

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance EVALUATION MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Evaluation of Gavi's contribution to reaching zero-dose children and missed communities (Year 2)

Business Owner/s: Programme Team, Strategy Team

Evaluation Title: Evaluation of Gavi's contribution to reaching zero-dose children and missed communities (Phase 2)

Study Evaluation Year: March 2024–April 2025

Evaluation Purpose: The purpose of this evaluation is to inform the Gavi Board, Secretariat and Alliance partners on how their work is contributing to immunising zero-dose children (ZDC) and missed communities in Gavi-eligible countries.

Evaluation Key Objectives: The evaluation looks back to Gavi 4.0 (2016–2020) for lessons learnt and forward to Gavi 6.0 (2026–2030) to guide the design of the next phase. This report covers Phase 2 (2024–2025) of a three-stage evaluation and provides insights in seven case study countries. The phase 3 of the evaluation has been reprioritised for the next strategy. The evaluation originally had four specific objectives, of which Objective 1 was expected to have the strongest evidence in Phase 1:

O1: Evaluate the relevance and coherence of ZD Agenda in terms of Gavi 5.0/5.1 (2021–2025); O2: Assess the operationalisation of the ZD Agenda through the Gavi 5.0/5.1 funding levers and programmes;

O3: Estimate the plausible contribution of pro-equity grants initiated under Gavi 4.0 with continued implementation in the Gavi 5.0/5.1 period, and grants initiated under Gavi 5.0/5.1, to achieving Gavi's targets related to reaching ZD and missed communities; and

O4: Generate lessons learnt on the implementation of the ZD Agenda to inform course correction and development of the Gavi 6.0 strategy.

Context

Phase 2 adopted a pragmatic, learning-oriented lens focusing on a narrower set of key topics and questions than originally envisioned. The aim was to generate actionable insights that would be useful to the secretariat and the Board. Additionally, an emphasis was placed on specific themes (agreed to with the secretariat) that aligned with strategic priorities and where learnings can meaningfully contribute to informing the Gavi 6.0 strategy (2026–2030).

<p>Gavi secretariat overall response to the evaluation</p>	<p>Gavi values the comprehensive insights and recommendations provided in the Phase 2 zero-dose (ZD) evaluation by the independent evaluation team. We are pleased that this thorough independent report which has been structured into five thematic briefs, will be made publicly available, significantly enriching the evidence base on the zero-dose agenda.</p> <p>Our commitment to independent, credible and actionable evaluations remains strong. This evaluation was particularly timely, aligning with priority areas that supported the new Health Systems strategy and the operationalisation of Gavi 6.0.</p> <p>Recognising the critical role of zero-dose children in Gavi's equity agenda, we will continue to prioritise and generate rigorous evidence on zero-dose populations throughout Gavi 6.0, ensuring that data-driven insights inform decision-making and program design.</p> <p>We broadly concur with the findings and recommendations, many of which are already being addressed within Gavi and the Vaccine Alliance. Some key recommendations have also emerged in our Alliance discussions, reinforcing their relevance. These insights will directly contribute to enhancing Gavi's effectiveness and impact, while guiding the implementation of Gavi 6.0 to improve immunisation coverage and health outcomes for the most underserved communities.</p>
<p>Recommendation 1</p>	<p>Gavi Board, Alliance partners: Invest and enhance measurement and monitoring of ZD-specific and -linked indicators, especially at the country level. Adopt the use of tracking timely achievement of intermediate results or completion of actions in the performance and risk monitoring plan, as well as linkages to financial reporting in Gavi 6.0. The planned development of the Gavi 6.0 Theory of Change and measurement framework will need to include a clear and measurable vision for reducing ZD children in Gavi 6.0 that outlines specific objectives, targets and indicators for tracking implementation progress that can be measured, monitored and embedded in Gavi's data management systems effectively. This needs to be shared across donors with normative definitions agreed and leveraging the use of in-country data where possible to reduce burden.</p>

Alliance Management Response (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)	Partially agree.
If recommendation is rejected/partially accepted, indicate reasons:	Partially agree. More careful monitoring of financial utilisation, workplan implementation and key intermediate results will be trialed in a subset of countries in 2025 and will be part of the grant performance framework within the new Grant Management System for Gavi 6.0. Also noting that many of the health systems investments that will be tracked in Gavi 6.0 are germane to the zero-dose agenda while also being relevant to the broader objectives of the Health Systems Strategy. Recommendation is only partially agreed to as doing this at scale will require substantial funding which may be challenging to fully secure in a context of significantly reduced funding for health system strengthening (HSS) and strategic focus areas (SFAs). We will encourage countries to prioritise this in the Programme funding guidelines (PFGs) and also explore catalytic investment from the solutions fund.
Actions planned	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board Approval of Health Systems Strategy which will also inform implementation monitoring mechanisms. 2. Roll out of pilots to test enhanced approach to zero-dose implementation to inform Gavi 6.0. 3. Gavi 6.0 grant reporting templates drafted for use in new grant management system. 4. Gavi 6.0 country M&L guidelines published 5. Collation of lessons learned from ZD implementation monitoring pilot.
Recommendation 2	Gavi Secretariat, Alliance partners: Refine the Partners' engagement framework (PEF) to enhance responsiveness to context and implementing partner needs, including at subnational level, to ensure it delivers against ZD objectives. Streamline and realign funding levers to enable longer-term funding for core technical assistance (TA). Work with core and expanded partners to identify TA support needs throughout the grant cycle and how to work more efficiently to facilitate and expedite grant absorption at the sub-national level, particularly for reaching marginalised ZD communities. Rigorously update and promote a database of pre- screened partners to support the inclusion of non-Core Partners. Build in more accountability systems.

