

## Gavi Alliance Evaluation Advisory Committee Meeting

13 November 2024

### Virtual meeting

#### 1. Chair's report

- 1.1 Noting that the meeting had been duly convened and finding a quorum of members present, the meeting commenced at 20.00 Geneva time on 13 November 2024. James Hargreaves, Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) Chair, chaired the meeting.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Justice Nonvignon whose appointment as an EAC member had been approved by the Board in early October 2024.
- 1.3 Standing declarations of interest were tabled to the Committee (Doc 01a in the Committee pack).

-----

#### 2. Evaluation Function Review

- 2.1 Naomi Blight and Nick York, external evaluators from IOD Parc, were invited to join at the start of the agenda item to respond to questions related to their pre-recorded video presentation on the recommendations of the Evaluation Function Review (EFR).
- 2.2 James Hargreaves, EAC Chair, and Hope Johnson, Director, Measurement, Learning and Evaluation, presented on recent touchpoints related to the EFR (Doc 02) such as:
  - the discussion at the Programme and Policy Committee (PPC) meeting in October 2024, where the PPC had been very engaged and provided input into potential evaluation topics for Gavi 6.0;
  - the discussion at the Governance Committee in October 2024, in which it appeared there was a unified view that any options presented should get at the root causes of the identified EFR problem statements and noted that structural questions may be less important when balanced with utility; that there is a need to reflect on the current role and mandate of the EAC to make sure it is fit for purpose for Gavi 6.0; and explore strengthening the linkages between the EAC and the PPC; and
  - the EAC Chair's recent discussion with the CEO, who expressed her early thinking about the purpose of monitoring, learning and evaluation as being to take remedial actions, course correct and have evidence for policy change, with evaluations serving a role for medium-term policy change.
- 2.3 Penny Hawkins, EAC member and EFR Focal Point, and Esther Saville, Head, Evaluation & Learning (EVLU), provided an update on discussions at the last Oversight Panel meeting on 13 November 2024, in which the Oversight Panel had

agreed to continue its engagement for another 6-12 months, and was in agreement with the proposal for enhanced PPC engagement in evaluation.

- 2.4 The three EFR Focal Points – Helen Evans, Adolfo Martinez Valle, and Penny Hawkins – also provided reflections on the EFR process.

### *Discussion*

- In the first portion of the agenda item in which the IODParc evaluators were present, EAC members queried matters such as:
  - Whether the evaluators recommendation for the EAC to take a portfolio level view was intended to include both centralised evaluations and decentralised evaluations. The evaluators clarified that it was recommended to do so for both centralised and decentralised evaluations;
  - What was meant by “no shared vision for evaluation”. The evaluators noted that the lack of shared vision had been apparent across stakeholder groups within the Secretariat as well as across the Board and Committee members; and some noting that the timelines or scope made them less useful for decision making;
  - How the learning hubs fit within Gavi’s evaluation approach. It was clarified that the review found that currently there were not strong linkages between the learning hubs and evaluations; and
  - On the tension between independence and utility, whether the evaluators could provide any further information about the models adopted by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) and the Global Financing Facility. The evaluators explained that the Global Fund had recently moved to a more independent model. They suggested that whether such a model would be better for Gavi would depend on the vision of Gavi for evaluation moving forward. It was also noted that there is a risk in introducing more structural independence as it can lead to a disconnect with the business. Recent experience in International Financing Institutions (IFIs) broadly, however, has been that having evaluation located close to the business can be positive despite it coming with some risks to independence.
- There were no specific questions from EAC members related to the read-out of the recent PPC, Governance Committee and engagement with the CEO.
- With respect to the read-out of the last Oversight Panel meeting by the Head of EVLU and the EAC observer to the Oversight Panel, EAC members queried:
  - How far the Oversight Panel had gone in discussing the quality of the EFR report. It was clarified that the Oversight Panel had not expressed a specific view, given this was not part of their remit;
  - The Terms of Reference for the Oversight Panel over the coming 12 months. It was clarified that it would continue in the same role, namely to:

