

Management Response to HLSP IRC Review Report released in March 2010

1.1: Strategic Recommendations for the IRC Model	
Recommendations	Management response
1.1.1 Pre-Review: Potential Conflict of Interest: Partners: WHO/UNICEF “To maintain but consider changing features of the pre-review phase of the IRC model. Other agency options could be considered for undertaking these reviews, particularly as it relates to the role of WHO (not UNICEF). An expanded scope of work could also be considered.”	The Secretariat recognises the concern over the real or perceived risk of conflict of interest. The Secretariat also acknowledges the principle that the parties supporting programme implementation should not be the ones signing off on monitoring data. GAVI needs to manage perceptions and make sure processes are explicit and transparent. In this regards, the Secretariat is to work with WHO to ensure all parties are aware of the details of the WHO screening process.
1.1.2 IRC and country knowledge “There is a need to strengthen IRCs’ access to knowledge about the country specific context for informed and enhanced quality of decision making, as well as for external credibility reasons.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.
1.1.3 Enhanced assessment of the validity of country data “There is a need to improve and expand the methods by which the IRCs have access to better assessments of the validity of country data.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.
1.1.4. Monitoring IRC: the future role of the GAVI Board in grant renewals approval; “The GAVI Alliance Board is requested to consider the necessity of its role in reviewing and approving the IRC recommendations for grant disbursements related to already approved grants.”	The Secretariat notes the concern over turn around time related to fund disbursements to countries. All options for shortening the turn around time will be explored including review of internal secretariat processes, a revised grant renewal process with a modified Monitoring IRC. However, the financing decisions should remain a Board responsibility

Recommendations	Management response
1.1.5 Potential Conflict of Interest: In-house management and support of IRC “GAVI is advised to consider changing the locus of management support to IRCs within the Secretariat.”	The Secretariat recognises the concern over the real or perceived risk of conflict of interest for the Programme Delivery Department to manage the review process. The Secretariat will explore options to reduce the risk of conflict of interest, including the development of code of conduct for participation by technical staff in IRC discussions. The restructuring of PD under 2 separate directors for Country Programmes and Review teams offers the opportunity for separation of management of the two key functions of the department. The Secretariat will monitor closely the impact of the restructure on issues raised
1.1.6 Development of a systematic grant performance scheme “Consideration should be given to the value of developing a systematic and transparent grant performance classification system.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.
1.1.7 Development of a quality assurance mechanism for IRC Decision making “It would be worth considering the development of a quality assurance mechanism for IRC decision making.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendation
1.1.8 Country appeal mechanism “It would be worth considering the introduction of a country appeal mechanism at GAVI based on very explicit and narrow criteria of what constitutes grounds of appeal.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendation. The country appeal mechanism will be developed based on the principle that it would be well-managed, transparently aligned with GAVI strategy and clear on the rules about which IRC recommendations can be appealed and clear timelines on when such appeals can be lodged

1.2: Broader Strategic Recommendations	
Recommendations	Management response
“GAVI may wish to undertake a systematic assessment of the amounts of resources tied up in grants or stock that, for a variety of reasons, are committed but unused aid resources.”	The Secretariat welcomes the recommendation. It recognises the need to regularly assess the unused amounts of resources tied up in grants or vaccine stocks. • On vaccine stocks, an Alliance sub group is working on improving vaccine stock monitoring reporting. . New country guidelines will be introduced in the new vaccine applications and the monitoring process. This is expected to start in 2011. • On cash grants, a systematic assessment of unused grants will be done, taking into consideration when funds were disbursed to countries and the reporting period. .

1.3: Detailed Recommendations Related to the IRCs

Design

Recommendations	Management response
“IRC ToRs are expanded to provide clearer guidance on the roles of the Chair /co-Chairs, linkages between IRCs, along with a clearer specification of ‘who is responsible for what’ when performance issues are identified with country grants; and other issues such as meeting support, including the role of the Secretariat. Importantly, the standard of the ToRs for the Monitoring IRC needs to be harmonized with those of the New Proposals IRC.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.
“For enhanced transparency purposes, an open, competitive IRC membership selection process, which also draws upon applications from individuals recommended or suggested by Alliance partners.”	The secretariat agrees with this recommendation The new selection mechanism will be built to bring new competencies to IRC as needed and to ensure clear conflict of interest policies in place.
“For enhanced transparency purposes, the GAVI website is kept up-to-date with IRC details – including membership. Information available via the web could include members CVs, and have a longitudinal as well as cross sectional perspective.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.
“For improved management of specific IRC composition needs, a minimal data set is created and maintained, that includes core information such as: number of members, names of members, professional skill areas, degree and type of country based experience, gender, geographic /regional expertise etc.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.
“IRC composition requirements are proactively managed in terms of IRC specific needs.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.

“Governance expertise be considered as an additional area of expertise on IRCs. Furthermore, it is also recommended that M&E advisers are systematically included on both New Proposal and Monitoring IRCs”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.
Recommendations	Management response
“The management mechanisms and solutions for the substitution of IRC members who drop out of meetings at the last minute are reviewed.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.
“The linkages between respective IRCs are strengthened and improved.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.
“The IRCs, with support of the Secretariat, develop a standard approach to reviewing in small groups.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.

1.3: Detailed Recommendations Related to the IRCs

Execution

Recommendations	Management response
“Committee work load/volume versus size of committee and length of meeting are more actively monitored and managed.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.
“Each Committee has a dedicated rapporteur for all sessions to facilitate a more systematic process of decision making by the IRC and alleviate the burden of record keeping from the Chair /co-Chair.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.
“Data management mechanisms for how to systematically make available current and past country grant information be reviewed. This should also include information about IRC recommendations and funding levels over time, and include details of clarifications and conditions requested, with associated country responses.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.
“Consideration is given to harmonizing the IRC decision bands and introducing a decision point that allows the Monitoring IRC to make conditional approval recommendations”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations
“Consideration is given to developing explicit and standard application assessment criteria for both new proposals and APR assessment. This has the advantage of increasing transparency and making it easier for new members to ‘learn the ropes.’ Where committee turnover is undesirably high in any given session it may also serve as a means of standardizing decision making across Committees.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.
“The Secretariat plans a thorough induction and handover period between new incumbents and the senior programme officer supporting the new proposals Committee, who is leaving post early this year (2010). This change has the potential to negatively impact upon institutional memory and continuity if not actively managed.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations. A system has already been put in place for effective handover.

Recommendations	Management response
“Given the importance of presentation of information via country application forms, a review of the following could improve how information is captured and reported by countries to IRCs to inform decision recommendations: 1) A specific section or question which requests countries to summarise previous grant history and performance. It is possible the ‘lessons learnt’ section of the form can address this but the way it is used could be re-examined; 2) Stock control – consideration to a better way to profile ‘stocks in hand’ and ‘stocks being introduced’ which more easily helps to track and manage stocks so there are not over stocks as one vaccine is being transitioned in and another out. The advice of UNICEF on this would be helpful, as would very directive comment in the pre-review stage on stock control matters.”	The Secretariat agrees with all the recommendations.
1.3: Detailed Recommendations Related to the IRCs Results	
Recommendations	Management response
“All IRCs should be subjected to regular quality assurance and evaluation”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations
“Structure and overall content is agreed for IRC general reports, drawing on data supplied by the Secretariat as appropriate.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations
“A central log is kept of IRC Recommendations to the Board /Executive Committee and that a systematic feedback mechanism is created to inform IRC committees about their policy recommendations, using the log as a record of information.”	The Secretariat agrees with the recommendations.