Alliance Management Response (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)	Agree. In December 2024, the Gavi Board endorsed a rethink of the PEF model and requested the Secretariat to: (1) consolidate country-level technical assistance into country cash grants; (2) redesign FS and SFA funding into a more streamlined, transparent and accountable process. This led to the creation of the Foundations Fund, which supports technical assistance at global, regional and country levels, with country-level support targeting specific functions that complement the consolidated grants. The Fund also includes a Solutions Fund, focused on catalytic, innovative approaches to address persistent challenges in Gavi's SFAs. An accountability framework is also being developed to support performance management across these functions.
Action planned	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare Programme and Policy Committee (PPC) and Board papers to reflect the evolution of the partnerships approach in Gavi 6.0 including the redesign of PEF funding. 2. Operationalise Board mandate for Gavi 6.0 PEF funding structure, quantum of funding, approach to programming of TA.
Recommendation 3	Gavi Board, Gavi Secretariat: Commit to primary health care (PHC) integration and HSS at the core of the immunisation agenda and use the forthcoming HSS strategy to define clearly Gavi's approach to PHC integration and reduce grant funding siloes between Gavi and other institutions. This includes expanding investment in pooled funds and other joint financing initiatives. Reduce fragmentation of grant investments in HSS and ZD-focused programmes. Consider developing a more differentiated approach to HSS and PHC investments and invest in cash grants that explicitly improve programmatic and financial sustainability of immunisation programmes.
Alliance Management Response (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)	Agree.
Action planned	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop health systems strategy which clearly defines Gavi's approach to PHC integration, pooled funding and differentiated investment approach. 2. Consolidate Gavi funding levers to ensure a single grant for all cash and TA support and reduce fragmentation of grant investments.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Mainstream PHC integration and differentiated investment approach into Gavi programme funding guidelines. 4. Strengthen collaboration, coordination and joint programming in support of country plans with other GHIs through Lusaka Agenda. 5. Seek to institutionalise closer collaboration and joint investment with multilateral development banks.
Recommendation 4	<p>Gavi Secretariat: Consider setting-up a distinct department that focuses on delivering services in humanitarian contexts. This team could have responsibility for implementation of relevant policies related to fragile and humanitarian contexts, e.g. Fragility, Emergencies and Displaced Populations (FED) policy, to enable ZD services in humanitarian contexts across the whole Gavi portfolio. Funds from this department should be enabled operate in a much more agile and acute way, focusing on specific contexts, and with a higher risk appetite. The department should also work with greater independence from other Gavi processes (for example, Country Teams) than the current ZIP programme. Consider defining mechanisms to substitute funds with other Gavi resources, particularly HSS and EAF.</p>
Alliance Management Response (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)	Partially agree.
If recommendation is rejected/partially accepted, indicate reasons:	<p>Management agrees on the need to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat to manage programmes in fragile and humanitarian contexts. As part of the Gavi 6.0 strategy, the Board has requested a Fragile & Humanitarian (F&H) Approach to meet the differentiated requirements to meet the needs of Fragile countries and complex settings, including those that requirement humanitarian response. This F&H Approach is being proposed to the PPC and, pending their recommendation to the Board, will be supported with an operational plan to include change within the Secretariat. This includes ensuring a better equipped Gavi Secretariat with streamlined, harmonised and simplified policies and grant management processes to better engage in F&H settings. This includes embedding the Board-approved higher risk appetite under the FED policy into all Gavi 6.0 normative guidance, grant</p>

	management processes and tools. As part of the ongoing organisational review, the Secretariat is also assessing the skills and capacities needed to operate effectively in these complex environments. This includes strengthening humanitarian expertise to ensure the Secretariat is equipped to navigate access challenges, coordinate with partners and deliver impact in crisis-affected settings. While the Secretariat is committed to these changes, it does not agree that this requires a separate department and believes there are significant potential inefficiencies and siloes that may result from such a structure. Therefore, it has chosen as part of its organisational review to embed the above changes within its existing structures which include a dedicated fragile & humanitarian team within the country delivery department.
Action planned	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. F&H approach approved by Board. 2. F&H approach operationalised as part of Gavi 6.0 operationalisation. 3. Mainstreaming differentiation into the new grant management model with light processes/more flexibility for F&C countries.
Recommendation 5	Gavi Secretariat: Define and develop advocacy for ZD within the IRMMA Framework (i.e. identify, reach, monitor & measure, advocate). Public Policy and Engagement (PPE) team as the mandate holder for advocacy, to outline an advocacy approach for ZD within the IRMMA framework and lead coordination guide implementation among Gavi core and expanded partners. This strategy/approach should define clear objectives, key messages, target audiences and measurable outcomes. PPE will lead coordination efforts, establish a structured engagement plan, and guide implementation among Gavi core and expanded partners. Additionally, PPE will set up regular progress reviews, identify key advocacy opportunities and ensure alignment with broader Gavi priorities.
Alliance Management Response (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)	Agree.
If recommendation is rejected/partially accepted, indicate reasons/ caveat:	In preparation for a strategic approach to Advocacy at global, regional and country level, Public Policy and Engagement (PPE) is developing an advocacy strategy/ approach that will inform key areas of political and

	programmatic advocacy including ZD advocacy within the IRMMA framework in response to the recommendations of this report. This strategy is due for finalisation in October 2025.
Action planned	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outline an advocacy approach for ZD within IRMMA framework. 2. Outline and operationalise an internal coordination mechanism to ensure alignments and continued coherence and support for implementation. 3. Track country and implementing partners' orientation.

The full detailed version can be accessed by request to the Gavi Secretariat.