Review of GAVI
Independent Review Committees (IRCs)
RFP-EVIRC060709

Final report
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Authors:

Martine Donoghue
Nel Druce
Nicolas Avril
Marame Ndour
David Lewis

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Annex 6 contains a list of key informants interviewed.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Full Title
AD	Auto-Disable
A & FC	Audit & Finance Committee
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APR	Annual Progress Report
AR	Approval Request
BD	Banking Details
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEPA	Cambridge Economic Policy Associates
CET	Central European Time
CMP	Cash Management Plan
COI	Conflict of Interest
CRO	Country Responsible Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
DL	Decision Letter
EC	Executive Committee
EMRO	Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunisation
EURO	European Regional Office
FMA	Financial Management Assessment
FPM	Fund Portfolio Manager
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation
GDF	Global Drug Facility
GF	Global Fund
GFATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GIVS	Global Immunisation Vision and Strategy
Hep B	Hepatitis B vaccines
HLTF	High Level Taskforce on Innovative International Financing for Health Systems
HSCC	Health Systems Coordination Committee
HSFP	Health Systems Funding Platform
HSS	Health System Strengthening

ICC	Inter-agency Coordination Committee
IF&STT	Immunization Financing & Sustainability Task Team
IHP+	International Health Partnership
INS	Injection Safety Support
IRC	Independent Review Committee
ISS	Immunisation Services Support
JANS	Joint Assessment of National Strategies
JRF	Joint Reporting Form
JSI	John Snow Inc.
LFA	Local Fund Agent
LICUS	Low-Income Countries Under Stress
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MD	Managing Director
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoH	Ministry of Health
NP	New Proposals
NSA	National Strategy Applications
NVS	New Vaccine Support
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PA	Programme Assistant
PAHO	Pan American Health Organisation
PBF	Performance-Based Funding
PD	Programme Delivery Department
Penta	Pentavalent vaccines
POA `	Plan Of Action
PPC	Programme and Policy Committee
PSC	Policy and Strategy Committee
RFP	Request for Proposal
SPM	Senior Programme Manager
SS-AR	Senior Specialist - Annual Reports
SS-P	Senior Specialist - Proposals
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
TAP	Transparency and Accountability Policy
TB	Tuberculosis
ToR	Terms of Reference
TP	Technical Partner
TRC	Technical Review Committee

TRP	Technical Review Panel
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States Government
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 Background

This report presents the findings of a review of GAVI's Independent Review Committees (IRCs). The review was commissioned by GAVI and undertaken by HLSP (a consultancy company). The review period was 2006-2009, with the primary purpose of the review being to assess the IRC 'fit for purpose'.

Purpose is defined as the ability of the IRCs to conduct robust and independent technical appraisals of country applications and make funding recommendations to the GAVI Board /Executive Committee. The *fit* refers to the ability and suitability of the IRC model, in terms of its design and execution, to satisfy this purpose and deliver results. More specifically, the questions to be addressed by this review were:

Design: To what extent are the design of the IRC and related processes (e.g., terms of reference, composition, role of Secretariat and partners, processes for reaching decisions) fit for purpose?

Execution: To what extent have the management of the IRC by the Secretariat and the conduct of the pre-review by WHO and UNICEF been appropriate and effective? Furthermore, to what extent has the IRC appropriately executed its internal work processes in reaching decisions?

Results: To what extent have IRC decisions regarding country applications and Annual Progress Reports and recommendations regarding policies been robust, independent, appropriate and well justified?

The IRCs serve a dual role for GAVI: (1) They safeguard the independence of funding recommendations, and strengthen the accountability and transparency of the Alliance's decision making; (2) By advising the Executive on funding applications they are integral to GAVI's process of resource allocation.

The IRC model is a system of peer review undertaken by a committee of independent technical experts. It is a desk based assessment of written funding applications and progress reports submitted to GAVI by eligible countries, and takes place in Geneva, mainly on a bi-annual basis for each Committee. The configuration of the Committees evolved over the period of this review. During 2006-2008, there were two New Proposals IRCs, i.e. one that covered funding application requests for new vaccines, immunisation services support and injection safety, with a separate Committee for health system strengthening and civil society organisation application requests. Reviewing grant performance through the Annual Progress Report (APR) and giving recommendations on continued support (including performance based funds) for approved and ongoing grants is the responsibility of the Monitoring IRC. This review examines all these Committees in its scope.

The framework guiding this review examines issues and indicators that relate to the design, execution and results/performance of the IRCs (Figure 1). These are also considered within the rubric of the OECD DAC (Development Assistance Committee) criteria.

A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods has been used to investigate different information and data sources. Methods include: documentary review, stakeholder interviews (including country consultation), participant observation of the Committees, Committee self assessment, a 'benefit of hindsight' review of grants, a mapping of IRC related processes, and an examination of other relevant peer review models for comparative and benchmarking purposes.

Figure 1: Review Framework

IRCS	IRCS DESIGN	Issues Examined	Indicators	Data Sources	Methods
Relevance		• The extent to which IRC design is 'fit for purpose	Relevance/clarity of ToRs • Committee Size • Independence & transparency of selection process (incl. Chair) • Preservation of Committee memory • Extent to which 'joined up with relevant GAVI entities	• Document • GAVI website • Key informants	• Document review • Key informant interviews • Committee participant observation • Focus Gp with IRCs
Efficiency	IRCS EXECUTION	Issues Examined	Indicators	Data Sources	Methods
Relevance		• Nature and quality of IRC decision making process • Interactions and communication within IRCs, between IRCs and applicant countries, GAVI Secretariat and GAVI Alliance Board	• Num of proposals/APRs approved, with clarifications, rejected • Volume of work vs committee size/ speed, length of meeting • Cost • Briefing of IRCs • Ability to track decisions	• Committee documents and country APRs • Committee cost data •Key informants	• Document review • Key informant interviews • Committee participant observations • Focus group with IRCs
Impact	IRCS RESULTS	Issues Examined	Indicators	Data Sources	Methods
		• Extent to which IRCs provide balanced and fair assessment • Extent to which IRCs reduce GAVI's exposure t undue risk • Num disputed decisions" • Policy development function • Value for money of IRCs	•Extent of'good' and 'weak' performing grants • Num of disputed decisions • Proportion of IRC policy recs adopted by GAV(• IRC model vs other grant review models	• Country grant data • Key informant data • Documents	• Document review •Key informants • Examine uptake of IRC policy recommendations – by doc review and consultation with Secretariat

2 Findings and Conclusions

Relevance of IRC Design

This review found that as a conceptual approach there is significant logic and merit to having a system of independent technical review. This is externally validated by other agencies, who also use a similar approach (although with some differences), to advise their respective Boards on programme funding decisions. Yet whilst the mandate and composition of the IRCs is broadly appropriate, this review also identified a number of gaps that need to be strengthened to increase the relevance of the design. For example:

- A lack of an open and competitive appointment of members, which would provide greater assurance and transparency of independence (whereas the current system relies mainly on partner nominations).

- Addressing gaps and disparities in IRC ToRs (e.g. the ToRs for the Monitoring IRC are looser and give less clear guidance than those for the integrated New Proposals IRC).
- Adopting a more systematic and evidence based management approach to Committee composition which is driven by the needs of individual Committees rather than a 'one size fits all' management approach. Variation within and across IRCs was observed from an examination of Committee demographics, skill mix and levels of country experience. Committee size and mix was not always fit for purpose.
- Weak institutional linkages and synergies between IRCs were observed. This has resulted in somewhat separate review systems rather than a model that operates as a continuum. This has the advantage of separating recommendations for the award of new proposals from subsequent recommendations for 'funding disbursement,' and thus may instil greater impartiality into the system. However, it also results in reduced 'read across' for Committees that are often dealing with related funding decisions.
- Regarding support provided to the IRCs by the Secretariat (Programme Delivery Department - PD), a dual responsibility to relationship build with countries and be responsible for the day-to-day oversight of country grants, is potentially at odds with the support role to Committees who make recommendations to the Board for the flow of resources to these same countries. Views expressed by some IRC members indicated that PD could be perceived as advocating for countries. A recent IRC Report to the Board (May 2009) contained a statement about the need for the Secretariat to respect the decision recommending role of the IRCs. This issue is not peculiar to GAVI. A similar experience was observed at the Global Fund by their Technical Review Panel, with regards to earlier support arrangements with their Country Programmes Department. This resulted in the introduction of the Proposal Advisory Services Unit from funding Round 6.

3 Effectiveness of the IRC Model

The findings of this review conclude that the IRCs have been delivering their overall purpose reasonably well. The pool of people from which members have been drawn are highly respected and committed individuals who recognise the importance of their role. Equally, the Secretariat has been providing dedicated support. This review identified a number of signs that indicated strength and effectiveness in the model.

- **Efforts to improve and strengthen systems:** There is evidence of an active approach, based on iterative learning, to the management and support of the IRCs. Changes – particularly in recent years – are considered to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the IRCs. For example, the introduction of the Transparency and Accountability Policy (TAP) team; the strengthening of the pre-review process to more effectively screen out proposals/APRs that do not meet specified minimum requirements; and the establishment of Vice Chairs in the IRCs.

- **Patterns of IRC decision making:** The proportion of grant approvals across IRCs is consistently higher than for re-submissions. This compares to the findings from other similar independent technical Committees in other agencies (e.g. the Technical Review Panel of the Global Fund). Whilst there was a prevailing view amongst some key informants from different constituency groups, that Francophone countries had lower levels of success with IRCs, there was no evidence found in the data. Yet there was a suggestion that levels of success might be lower for Lusophone and Hispanophone countries, in some instances. However, as actual numbers of applications were small, it was not possible to draw reliable conclusions about this. It is suggested that this be monitored and over time on a larger sample size. There was no evidence found in the data to suggest that LICUS/non-LICUS countries had differing levels of success when assessed by IRCs. More broadly, it was observed the general pattern of IRC decisions vary across, and within, funding streams by Committee. It was not possible to determine if this was attributable to the quality of proposals in any given year, or the dynamics of the individual Committee.

- **IRC & Communications with Countries:** Communication to countries was reported to have improved over time. This was a view also expressed by country representatives. Nevertheless, there is always scope for improvement, with the comprehensiveness of explanations for a funding decision (particularly if not approved) highlighted as an area for continued attention.