- Safeguard the independence of the review process, serving as a neutral intermediary between the independent consultants (IOD Parc) and the evaluands (MEL Director, Centralised Evaluation Team (CET), EAC); and
  - Following completion of the review, steward the EFR communication process liaising with key stakeholders to promote consideration of and action on the recommendations with respective constituents.
- It was agreed by the Oversight Panel that it would be retained for 6-12 months through 2025, with a discussion at mid-point on continuation beyond the first 6 months. It is envisaged that a meeting would be scheduled after the PPC/Board Technical Briefing and prior to the Governance Committee meeting in February 2025, and that 2-3 meetings would be required over the 6-12 months' period.
- EAC Focal Points provided the following reflections on the process so far:
  - That there were three overarching questions for the EAC to keep in mind: i) whether the EFR had fulfilled its ToRs, ii) whether the quality was ok, iii) whether the recommendations were appropriately useful. While the Focal Point did not necessarily agree with all of the report content, it was hard to disagree with the recommendations. However, the Focal Point was concerned about the swing towards accountability from learning and also commented on the broader discussions within Gavi on reducing programmatic complexity and whether it would be possible to simplify without losing rigour. On the question of whether EAC is meeting needs, it appeared to be necessary to adapt;
  - That there seemed to be a lack of evaluation culture at Gavi right now. The Focal Point agreed on the emphasis on utility and with some of the recommendations related to strategic matters and on country participation. Even if the EFR was not of high quality, it had included recommendations that were feasible and pertinent – and there should be further discussion on these points;
  - That while the EFR was not a high-quality review, it did meet the ToRs. As an overarching issue, the Focal Point noted that it is still not clear how the recommendations link to the findings. As a presentational matter, it would have been good to see strategic issues tiering down into operational issues. Finally, a central question remains about the shared vision - there is not an overarching M&E framework that is understood and this needs to be driven by management. A review of the Evaluation Policy and EAC ToR needs to address questions such as whether the workplan should be approved by PPC and when/how much it should be consulted as well as the role and mandate of EAC.
- EAC members commented on the following common themes:
  - The centrality of a shared vision, with leadership from the top;

- Many agreed that strengthening independence does not seem like most important direction; however, one member had a nuanced view that independence improves the credibility of the evaluation and should be considered;
  - One EAC member noted that country engagement had again come out in the recommendations as an area needing further consideration;
  - With respect to the role of the EAC, there seemed to be support for a role that includes more strategic oversight for Gavi evaluation; and that elevating the role of the EAC to a more strategic and oversight level would be helpful with prioritising and maximising learning. EAC members also noted that EAC spends a lot of time on quality assurance, which is time consuming, and that external quality reviews could be helpful in this regard;
  - EAC members reflected that it remains difficult to tease out centralised versus decentralised evaluations within the EFR report. On the question of structural independence, it would be important to understand better the issues for both; and
  - One EAC member flagged a concern about quality of report and hesitated on whether the EAC should rely on it to propose any big changes. He suggested it would be helpful to have more information on best practice at other organisations to find alternatives; noting as well that to respond to the recommendations and way forward, there should be a Theory of Change.
- With respect to next steps, the three EAC Focal Points for the EFR agreed to continue in this capacity and would plan to meet soon to talk about the sequencing of next steps. The EAC Focal points would consider whether there were any key points from this meeting to potentially share with the Oversight Panel ahead of its next meeting. The Chair indicated he would also like to remain engaged.
  - A Technical Briefing on evaluation previously planned for November 2024 had been rescheduled to early 2025.
  - EAC members asked to understand more about the burden placed by the EAC on the Secretariat. It was clarified that one factor is that the EAC as an advisory body is part of the formal Gavi governance process, which means it comes with some prescribed process and entails more preparatory work than some other bodies might. It was also noted that in recent years the EAC had requested the Secretariat to consider expansions of its mandate, e.g. with the request to amend the Evaluation Policy to add EAC members to evaluation Steering Committees. Those exercises required support from the CET team to prepare additional supporting papers, presentations, and speaking points for the Governance Committee, EAC, and Board, and that came in addition to their workplan.
  - In terms of risks, one EAC member noted that there were some risks related to the revision of the Evaluation Policy, and accountability for implementation of the policy, if it were perceived to be shifting towards a compliance function, also with respect to oversight of decentralised evaluations, as this could change how colleagues perceive and engage with evaluation.

- It was also noted that the ambiguity in some of the recommendations related to the EAC mandate could result in the mandate of the EAC being weakened, and an associated risk would be that the oversight function was also weakened.
- In response a question about the statistics on the percentage evaluation suppliers from low- and middle-income countries, CET indicated it would review the figures and provide EAC with more information.

-----

### **3. Closing remarks and any other business**

- 3.1 The EAC Chair noted that the EAC had met in closed session prior to the start of the virtual EAC meeting.
- 3.2 After determining there was no further business, the meeting was brought to a close.

-----

---

Ms Meegan Murray-Lopez  
Secretary to the Meeting

## Attachment A

### Participants

#### **Committee Members**

- James Hargreaves (Chair)
- Helen Evans
- Juan Pablo Gutiérrez
- Penny Hawkins
- David Hotchkiss
- Adolfo Martinez Valle
- Ezzeddine Mohsni
- Malabika Sarker
- Onei Uetela
- Justice Nonvignon

#### **Secretariat**

- Hope Johnson
- Esther Saville
- Leslie Moreland
- Cristina Cimenti
- Meegan Murray-Lopez

#### **Regrets**

- Rhoda Wanyenze

#### **Guests**

- Naomi Blight, IODParc (start of item 2)
- Nick York, IODParc (start of item 2)