that the GAMR process evaluation could be postponed, considering the ongoing discussions and potential changes to Gavi's support model.

- In relation to the proposed evaluation of Gavi HPV support, EAC members noted that it will be important to ensure that there is no duplication of work being carried out in the FCE project or by other organisations.

- EAC members had a preliminary discussion on a possible continuation of the FCE project beyond 2016 and noted that before a final decision is taken discussions will be held with the country evaluation teams, IHME and PATH to get their views, and that it will also be important to have discussions with the four countries themselves, as it would be inappropriate to impose an extension of the project on them if it is not something that they would find useful. Discussions with Alliance partners at the country level are also foreseen. Once these consultations have been completed the EAC will be presented with clear scenarios and financial implications.

- Participants noted that as the FCE project is currently made up of different components, discussions on a possible continuation of the project could consider a restructuring of the project, possibly being more targeted as well as other contract modalities.

- EAC members suggested that increased ownership of the country evaluation teams is something that could be explored going forward, as well as potentially

partnering with other organisations such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. It was suggested that one option going forward might be to issue a new request for proposals, and that it would also be useful to draft a set of principles for the post-2016 FCE project for the EAC to review.

- EAC members also suggested that it would be useful to do a critical assessment of how the project has gone so far. The Secretariat noted that this had been done to a certain extent quite recently and shared some of the findings with the Committee. Some concerns were raised in relation to timely follow through on capacity building activities and challenges about how the communication feedback loops to country stakeholders.

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11. Review of decisions

11.1 Joanne Goetz, Head, Governance, reminded participants that as there was not a quorum for this meeting the proposed language of the decision in relation to Agenda Item 6 (Evaluation of Technical Assistance provided through the Partners' Engagement Framework) would be circulated to all members of the EAC by email for approval by unanimous consent, as foreseen in the Gavi Statutes and By-Laws.

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12. Any other business

12.1 EAC members agreed that in light of the workplan for the coming months it would be useful for the Committee to have another in-person meeting and that this should be in Geneva in September. The Secretariat will consider possible dates and circulate to the Committee for approval.

12.2 It was also agreed that any EAC members attending the Gavi Board meeting in June 2016 could use the opportunity to have an informal get together to take stock of the ongoing work.

12.3 After determining there was no further business, the meeting was brought to a close.

Mrs Joanne Goetz
Secretary to the Meeting

Attachment A

Participants

Committee Members
- Rob Moodie, Chair
- Jeanine Condo
- Wieneke Vullings

Regrets
- Zulfiqar A. Bhutta
- Fred Binka
- Gonzalo Hernandez
- Mira Johri
- Angela Santoni
- Samba O. Sow

Secretariat
- Abdallah Bchir
- Joanne Goetz
- Peter Hansen
- Alba Vilajeliu

Guests
- Gilbert Asiimwe
- Baltazar Chilundo
- Sarah Gimbel
- Steve Lim
- Felix Masiye
- Jessica Shearer
- Jasim Uddin