In terms of other aspects:

- **Committee Management:** The overall effectiveness of the IRCs can be judged to be sub-optimal, due mainly to some limitations in management and monitoring processes. This conclusion is based on evidence of: some lack of adjustment of work loads to Committee size (some of this due to factors such as Committee member schedule changes that are beyond Secretariat control); best use of expertise within the group; a Committee working style that does not optimally 'mine' information about past grant history and performance; lengths of meetings that are not adjusted to work volume; and insufficient linkages between IRCs. Both Committees are designed to receive similar levels of support and types of information, but the Monitoring IRC may have been comparatively less well served (due in part to the lack of a dedicated staff member during the time of the review), and consequently is labouring with more of these difficulties, than the New Proposals IRC.

- **Organisation & Use of Committee Data:** A related but separate finding was that weakness was found in the compilation, synthesis and monitoring of core Committee data (both for issues of composition and Committee recommendations made, especially for APRs). It is difficult to imagine how issues of IRCs composition and results could be systematically managed without investment in this function. This also means that IRCs are challenged in monitoring trends and in delivering the overview IRC report which requires use of consolidated data. Staff supporting the Committees have busy and responsible roles and are stretched. Weaknesses identified are systemic, and not a reflection on committed individuals, but need to be addressed.

- **Pre-Review Process:** In terms of the pre-review phase, this was found to be useful by IRC members and allowed for a more efficient and effective use of Committee time. However, the quality of pre-reviews was reported by IRC members to vary in quality. The complex nature of HSS proposal and review means that HSS pre-review may be more challenging and the output less useful. The conduct of the pre-review by UNICEF and WHO represents a good deal for the GAVI Alliance in terms of cost, especially for immunisation related grants.

  A broader concern about the pre-review process was highlighted in relation to an *in principle* and *in practice* issue concerning the design of the model, as it stands. Technical partners are involved in providing support for the development and implementation of proposals at the country and regional level (including that of providing independent coverage data). In principle, colleagues at the global level may be uncomfortable identifying inconsistencies and weakness in proposals supported by colleagues at other levels of the organization. This is true for both UNICEF and WHO but is possibly more marked for WHO given their country assistance role and mandate. Given the 'mechanical' (not advisory nature) of the pre-review process, IRC and technical partners commenting on this matter did not perceive this to be a problem. In practice, this may be more complex than acknowledged if the line between proposal development activities, review and follow-up for information becomes blurred. Evidence to support this was suggested in interview.

  WHO's use of consultants to undertake the pre-review process is a good method of managing and strengthening impartiality. As WHO has expressed interest in reviewing the system and arrangements for the conduct of the pre-review, it seems timely to consider assess this.

4 Efficiency of IRC Design and Execution

The consideration of the IRC model in terms of efficiency was undertaken through examination of use of time, monetary costs and an assessment of efficiency gains possibly made through managing the IRC task in another way.

- **Use of time:** When compared with other peer review models, the number of review days per member is roughly comparable, although the New Proposals IRC has approximately half a day more time per member/proposal to undertake a review than a similar model.

- **Monetary costs:** It was calculated that the average proportional cost of all IRCs per year is 0.15% of the value of the financial portfolio that the Committee advised on per year over the review period. Given Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) costs are expected to be in the order of 8-10% of a programme, with most spent at country level, this cost would appear to be proportionately low.   At another level, considerable cost variation was noted across and within IRCs year on year.   It was not always clear what cost drivers explained this variation although factors such as procurement arrangements (e.g. hotels) made a difference. Interestingly, when examined over time the actual unit cost of each review round is actually decreasing, making each round increasingly better value for money

- **Considering alternative scenarios:** Efficiency gains from doing 'business' another way were considered, including the case for bringing the monitoring of country grants in-house to the GAVI's Secretariat. Given certain assumptions, along with a balancing of pros/cons, it was concluded there was no currently compelling case for considering this (financial or otherwise).

5 Impact and Results of IRCs
It is not possible to directly measure the attribution and impact of the IRC contribution to GAVI's organisational goals. This is because the causal pathway from IRC actions to the saving of children's lives via immunisation is too distant. Instead, IRC impact has been measured in two ways:
- The identification, raising and addressing of 'flags' or issues that may affect programme implementation and grant performance; and
- IRC contribution to GAVI's policy process, as specified in IRC ToRs.

The review examined to what extent respective IRCs identified flags from clues found in documentation presented to them, at the actual time of application and report appraisal and decision recommendation. With regards to the grant review exercise, it identified a tendency for IRCs to identify flags, which is good, but less robust performance in responding to and managing the flags that were identified. There is a need to better clarify and delineate collective partner / entity roles and responsibilities, to strengthen the management of concerns identified by the IRCs.

On the other major aspect of their role, respective IRCs were found to have contributed significantly, through making general recommendations on the basis of their reviews, to the overall GAVI policy process.

6 Overall Recommendation
In sum, this review found that parts of the model are fitter than other parts for the task required.   It is argued that more rigorous management of factors effecting the design and execution of IRC activities will in turn improve the effectiveness, efficiency and ultimate results of IRCs. The primary conclusion of this review was:

To preserve but strengthen the IRC model to make it more fit for purpose. Undertaking a number of policy, management and operational changes will make it a more relevant, effective and efficient model for fulfilling its purpose and achieving results.

1. INTRODUCTION

> **Key Messages:**
> - This is a review of GAVI's Independent Review Committees which are responsible for the technical appraisal of new proposals, as well as for the monitoring of performance and related fund disbursements, to already approved grants. These respective Committees make recommendations to the GAVI Alliance Board - they are not decision making bodies.
> - The review was undertaken for GAVI by HLSP (a consultancy firm).
> - The review was tasked with considering the IRCs 'fit for purpose' in terms of design, execution and results for the period 2006-2009.

This report presents the findings of a review of the Independent Review Committees (IRCs) of the Global Alliance for Vaccines & Immunisation (GAVI). This review was undertaken by a team of HLSP consultants, commissioned by the GAVI Secretariat. Its purpose was to assess the degree to which the design, execution and decision of these IRCs is "fit for purpose"[1]. More specifically, the review considered the independence, rigor and adequacy of the IRC review process during the period 2006-2009. The Terms of Reference (TORs) for this review are attached (Annex 1).

The timing of this review is apt for several reasons:
a) The findings of this review can contribute to information required for the development of the GAVI Alliance strategy (2011-2015) which is taking place in 2010.
b) Although not a comparative study, it is timely that other key agencies (e.g. the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria - GFATM) have conducted recent evaluations of their performance (including technical advisory groups and review Committees). It will be useful to situate the findings of this review in the context of other agency approaches and experiences.
c) The New Proposals IRC (Health Systems Strengthening/Civil Society Organisation) was integrated with the New Proposals IRC (New Vaccines, Immunisation Services Support, and Injection Safety) in early 2009. A stock-take of how this arrangement is 'bedding down' is useful.
d) Given plans for a joint programming arrangement for Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) between GAVI, GFATM and the World Bank, it is appropriate to reflect on the broader nature and potential development options of the IRC model.

Box 1 summarises the key questions to be addressed by this review, set out in the TORs.

Box 1: Questions Addressed by the Review

> **Design:** To what extent are the design of the IRC and related processes (e.g., terms of reference, composition, role of Secretariat and partners, processes for reaching decisions) fit for purpose?
> **Execution**: To what extent have the management of the IRC by the Secretariat and the conduct of the pre-review by WHO and UNICEF been appropriate and effective? Furthermore, to what extent has the IRC appropriately executed its internal work processes in reaching decisions?
> **Results:** To what extent have IRC decisions regarding country applications and Annual Progress Reports and recommendations regarding policies been robust, independent, appropriate and well justified?

This paper consists of five sections that cover: a description of the IRC model (Section 2), review framework and methods (Section 3); findings (Section 4); discussion and conclusions (Section 5). The recommendations based on this review are presented in a stand alone document.

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[1] See Committee Terms of Reference:
(a) http://www.gavialliance.org/resources/Mandate_TOR_NewProposals_IRC_2009.pdf and;
(b) http://www.gavialliance.org/resources/Mandate_TOR_IRC_Monitoring_2009.pdf

2. IRC MODEL

> **Key Messages :**
> - The IRC model is a system of peer review by a Committee of independent technical experts. It is a desk based assessment of country written submissions that takes place in Geneva, mainly on a bi-annual basis for each Committee.
> - Both IRC Committees are responsible for making significant funding recommendation to the GAVI Board/Executive Committee. The Committees are advisory in nature – not decision making bodies.
> - Currently there are two IRCs – a New Proposals IRC and a Monitoring IRC. Prior to 2006, there was a single IRC to assess new proposals for new vaccines, immunisation services strengthening and injection safety. With the launch of the Health Systems Strengthening window (HSS) in 2006, a separate IRC was established to assess HSS new proposals. This existed from 2006-2008, and merged with the original new proposals IRC in 2009. This integrated new proposals IRC now reviews all country applications across all GAVI programme funding areas, (i.e. similar to the Monitoring IRC).
> - This is the first specific review of these Committees in the ten year history of GAVI, although other reviews/evaluations commissioned by GAVI have made observations relevant to the IRCs.
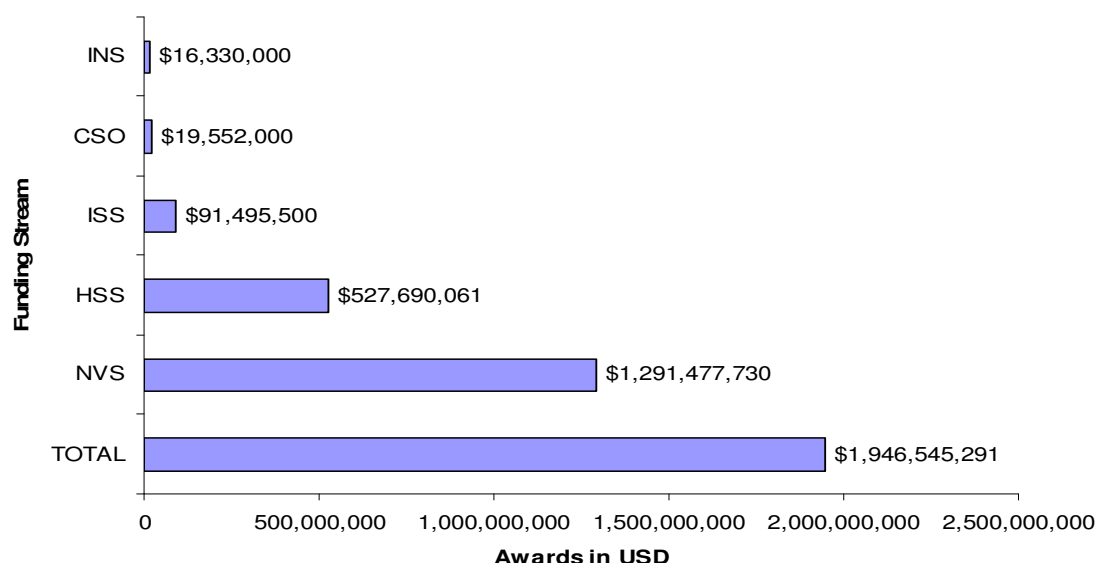
At the time of this review there were two IRCs, i.e. New Proposals IRC and a Monitoring IRC. These Committees are responsible for conducting a technical appraisal of country applications or progress reports. They serve an *advisory* function to the GAVI Board /Executive Committee and do not have executive decision making power. New grant applications are assessed by the New Proposals IRC. Reviewing grant performance through the Annual Progress Report (APR) and giving recommendations on continued support (including performance based funds) for approved and ongoing grants already is the responsibility of the Monitoring IRC.

IRCs play an important role for GAVI for the following reasons:

- **Recommendations about resource allocation:** They advise the Executive (i.e. the Alliance's governance bodies and the Secretariat) on the technical merit of country proposals and therefore play a critical role in GAVI's resource allocation process. To date, it is exceptional for IRC funding recommendations not to be approved by the Executive. Figure 1 shows the scale of financial resource allocation by funding stream recommended by the New Proposals IRC for the review period.

- **Safeguarding the independence of recommendations:** As independent, technical experts, the IRCs ensure the impartiality and integrity of funding recommendations, and strengthen the accountability and transparency of the Alliance's decision making.

The IRC Committees are fashioned on a particular model and approach to decision making. In essence, the IRCs conduct a desk based review of proposals/progress reports submitted by countries. The review is conducted in English, and where material is submitted in French, it is translated. The review for each Committee takes place in Geneva in the GAVI building, mainly on a bi-annual basis. IRC Committee members are supported by the GAVI Secretariat who attend Committee sessions (as appropriate), to answer questions about documentation or country issues, where possible. Additionally, focal point persons representing WHO and UNICEF also attend many plenary sessions, to answer any queries related to pre-review checks (see Section 4).

Figure 1: Amount of funding recommended by the New Proposals IRCs and approved by the GAVI Board /Executive Committee (2006-2009)

Box 2 highlights some key characteristics of the model.[2]

Box 2: Characteristics of the IRC model
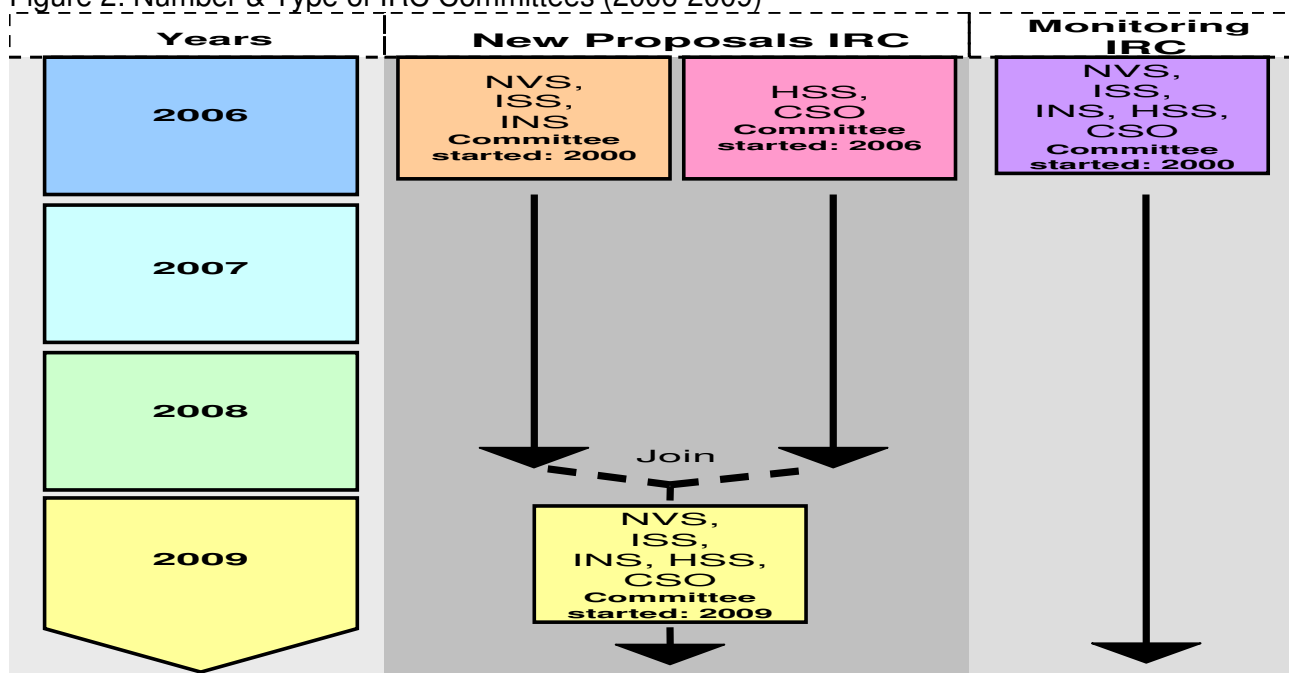
- A process of peer review conducted by an independent group of multi-disciplinary technical experts who make funding recommendations to the GAVI Board / Executive Committee.
- The peer review process takes place in Geneva via a desk based review of country written submissions.　There are two meetings per year, per Committee. Members review submissions in groups of three (for new proposals) and two (for monitoring). Recommendations are reached by discussion and consensus.
- The IRCs make a recommendation for each proposal/progress report as follows: approval, approval with clarification, conditional approval (New Proposal Committee only), and re-submission /insufficient information.
- Committee members are paid honorarium and expenses.　The honorarium level is set in accordance with the UN scale rates for senior technical advisers (i.e. P5 equivalent level)
- New Committee members are identified and nominated by GAVI Alliance partners.　A potential pool of candidates is reviewed by the Policy and Performance Committee, and subsequently reviewed /approved by the GAVI Board /Executive Committee.　Thereafter, the Chief Executive Officer of the Secretariat selects Committee members from the approved pool of candidates.
- Chairs of the IRCs are appointed by GAVI Secretariat.
- Each IRC has a Terms of Reference which includes a policy recommendation function for both IRCs.
- Each member is annually contracted, and the length of service is three years. Some members are invited to serve for longer.
- All members are required to sign a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement.

Figure 2 depicts the evolution of IRC Committees over the review period.　As mentioned, during 2006 to early 2009, there were two New Proposal IRCs, with a separate Committee for HSS in its

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[2] Also refer to the GAVI Alliance Handbook http://www.gavialliance.org/resources/Handbook_in_English.pdf for a description of the roles of the new proposal and monitoring IRCs, and application and monitoring procedures.

start up phase[3].   The Monitoring IRC has always been integrated (i.e. with HSS) and covers all GAVI funding streams.

Figure 2: Number & Type of IRC Committees (2006-2009)

Other points to note in terms of this review are:

- **Number of IRCs:** This review covers the period 2006-2009. During this period, there have been three new Committees: two new proposal IRCs for the period 2006 to early 2009; an integrated or merged new proposals IRC formed early last year; and a single monitoring IRC. For the purposes of this review, the design, execution and results/performance of these four IRC Committees are included.

  In terms of issues pertinent to the current IRC Committee structures, findings for the integrated New Proposals IRC (NVS, ISS, INS, HSS, CSO) and the Monitoring IRC are most relevant. Findings related to the two stand alone new proposal Committees during the period 2006-2008 have more historical than contemporary relevance.   Nonetheless, there are lessons to be learnt from an examination of all these Committees. It should also be noted that, given the recent merger of the new proposals Committees (i.e. in 2009), analysis for this integrated Committee is based on a far shorter history (i.e. two Committee sessions) but is still useful in terms of early lessons learnt.

- **IRC nomenclature**: For the purposes of this report, these respective Committees will be referred to as:
  - New Proposals Committee (NVS, ISS, INS)
  - New Proposals Committee (HSS, CSO)
  - Integrated New Proposals Committee (NVS, ISS, INS, HSS, CSO)
  - Monitoring IRC

- **What is already known about GAVI's IRCs?** This is the first specific review of these Committees in the ten year history of GAVI, although other reviews /evaluations commissioned by GAVI have made observations relevant to the IRCs (see Chapter 5 and Annex 9).

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[3] HSS funding stream was introduced by GAVI in 2006.

3. REVIEW: FRAMEWORK AND METHODS

Key Messages
- The framework guiding this review examines issues and indicators that relate to the design, execution and results /performance of the IRCs.
- A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods has been used to investigate different information and data sources. Methods include: documentary review, stakeholder interviews (including country consultation), participant observation of the Committees, Committee self assessment, a 'benefit of hindsight' review of grants, a mapping of IRC related processes, and an examination of other relevant peer review models for comparative and benchmarking purposes.

3.1 Review Framework

The approach to this review is summarised by the framework presented in Figure 3 which shows the relationship, structure and content of different components.   In essence, the review examined the IRCs in terms of the domain areas of *design*, *execution* and *results*.   Within these areas features are examined in terms of their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact (i.e. OECD /DAC evaluation criteria). This framework was refined during the course of the work, particularly regarding the identification of some indicators, sampling strategies and sources of data.

Figure 3: Review Framework

IRCS	Issues Examined	Indicators	Data Sources	Methods
IRCS DESIGN	• The extent to which IRC design is 'fit for purpose	Relevance/clarity of ToRs • Committee Size • Independence & transparency of selection process (incl. Chair) • Preservation of Committee memory • Extent to which 'joined up with relevant GAVI entities	• Document • GAVI website • Key informants	• Document review • Key informant interviews • Committee participant observation • Focus Gp with IRCs
IRCS EXECUTION	• Nature and quality of IRC decision making process • Interactions and communication within IRCs, between IRCs and applicant countries, GAVI Secretariat and GAVI Alliance Board	• Num of proposals/APRs approved, with clarifications, rejected • Volume of work vs committee size/ speed, length of meeting • Cost • Briefing of IRCs • Ability to track decisions	• Committee documents and country APRs • Committee cost data • Key informants	• Document review • Key informant interviews • Committee participant observations • Focus group with IRCs
IRCS RESULTS	• Extent to which IRCs provide balanced and fair assessment • Extent to which IRCs reduce GAVI's exposure t undue risk • Num disputed decisions" • Policy development function • Value for money of IRCs	•Extent of 'good' and 'weak' performing grants • Num of disputed decisions • Proportion of IRC policy recs adopted by GAV(• IRC model vs other grant review models	• Country grant data • Key informant data • Documents	• Document review •Key informants • Examine uptake of IRC policy recommendations – by doc review and consultation with Secretariat

(Left side vertical labels: IRCS, Relevance, Efficiency, Relevance, Impact)

* Number of disputed decisions refers to the number of 'country appeals' against IRC decisions. The review framework presented here is the framework originally devised for this work, and was developed before it was understood that there was no country appeal system.

3.2   Methods

A range of methods, both quantitative and qualitative were used by this study.   For clarity, Table 1 lists the range of methods used by area of examination. Different methods were used to explore some of the same topics either because they elicit different types of information, thereby increasing the comprehensiveness of data available, or they allow for triangulation of data produced, and so allow for corroboration or validation of information provided.

Table 1: Type of methods by issue /indicator of examination

Issues & Indicators	Doc Review & Grant Review	Stakeholder Interviews				IRC Participant Observation	Process Map	Other Models of Peer Review
		Countries	IRC*	Secretariat	Tech Partners			
Design – Fit for Purpose								
Relevance of ToRs	X		X	X	X			X
Committee Size	X		X	X	X	X		X
Independence /transparency	X	X	X	X	X			X
Preservation of Committee memory	X		X	X	X			X
Committee linkages	X		X	X	X		X	
Execution •								
Work volume, comm. size, meeting length	X		X	X	X	X		X
Cost	X							X
IRC reports and decisions	X	X	X	X			X	
Ability to track decisions	X		X	X		X	X	
Results △								
Extent to which 'flags' are identified by IRCs	X							
% disputed decisions	X	X		X				
IRC reports and contribution to policy development	X		X	X				
Value for money	X							X

* Includes a group self assessment exercise by each IRC.

• Execution refers to activities such as: the pre-review process; management and support provided by the Secretariat; IRC decision making; Committee processes and /linkages to other relevant bodies

△ Results - balanced and fair assessment; risk management; contribution to policy development; value for money

3.2.1 Document Review & 'Benefit of Hindsight' Grant Review

Given the historical span of this evaluation, documents and other secondary data sources provide an important source of information. Documents used can be divided into two main categories:

- **Committee Related Documents**

These included documents such as: IRC reports (overall Committee summary reports, plus country specific reports), GAVI Board Reports, pre-review reports, CVs of IRC members, grant decision spreadsheets (where compiled) and IRC membership lists, with a list of documents consulted presented in Annex 2. These documents were drawn on for a range of facts and figures that informed subsequent data compilation and analysis.

- **'Benefit of Hindsight' Grant Review**:

Rationale:
Country grant performance was identified by the review team as a marker or indicator of IRC performance and results. Admittedly, grant performance is affected by many factors, and there is not a direct causal pathway between IRC decision and subsequent grant performance. However, the IRCs play an important fiduciary role in the GAVI Alliance in terms of calculated risk management based on technical assessment.   For this reason, conducting a 'benefit of hindsight' review of the IRCs past decisions in a selected number of countries was considered a useful exercise in order to:

(a) Determine the extent to which IRCs (New Proposals[4] and Monitoring) raised or missed a flag concerning 'clues' present in country grant or annual progress report (APR) documentation, which gave possible forewarning of subsequent grant implementation challenges. Conclusions drawn about the presence or absence of flags were made on the basis of written evidence available to IRC members at the time.

(b) Facilitate learning over time both within and across IRCs

This exercise did not in any way seek to undertake a full independent technical assessment of grants reviewed. However, its results demonstrate that such an exercise could be valuable to undertake by GAVI itself as a form of quality assurance.

Sample:

A purposeful sample of 15 country grants covering a range of different funding streams (i.e. new vaccine introduction - NVS, health systems strengthening - HSS, Immunisation Services Support – ISS) were examined during the review period.   Table 2 lists the criteria used to identify country grants.   These criteria were developed in consultation with the Secretariat's Programme Department (PD). Annex 3 shows how these 15 grants distributed across different Committees /funding streams[5].   Countries fulfilling these criteria were independently nominated by Country Responsible Officers (CROs) in GAVI, with 15 countries subsequently selected by the review team to ensure a geographical and language spread.

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[4] Both New Proposals IRCs, namely NVS, ISS, INS and HSS, CSO were included in this exercise. For the purposes of reviewing grant performance and history, the Integrated New Proposals Committee (NVS, ISS, INS, HSS, CSO) was excluded because of its recent formation.
[5] The names of countries have been purposefully withheld. The focus of interest here is the IRC (not individual countries), and to what extent IRCs detected or missed clues (or flags), at the time of grant review, that might have been reasonably detected, and provided forewarning of subsequent grant implementation challenges.

Table 2: Criteria for Selecting Country Grants

	New Proposal IRC		
Funding Stream	**Criteria defining sub-optimal grant performance**		
NVS	• Excessive delay in starting grant activities compared to plan. *'Excessive delay' '* was defined as six months or greater delay to grant start and excluded manufacturing delay		
HSS	• Delay in using first received funding disbursement. This measure pertains to delays subsequent to receipt of funds and excludes delays related to grant negotiations, establishing bank accounts and waiting for funds.		
ISS	• Low use of ISS funds - low use is defined as a third or more of funds unused		
	Monitoring IRC		
NVS	• Use of vaccines (stock outs and over stocks) - one or more occasions of vaccine stock out in a twelve month period, or 50% or more vaccine in stock than planned for at point of APR		
HSS	• No funds used - or 60% or more of funds unspent as per plan at point of APR		
ISS	• Population coverage significantly differs to reports of administrative coverage Note: 'Significantly different' is defined according to GAVI current funding guidance – i.e. 10% variance on WHO figures		

Options to categorise flag status were:

No flag: On the basis of information available to the IRC, it was the reviewers' opinion that a flag could not have been identified (i.e. there were no clues or evidence available to the IRC to suggest the likelihood of the subsequent event).

Flag raised: This means the IRC identified and noted the issue. Variants of this flag status are whether a flag was fully or partially raised and, where it was raised, if the matter was proactively addressed by the IRC.

In addressing, or responding to, the flag, the IRC may not always be the body responsible for following up or managing the issue identified / flagged. What was of interest to the review team was whether steps were taken to alert relevant partners /authorities, and whether conditions or follow up action were initiated by the IRC, as appropriate.   The nature of possible response will be different in different circumstances, and sometimes will be a Committee responsibility, at other times it will be a shared responsibility and may result in action requested of the Secretariat, or communication with the Board, or with technical partners (e.g. WHO, UNCEF), where for example issues of data or country capacity may be of question.   The review team were not in a position to assess how appropriate or adequate action taken by the IRC happened to be.   Instead they examined whether there was any evidence that active steps (of whatever sort) were taken by the Committee, to address the identified matter of concern.

Flag missed: This means the IRC did not describe or refer to clues or evidence in the documentation that was available to them at the time.

Other details:

• Country grant documentation was provided to the review team by the GAVI Secretariat for all 15 selected country grants. Documentation included, relevant grant applications, APRs, IRC country specific reports, pre-review reports by technical partners and decision letters to countries which inform them of the results.   Where relevant, country submissions and related

IRC reports were also requested, for preceding or subsequent country submissions in order to track events forwards and backwards.

- In terms of the conduct of this 'benefit of hindsight' grant review, two members of the review team jointly undertook the review. They reviewed all grant documentation together and agreed by consensus the flag status on a given grant. Where flags were identified, evidence of action initiated was sought for in the documentation.

3.2.2 Key Informant Interviews

A range of interviews were conducted with different stakeholders. These included consultations with IRC members, relevant technical partners (WHO and UNICEF), members of the GAVI Secretariat and a select number of representatives from agencies whose own models of technical peer review were examined for comparison and lessons learning purposes. Information elicited from the latter is reported on separately in Section 4 when describing other peer review models.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by telephone as well as face-to-face (where practical). A topic guide was used to guide interviews and applied in a flexible manner, with questions customised to the knowledge, background and experience of the respective interviewees. The topic guide was structured to mirror the evaluation framework but incorporated open questions to allow respondents to raise issues which were not posed by the interviewer. Topics addressed included a general appraisal of Committee strengths/weakness, design issues such as Committee selection, independence and composition, Committee process or execution issues such as support provided by the Secretariat, Committee self organisation, the pre-review process, as well as views on Committee results and performance. The topic guide (Annex 4) was principally used with IRC members, members of the GAVI Secretariat and technical partners, with additional questions to the latter about the nature and function of the pre-review process.

- **Country Consultations**

Countries are the principle agents affected by recommendations made to the GAVI Board on their funding applications or progress reports by the respective IRCs. Countries views on the impartiality, technical robustness and transparency of decisions made by these Committees is important to the integrity of the process. The objective of conducting country consultations was to explore these and other issues from a country perspective. These consultations were conducted by conducting a semi-structured telephone interview (Annex 5), with a total of 35 representatives (two per country)[6], from 19 countries, invited to participate in the consultation. Country representatives were the EPI manager/ HSS focal point and the WHO country representative.

A stratified purposeful sample was taken (Table 3), with country selection stratified by IRC decision band[7] and by Committee (New Proposal and Monitoring). Between 1-3 countries per decision band were selected, with selection weighted (particularly for the Monitoring IRC) based on Committee decision making patterns.

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[6] The same WHO officer was nominated as the WHO key informant for Yemen, North Sudan and South Sudan.
[7] That is, approval, approval with clarification, conditional approval (new proposal committee only), and re-submission /insufficient information.

Table 3: Countries Selected for Consultation

DECISION BAND	COUNTRY	GRANT TYPE
NEW PROPOSALS IRC		
Direct Approval	Tanzania	NVS
	Cote d'Ivoire	HSS
	Myanmar	HSS
Clarifications	D.R. Congo	NVS
Conditional Approval	Lao PDR	NVS
	South Sudan	HSS
Re-submission	Sao Tome	NVS
	Benin	HSS
MONITORING IRC[8]		
Direct Approval	Benin	NVS
	Bosnia & HG	NVS
	Malawi	NVS
	Kyrgyz Republic	HSS
	Rwanda	HSS
	Vietnam	HSS
Clarifications	Bangladesh	NVS
	Niger	NVS
	Sierra Leone	NVS
	Cameroon	HSS
	Sudan (North)	HSS
	Yemen	HSS

This means more countries tended to be taken from decision bands with a greater number of countries, and naturally no countries were selected from bands where the Committee didn't allocate or use that type of decision. This approach means country views were sought across a spectrum, of countries that were successful with their funding applications, to those who were unsuccessful, and invited to re-submit or provide further information. Within these strata, consideration was also given to:

- sampling countries that submitted new proposals /annual performance reviews during 2008–2009 (excluding October 2009). Countries were selected from recent years in order to reduce recall bias and increase the likelihood of speaking to people involved in the country submission process.
- a mix of applications /APRs covering either new vaccines or HSS grant applications (i.e. one cash and one non-cash funding stream)
- geographic spread
- language mix (interviews were conducted in English, French or Portuguese, as appropriate).
- LICUS / non-LICUS status (i.e. low income countries under stress), according to the World Bank definition.

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[8] Countries with a Monitoring IRC recommendation of 'insufficient information' were not included in the sample because there were very few countries who received this type of a recommendation for the period 2008-2009

3.2.3 IRC Committee Self Assessment

In addition to a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with individual members of the respective IRCs, a group self assessment exercise was also conducted with each current IRC. This was a closed session (i.e. IRC members only) conducted with one to two members of the review team. The purpose of the session was to have a focus group, or round table discussion, with members to explore views about the strengths and weaknesses of IRC.

In terms of the group activity, a total of six flash cards in two different colours were distributed to each member (i.e. three cards in one colour and the remainder in another colour). Members were asked to identify three Committee strengths using one set of coloured cards and three Committee weaknesses using the other set of coloured cards. The exercise was anonymous in that people were not required to write their names on the flash cards. All flash cards were pooled when completed.   Strengths /weaknesses were grouped into similar themes /issues and a group discussion was facilitated by the reviewers about the shared and different views within the group.

3.2.4 Participant Observation of IRC Meetings

Between one to two members of the review team engaged in up to three days of participant observation for each IRC Committee, i.e. the Monitoring IRC meeting in September 2009 and the New Proposals IRC in October 2009.   Participant observation of IRC meetings studied the following features:
- Clarity of focus and task
- Dynamic of the group (e.g. level of inclusion, management of 'talkers' etc)
- Approach to group decision making
- Level of organization (e.g. between Chair and Vice Chair, of working groups)
- Chairing style
- Application of GAVI policy to Committee decision making
- Nature and extent of interaction with GAVI Secretariat representation
- Nature and extent of interaction with WHO /UNICEF representation
- Evidence of cross checking with previous documentation /issues (where appropriate)
- Workload

3.2.5 Process Map

A process map has been compiled which charts the steps and roles /responsibilities of respective entities from the submission of country applications /annual progress reports to GAVI's Secretariat through to the Board's decision. This also includes the process involved with funds disbursement and the nature of system checks on financial figures.

This exercise built on a series of organisational flow charts provided to the review team by the GAVI Secretariat, and developed them using knowledge accrued by the team during the process of the review, supplemented by discussion with the GAVI Secretariat.

3.2.6 Other Peer Review Models

An examination of other peer models was incorporated into this review for lessons learning and bench marking purposes. Given the similar purpose/function of the comparator technical review Committees, the working assumption was that shared features could affirm and indicate robust processes and approaches, while differences might indicate areas where lessons can be learnt.

Two other models have been examined.
- The Technical Review Panel (TRP) of the GFATM; and
- The Technical Review Committee (TRC)of the Stop TB Partnership's Global Drug Facility

Criteria used to identify these Committee models were:

- **Similar models with key distinctive features:** These Committees consist of independent groups of experts, set up by global health public private partnerships, with a remit to make recommendations for grant funding (cash or in kind) based on review of the technical aspects of a country proposal or monitoring report.

- **Established track record:** They each have been in existence for over five years which allows for an examination of experience over time.

- **Publicly available information**:   In terms of reviewing these models, the team drew upon prior descriptions and /or evaluations of the other technical review Committees' models, and reviewed literature in the public domain.   Interviews with two relevant staff members per organisation were also conducted. This provided a snapshot of how the Committees work. Data such as Committee costings were not available in the public domain, and therefore could not be included.   The GDF TRC and GAVI's IRCs have not been subject to review or evaluations, whereas the TRP's role was included in two GFATM reviews/evaluations (Eurohealth 2006 and Macro International 2009, GFATM Five Year Evaluation Study area 1)[9].

  In undertaking this comparison, key facts were extracted from organizational websites and relevant evaluation reports etc.   These facts were augmented with a select number of interviews with key individuals in the relevant agencies.   In terms of the comparison, information was assembled and presented in keeping with the framework underpinning this review i.e. Committee design, execution and results.

The selection of these particular comparators was discussed and agreed with the GAVI Secretariat.

3.2.7 Data Analysis

Different modes of analysis have been applied to the different data sets contributing to this review:

- For the **document analysis** that informed features of Committee composition and decision making patterns, standard descriptive statistics (e.g. averages, proportions and frequencies) were used to examine data. Where relevant, comparisons were made over time and between different IRCs for the review period.

- For the '**benefit of hindsight' grant reviews**, a content analysis of key documents was conducted to assemble a timeline and sequence of events.   A range of documents relevant to the Committee recommendation were read (e.g. country applications /APRs, IRC country specific reports, pre-review reports, decision letters, and relevant correspondence from the Secretariat). Based on this material, a 'jig saw' or picture of facts were compiled by the review team, in relation to the dimension of grant performance under examination (e.g. programme start up time, use of funds, issues with vaccine stock or differences in data sources). A judgement was made on whether there were 'clues' or evidence in the documentation available to the Committee to raise a 'flag' that the grant may experience subsequent problems in a given areas.   On the basis of this judgment, it was noted whether the Committee identified or missed flags (where present), and if so did they address or respond to these flags.

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[9] (i)Wilkinson D et al. Assessment of the Proposal Development and Review Process of the GFATM, Eurohealth Feb 2006; (ii) The Five-Year Evaluation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Synthesis of Study Areas 1, 2 and 3; March 2009, Macro International Inc.

- For **key informant interviews,** themes and issues were extracted from interview transcripts and grouped by stakeholder group in terms of commonly repeated themes, in addition to less commonly expressed but salient points. Areas of consensus and non-agreement were noted both within and across constituency groups. This was similar for the analysis of the IRC self assessment exercise, wherein Committee strengths and weakness were semantically grouped and ranked in priority, according to the frequency or number of times an item was mentioned by different Committee members.

- The **process map** and **comparative peer review models** were descriptive exercises, with one captured more in table /graphic format (i.e. process map), the other expressed more by narrative but organised around indicators of design, execution and results. In terms of the process map, processes were listed separately for the new proposals and monitoring Committees, and charted in a chronological sequence of events from screening and pre-assessment to GAVI Board decision and fund disbursement. The roles and responsibilities of different GAVI Alliance entities in respect of these stages were documented.

4.   FINDINGS

Key Messages
Design:
- **ToRs:** Current ToRs are more defined than earlier versions; ToRs for New Proposals Committee are stronger than those for Monitoring IRC; and areas for development are identified.
- **Independence of Committee**: Perceived to be independent by most; Conflict of Interest procedures are in place; the process of member selection could be more independent and open; support to the IRCs is structured and provided well by the Secretariat, but could be further strengthened, particularly concerning data management.
- **Committee Composition:** Demographics, skill mix and extent of country experience are examined. There is variation within and across IRCs.
- **Committee Linkages**: Limited institutional linkage and synergies between IRCs were observed which weaken the co-ordination of Committee recommendations on resource allocation to country programmes.   The need to enable a culture of continuum rather than separation is important.

Execution:
- **One size /approach fits all:** The review found a lack of calibration of Committee size, meeting length and some expertise areas to volume and type of work.
- **Pre-review:** Found useful by IRC members though quality can vary. The complex nature of HSS proposal and review means that HSS pre-review may be more challenging and the output less useful. The pre-review by technical partners was considered a good deal for GAVI in terms of cost, although the HSS/CSO cost was comparatively more commercially costed.   An issue concerning the design of the pre-review process was identified. In principle, it could be considered a problem that technical partners, working at the country and regional levels, as advisers to countries are also involved at the global level in reviewing the same proposals /APRs. Key informants (including technical partners) did not perceive this to be an actual problem because of the mechanical (non-advisory) role of the pre-review process. In practice, the line between proposal development and proposal review has potential to become blurred. This applies to both UNICEF and WHO but may be more pronounced for WHO given their role /mandate.
- **Committee Decision Making:** An analysis of recommendations made by IRCs (2006-2009) found patterns vary across funding stream and from year to year within funding streams. Where variation occurs it is difficult to know what drives it – i.e. the quality of the applications or the quality of the IRC. A sub-analysis found that patterns of approval /re-submission were the same by LICUS /non-LICUS status, as well as by different language groups, amongst applicant countries. Some caveats are made for Lusophone and Hispanophone countries.
- **Committee decision bands:** The lack of a decision band to allow for conditional approval recommendations is challenging for Monitoring IRC
- **Committee Costs & Efficiency:** There is significant cost variation by round due to a variety of factors. Interestingly the unit price[10] per round (2008-2009) is decreasing. The model is reasonably efficient when the average yearly cost is considered as a proportion of the financial portfolio.   Efficiencies gained by other 'ways of doing business are considered. Compared to other peer review models, there is an argument that the New Proposals IRC could use time more efficiently.
- **Turn around time on APRs**: This is approximately 3-4 months for both new proposals and APRs which is more problematic for programmes being implemented.
- **Other Peer Review Models:** Parity with other peer review models examined – similarities and differences are identified

Results:
- **Benefit of hindsight grant review**: This exercise identified a tendency for IRCs to identify flags which is good, but a weakness responding to identified flags. Some flags were missed altogether by the IRC New Proposals Committee.   There is a need to better clarify and delineate collective partner / entity roles and responsibilities, to strengthen the management of concerns identified by the IRCs.
- **IRCs Recommendations on GAVI Policy:** IRCs contribute to GAVI Policy by making recommendations, although feedback to the Committees about response to recommendations made could be better.

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[10] This is derived by dividing the cost of the meeting by the number of financial supports requested, by the number of Committee members and number of meeting days.

4.1 Response Rates

Response rates refer primarily to the conduct of key informant interviews, including country consultations. Interviews conducted with IRC members, GAVI Secretariat staff and technical partners (WHO /UNICEF) at headquarter level yielded a 100% response rate. A 60% response rate for interviews with representatives of Regional Working Groups was achieved whilst the response rate for country consultations was considerably more modest.

Individuals in 48% of countries approached for interview were spoken to, with interviews conducted with 40% of 35 individuals with whom an interview was requested.   One individual refused an interview, whilst non-responders were sent two email reminders, with a subsequent follow up telephone call to request an interview.   Of those respondents interviewed, approximately 50% were from countries with experience of grant approvals (i.e. versus approval with clarifications or conditions).   Refer to Annex 6 for a list of key informant interviews.

4.2 Design

Review Question: **Design** - *To what extent are the design of the IRC and related processes (e.g., terms of reference, composition, role of Secretariat and partners, processes for reaching decisions) fit for purpose?*

4.2.1 Relevance and Adequacy of Committee Terms of Reference

Compared to earlier versions of IRC Terms of Reference (ToRs) the current ToRs for both IRCs (New Proposals and Monitoring) are clearer and more detailed[11].   Committee accountability and mandate are specified, along with Committee decision point options, and expected Committee outputs.

Looking externally, ToRs for comparable Committees (e.g. the TRP of the Global Fund) cover issues of membership, Committee composition, process for identifying members, Committee scope of work, proposal review process and logistics related to participation in the Committee. Descriptions of decision recommendation categories are also covered. These ToRs are posted on the organisation's dedicated TRP website for public information and ease of access.

ToRs are often (and appropriately) individually crafted to the task in hand, with no universally adopted standards for what they should or should include.   Yet it is also true to say, conventions also exist which are commonly applied and adopted.   To guide the content review of IRCs ToRs, the sorts of areas addressed by the TRP of the GF are considered, along with some others, which the review team consider to be 'normative' areas (i.e. informed by HLSP's experience as a consultancy firm, with experience working to ToRs generated by a range of global and national agencies). Table 4 shows the presence / absence of these areas for the current ToRs for both the New Proposals and Monitoring IRCs.

The ToRs for the New Proposals Committee are more comprehensive and detailed than those for the Monitoring Committee[12].   A number of key items which are present in the New Proposal ToRs are missing from the ToRs for the Monitoring IRC, resulting in looser and less clear guidance. In addition to the impact this has on the clarity of guidance to the Committee, it poses difficulties for the management and monitoring of Committee composition and performance. Whilst membership conflicts of interest may be assessed and managed in practice, transparency is weakened by a lack of detail in the ToRs.

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[11] *Current* refers to those ToRs revised for the 2009 IRC Committees and available on the GAVI website http://www.gavialliance.org/about/governance/boards/taskteams/index.php
[12] The ToR available on GAVI's website for the Monitoring IRC states it is the Terms of Reference of the 2009 Monitoring IRC.

Table 4: Coverage of Issues by the ToRs for IRCs

ToR Area	Integrated New Proposals IRC		Monitoring IRC	
	Present (√)	Absent (X)	Present (√)	Absent (X)
Purpose	√		√	
Mandate /scope	√		√	
Accountability & reporting	√		√	
Committee size /composition	√			X
Process for member identification /selection	√			X
Proposal review process	√			X
Proposal review criteria	Partial			X
Specification of decision point recommendations	√		√	
Required Outputs	√		√	
Logistics	Partial			X
Public access to ToRs – e.g. available on website	√		√	

Key items not specified in the current version (Dec 2009) of the ToRs are: Committee size, professional skill set required, presence of a Committee Chair, management of Conflict of Interest, payment of honorarium, guidance on decision making processes, a fuller explanation of the pre-review phase of the application process, Committee briefing /de-briefing requirements, and a flow chart of key process steps as they relate to the Monitoring IRC. It is understood guidance on these items is available in other documents, and collating them into a single document is advisable.

Additionally, both sets of ToRs could be strengthened by:
- A fuller explanation of the role /responsibilities of the Chair.
- Recognition of the role of Vice Chairs (a recent development) and the respective division of roles / responsibilities between the Chair and Vice Chair.
- Explicit guidance about the roles /responsibilities of the IRCs versus other relevant entities (e.g. GAVI Secretariat, technical partners, the Board etc) with regards to 'who is responsible for what' in terms of follow up action identified during proposal /APR review.
- A description of when and how the Committee relates to other relevant GAVI entities (e.g. the counterpart IRC, the Programme and Policy Committee).
- An explicit statement about what support the Committee receives when in session.
- An explicit statement about the remuneration package received by members and standards or bench marks applied for the setting of fee levels.
- An explicit statement about how the formal record of meeting discussions and decisions should be made, and by whom.

4.2.2 How Independent is Independent?

Independence is a key hallmark of the *Independent* Review Committees in order to preserve the impartiality and integrity of programmatic funding recommendations. The IRC ToR defines independence in terms of the Committee making its recommendation in an environment free from political consideration. The appointment of competent but neutral technical experts with no vested interests is another important pre-requisite, as is the design of the overall process and separation of tasks.

There are no absolute standards by which to assess a Committee's independence. However, there are a number of established conventions and indicators that are adopted to varying degrees

by Committees across a range of technical and global international agencies and partnerships. These cover matters of: governance and reporting; processes such as: member selection; identification and management of Conflict of Interest; ensuring Committee confidentiality; and managing or curtailing situations that allow for potential influence on members.   How these apply to GAVI's IRCs is considered below:

- **Governance, Operational & Reporting Structure**:   The IRCs report directly to the GAVI Board and /or Executive Committee.   They do not report to the Secretariat, or to any configurations of Alliance partners, or to countries. Committee reports are submitted in writing to the Board or Executive Committees.   Overall, the links between IRCs, governance and executive bodies are robust, although there are a few anomalies which could be addressed. For example, the IRC general report and recommendations are not consistently presented by the IRC chair (or delegated IRC member) to the Board or EC; sometimes this is done by the CEO.   Also, the roles of the policy and performance, and governance teams vis-à-vis the Committees are not well defined, or highlighted in the current process (see Tables 6-7). The tightly defined definition of the review process and IRC members' role in it also contributes to the IRCs' independence. For example, the pre-review process by GAVI partners does not include contributions by IRC members – this separation of tasks supports independence. IRC review takes place during a defined two week period, when members are provided with electronic files. The limiting of review processes to the IRC meeting itself reduces any perception or risk of conflict of interest or potential interference in the process.

- **Committee Member Selection**: IRC members are identified via a call for nominations to GAVI Alliance partners specifying the particular area of expertise and qualifications required. Once nominations are submitted, the pool of experts and proposed chair is submitted to the Programme and Policy Committee[13] for review and to the Executive Committee of the board for approval.   The Chief Executive of the GAVI Alliance then selects members from the approved pool of members.   Whilst the common opinion of a wide range of interviewees was that the Committees are both expert in their fields and independent, the process of member identification, along with criteria for assessing expertise and skill areas, is not as transparent and open as they could be.   The Alliance (including the Secretariat) is not safe-guarded from any misperceptions, or possible future accusations of cronyism. By way of benchmarking, similar peer review models issue an open call for members (as required), with a competitive and independent system of appointment. Applications include those from individuals suggested by partners.

  At another level, several IRC Committee members were either quizzical or expressed some degree of dissatisfaction, at the way members changed over Committee rounds, and, with sometimes no obvious explanation, why some members were not invited back. It could be beneficial for the Secretariat to consider more fully engaging the Chairs of the respective Committees in these matters.   This would further strengthen the independence of the Committee and protect the Secretariat from any perception of interference.

- **Conflict of Interest:** In terms of the assessment and management of conflict of interest, each IRC member is required to sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest statement. Specifically, IRC members cannot be from Alliance partner agencies, nor have taken part in technically assisting country applications of countries they are reviewing, or taken part in the pre-review process. Furthermore, when in session, IRC members from countries being considered for funding are asked to leave the Committee whilst discussions are conducted and a decision recommendation reached.   This was applied and witnessed by the review team whilst observing the Committee in action.

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[13] A relatively recently established Committee of the Board (i.e. its Committee Charter was approved in October 2008.

- **Committee Confidentiality:** Recommendations from the IRCs are submitted to the Board or Executive Committee from the Committee as a whole. It is not disclosed which individual members had particular responsibility for leading the reviews on specific countries. This is a good way of ensuring Committee and member confidentiality.

- **Support to the Committee:** Secretariat support to the IRCs is provided by staff working in PD. In principle this combination may be tricky because on the one hand this department is charged with building country relationships and programme oversight, whilst on the other hand, supporting bodies responsible for making recommendations to the Board for the flow of resources to those countries. For example, the process for assessing whether grants 'approved with clarifications' by the IRC have been adequately met is handled within this team, and hence may be subject to possible divided loyalties. This risk would be reduced if staff working with the IRCs were external to the PD and mandated to engage across the Secretariat with relevant teams, including PD.

  Some IRC members perceived the PD to sometimes advocate for countries. The IRC in a recent Committee report (May 2009, Integrated New Proposals IRC), advised the Secretariat to take note of the need to adhere to their support role and respect the IRC to make decisions, simultaneously the IRC sought to create a working environment that promoted transparency and accountability, and permitted Secretariat staff to play a constructive and supportive role.

  It should be noted this situation is not peculiar to GAVI and the PD. Similar issues have been encountered by the Global Fund[14]. Beginning in Round 6, the Proposal Advisory Services Unit within the GF Secretariat became responsible for being the intermediary between the TRP and Fund Portfolio Managers (FPMs), i.e. the latter broadly equivalent to Country Representative Officers in PD. Prior to Round 6, FPMs worked directly with TRP members to provide clarifications to questions (in the same way that CROs do for the IRC), which some felt provided a window for FPMs to advocate for their countries. Following re-structuring, a representative from the Proposal Advisory Services Unit now takes questions and responses back and forth between TRP members and FPMs, in an effort to preserve and enhance impartiality of communication. Furthermore, the Proposal Advisory Services Unit also plays an active role as gatekeeper for any other individuals from the Secretariat or from other institutions who wish to observe TRP meetings, for the purpose of minimizing potential external influences on the process. It worth noting, that the GF TRP is also held off site from the premises of the Global Fund because physical distance is also considered to not only to symbolise but actually enhance the preservation of Committee independence.

From a country perspective, the majority of those interviewed (11/14) thought the decisions fair and independent, with a consensus that the workings of the IRCs are generally scientifically and technically sound, yielding good decision-making. A couple of respondents had the view that the objectivity of the IRC process was not as impartial as it could be. Concerns centred on a perception that:

- The IRC bases its judgement more on the opinions of WHO/UNICEF representatives than country officials when assessing proposals.
- There seemed to be "donor-darlings" which get instant approval of GAVI proposals whilst other countries experience more difficulties.

In sum, it is important to highlight that the prevailing view of all types of stakeholders interviewed for this review was that both IRCs were neutral and independent.

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[14] MACRO et al. Evaluation of the Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria: Results from Study Area 1 of the Five Year Evaluation. October 2007.

4.2.3 Committee Composition

In terms of the design of the IRC model, it is important to understand the nature and composition of its membership, in order to assess how 'fit for purpose' the structure is for the task it has to perform. Features such as Committee size and membership characteristics (i.e. skill mix, demographic characteristics such as geographic and gender diversity, degree of country programmatic experience etc) are central to this. What follows is an examination of these. Firstly, IRC composition is examined in the round (i.e. all Committees together) and then separately by Committee. What emerges is a picture of variation and lack of standardisation across the different Committees, not obviously explained by their different needs /tasks. Much of this variation is masked when the Committees are examined as a pool rather than by their constituent membership.

4.2.3.1 Committee Generalities
Box 4 summarises some general features of the IRC Committees as a whole (i.e. all Committees together).

Box 4: General Features of IRC Composition

- The average number of members per the total of 27 meetings (2006-2009) is 11 (ranging from an average of 8 people in the Monitoring IRC to an average of 15 people in the Integrated New Proposals IRC.
- On average the most common areas of professional expertise[1] in a Committee are: broad Public health (27% of members), HSS (27%), Health Economics[2] (18%), Immunisation Services (9%), Epidemiology (9%) and Cold Chain experts (9%).
- On average the most common areas of geographical work expertise of members are: Africa (64%), Eastern Med (20%), the Americas and Caribbean (8%) and the Western Pacific (8%) regions[3].
- On average the most common areas of nationality by WHO geographical regions are: Africa (36%), Europe (23%), the Americas and Caribbean (17%), South East Asia (10%), Eastern Mediterranean (9%) and Western Pacific (5%) regions.
- On average the gender balance is 69% male and 31% female[4].
- On average each Committee had 23% of new members per Committee meeting[4].
- On average each Committee had a membership where at least 47% of members had spent 2 years or more, working full time in the health sector, in a low income country (this figure is not adjusted by Committee size or number of Committee meetings)[4].
- Generally speaking, there has been a stability in Committee Chair and leadership over the review period:
  - 2006-2008: The same chair for the New Proposals Committee (NVS, ISS, INS). This changed in early 2009 with the integration of this Committee with the New Proposals Committee (HSS, CSO)
  - 2006-2008: The same chair for the Monitoring IRC, with a change of chair in 2008 who continues to serve as chair.
  - 2009: Introduction of co-chairs to both the integrated New Proposals IRC and the Monitoring IRC

[1] Some individuals have more than one area of expertise, for the purpose of this analysis only the primary area of expertise was counted. The professional skill areas used for this analysis are the same as those listed in the ToRs for the current integrated New Proposals Committee. However, the category of cold chain experts was added by the review team.
[2] This also includes people with financial analysis expertise.
[3] The WHO geographical regions were used for this classification.
[4] A number of these features differs when examined by Committee.

4.2.3.2 Composition by Committee

Committee size, professional and geographical expertise areas, and how these map to Committee business in terms of the type of applications to be reviewed, are all considered below. Additional features are assessed such as: Committee demography in terms of nationality and gender mix, as well as to what extent Committee institutional memory is preserved across successive Committee sessions (assessed via turnover rates).

The main message is that there is considerable variation across Committee, more marked along some dimensions than others. Arguably, some of this variation reflects a tailoring of the Committee to its individual Committee tasks. However, most strikingly it would appear that much of this variation is not purposeful, and to a greater or lesser extent may actually affect the performance of the Committee.

For ease, data has been aggregated for each Committee across its different Committee meetings, so findings are presented in terms of averages for a given Committee, with the range of values provided, where relevant.   For ease of reading and assimilation of information, findings are described below, with the data upon which this is based contained in annexes to this report (see Annex 7).

- **Average Number of Members by Committee (2006-2009)**

The average number of Committee members varies from 9 to 15 members per Committee. With the Monitoring IRC being the smallest Committee (n=8) and the integrated New Proposals Committee being the largest (n=15).   See Annex 7 (Figure 1).

- **Average Number of Types of Experts[15] by Committee (2006-2009)**

With the exception of the New Proposals Committee (HSS, CSO), the average number of professional expertise areas per Committee covered between 5-6 different disciplines.

For New Proposals (NVS, ISS, INS) the three leading disciplines were Epidemiology, Health Economics (including finance) and Public Health (including community health, demand generation etc).   For the Monitoring IRC, the three leading areas were Health Economics, Public Health and Immunisation Services.   Whilst for the integrated New Proposals it was more proportionally weighted to health systems skills, with other skills – health economics, broad public health, immunisation services, logistics /procurement - being present but not so heavily represented.   The IRC group with comparatively less diverse areas of expertise areas was the former New Proposals IRC (HSS, CSO), which had core skills of health systems, public health and health economics.

There is clearly no magic or prescribed formula concerning the optimum nature and level of skill mix in such Committees. It should also be recognised that many of these expertise areas are broad public health disciplines and bring added value, in addition to specialist niche areas. That said, one might have expected to find higher levels of health systems expertise, in addition to more consistent monitoring and evaluation expertise on the Monitoring IRC.   Conversely, it is arguable whether the integrated New Proposals Committee needs to be so weighted with health systems skills and could benefit from increased immunisation services specialism.   See Annex 7 (Figure 2).

- **Geographical Expertise Held by Committee Members by Committee (2006-2009)**

The criterion used to assess this was: two years or more experience working full time, in the health sector, in a low income country (as defined by the World Bank). This criterion therefore included OECD nationals working in LICs, but excluded experience in Lower and Middle Income Countries such as India, and individuals whose experience comprised short term consultancy only.
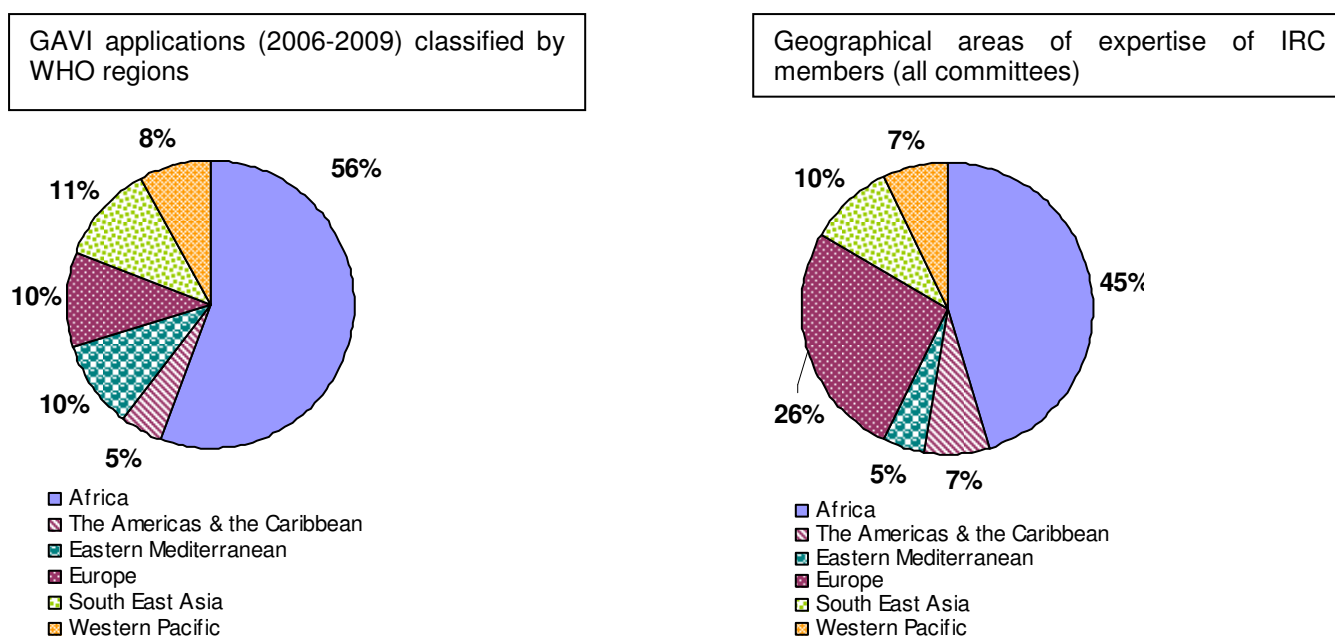
On average the geographical area of expertise represented most commonly by members across all Committees is regional experience of Africa. This is fitting given the majority of country applications are submitted from this Region (see below). With the exceptions of the integrated New Proposals IRC which has a comparatively high proportion of European expertise, other areas of geographical expertise are modestly represented. See Annex 7 (Figure 3)

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[15] Based on the average size of a given Committee

- **Geographical Expertise by Origins of Country Applications (2006-2009)**
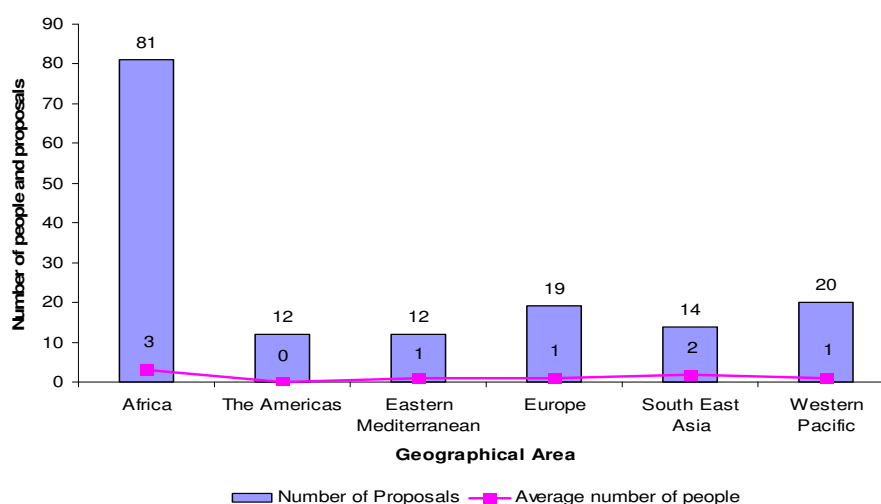
It is important to consider how some of these Committee characteristics map to the job required of IRC members.   When Committee data is pooled it can be seen that the regions of geographical expertise of IRC members are generally well matched to the regions of applicants.

Figure 4: Geographical Regions of Committee Expertise (all Committees) by Origins of Applications

GAVI applications (2006-2009) classified by WHO regions

- Africa
- The Americas & the Caribbean
- Eastern Mediterranean
- Europe
- South East Asia
- Western Pacific

Geographical areas of expertise of IRC members (all committees)

- Africa
- The Americas & the Caribbean
- Eastern Mediterranean
- Europe
- South East Asia
- Western Pacific

However, when this data is examined specifically by Committee a different picture emerges. For instance, Figure 5 shows the distribution of regions, from which proposals reviewed by the IRC (HSS, CSO) originated during 2006-2009.   Whilst the highest number of proposals came from Africa, and on average the most common area of regional expertise in the group was from Africa, the ability of these individuals to review all these proposals is not possible (i.e. a work load issue which is considered in more detail below).   Additionally, a number of proposals are from regions in which Committee members have no regional expertise.

Figure 5: Regional Expertise of Committee Members from the New Proposals IRC (HSS/CSO) versus Origins of HSS Applications.

- **Extent of Geographical Experience by Committee**

When Committee features are considered in aggregate, IRC Committees show that on average nearly half of all Committee members have two years or more experience working full time, in the health sector, in a low income country. When data is disaggregated by Committee, this continues to roughly hold true for the New Proposals Committee (NVS, ISS, INS), 56% of which members have this experience, as well as for the Monitoring IRC for which 60% of members this holds true. Interestingly, this is less for the New Proposals Committee (HSS, CSO) and for the Integrated New Proposals Committee (NVS, ISS, INS, HSS, CSO), who have an average of 37% and 34% of members respectively, with this level of country experience. Whilst it is a judgement call on what 'hands on' country experience Committee members should have, the adequacy of this proportion for both the former New Proposals Committee (HSS, CSO) - now more of historical than contemporary interest – and more importantly for the Integrated New Proposals Committee is questionable.

- **Nationality of Members by Committee**

On average the proportional breakdown of Committee members' nationalities shows that the Africa region is the area from which most people originate. In terms of proportions this ranges from 11% of the Committee (integrated New Proposals Committee) to 28% of the Committee (New Proposals HSS, CSO). Given most applications to GAVI are submitted from the Africa region this further indicates regional familiarity amongst the Committee membership. Members from Europe rank next in terms of the next common nationality group across all Committees, with members from the Americas and the Caribbean being equally prominent in the New Proposals Committee for NVS, ISS, INS as well as HSS/CSO. See Annex 7 (Figure 4).

- **Gender Balance by Committee**

With the exception of the New Proposals Committee (HSS/CSO), most Committees are mainly male (i.e. 66%-82%). The New Proposals Committee (NVS, ISS, INS) had the lowest proportion of women (18%), with the New Proposals Committee (HSS/CSO) having the highest proportion (48%). The latter Committee was the only committee over four years chaired by a woman. The proportion of females in the current Committees is 34% female in the integrated New Proposals IRC and 27% for the Monitoring IRC. This does not appear to be fully in keeping with the GAVI Alliance gender policy[16] to apply a gender perspective to all its work. There is room for increasing the number of women amongst the membership of these Committees, including in Committee leadership roles as Chairs. See Annex 7 (Figure 5).

- **Number of New Members per Committee Session by Committee**

On average there was turnover of between 14-28% of membership per meeting across the various Committees during the review period. At 14%, the lowest turnover was shown to be in the New Proposals Committee (NVS, ISS, INS), with just over a quarter (28%) of new membership per session, occurring in the integrated Joint Proposals Committee.

Importantly, it is worth noting that these averages mask a wide variation across meetings by individual Committees. For example, the Monitoring IRC experienced between 0-50% of membership turnover; the new proposal Committee (HSS/CSO) between 0-40%; whilst the new proposals Committee (NVS, ISS, INS) ranged from 0-34%. In particular, the Monitoring IRC has undergone significant turnover, with a membership turnover of 100% over three successive meetings. This has serious implications for the preservation of Committee memory and continuity. In particular, this is handicapping for a Committee charged with examining country grant performance over time.

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[16] The GAVI Alliance Policy Towards Gender Equality in Immunisation and Related Health Services, 2008.

It is healthy to have Committee membership turnover and it is also recognised that members may not be always available to attend meetings. Nevertheless, a balance needs to be struck in terms of protecting Committee continuity. Equally the burden on the Secretariat in terms of supporting and inducting new members needs to be managed. Going forward, the need to devise measures to ensure better Committee stability is important. Annex 7 (Figure 6).

4.2.4 Committee Linkages

In terms of the design of the IRC model there are limited formal linkages or channels for exchange between the Committee(s) recommending the approval of grant proposals and the Committee monitoring their implementation and performance. The rationale for this is justified in terms of ensuring impartiality and lack of vested interest in terms of the decisions to recommend grant awards and subsequent decisions to disburse funds to countries for those grants. However, Table 5 shows that over the course of the review, a small number of Committee members moved between Committees. The nature of this cross over varied by individual in that sometimes people served in a consecutive fashion on different Committees, for others it was simultaneous.

Table 5: Nature and Extent of Membership Crossover Between IRCs

Type of Committee Cross Over	Number of People
New Proposals (NVS, ISS, INS) + New Proposals (HSS/CSO) + Monitoring IRC	3
New Proposals (NVS, ISS, INS) + New Proposals (HSS/CSO)	6
New Proposals (NVS, ISS, INS) + Monitoring IRC	8

It is the understanding of the review team, that where members simultaneously participated in different Committees (i.e. new proposals and monitoring), they did so as a fully fledged voting member in one Committee but with observer status in the other Committee. However, based on participant observation of both Committees in the autumn of 2009, this did not appear to be the case.

There is a strong case for having closer and more formalised linkages and forums for exchange between the two Committees. The importance of which was recognised back in 2003 by the GAVI Board:
"One of the most successful new features developed by the GAVI Alliance is the Independent Review Committee (IRC), as evidenced again by the thoroughness of the presentations to the Board. It will be important to maintain the integrity of this mechanism by keeping it independent and ensuring that information flow between the teams is strengthened." [Extract from GAVI Board Minutes, 2003]

The case for better linkage is further supported by findings from the 'Benefit of Hindsight' grant review (see below). Missed opportunities for co-ordination across Committees can impact negatively on managing grant performance.

4.2.5 Other Considerations

- **Country Views on IRC Design**
  There were few points made about IRC design by countries representatives. This is probably because at country level specific details of IRC design are not known.   Where points were made they included suggestions by French speaking countries to include more French speakers on the Committees, and to give equal attention/access to information to French speaking countries. Also see section 4.3.3.3 for findings about the proportion of language approval /re-submissions by language of country.

- **Other Peer Review Models**
  It is useful to consider how the IRC model compares to how other agencies also approach the matter of independent peer review. Table 6 compares and contrasts design features of the GAVI IRC model with that of the GFATM TRP and GDF's TRC.

The models summarised in the table above share major **similarities** in purpose and design:
- All three organisations have established expert independent technical groups to make recommendations on funding new proposals from countries. The review bodies are consistently and widely described (in evaluations etc.) to be essential to the integrity, results and accountability of their organisations.
- The Committee function is focused on reviewing and making informed judgements on the technical aspects of the grant proposal/performance report, using transparent criteria which do not include reference to the financial envelope available.
- The Committees are making recommendations to the organisations' boards; while they are not decision making bodies, they are considered as part of the organisation governance structure.
- In addition to review functions, TORs include a role in making policy recommendations through the Committee's general report to its respective board. The GDF TRC also has a technical advisory role.
- Policies and processes are in place to ensure Committee independence, such as conflict of interest policies that: a) exclude staff of UN and their Secretariat, and board members; and b) where members excuse themselves from review and plenary discussions when they have country links, or have been involved in a proposal or monitoring process. Results are attributed to the Committee as a whole, not to individuals, and individual roles in each review are not published.
- Members are recruited according to expertise criteria defined in the TORs, and come from a wide range of technical and geographic backgrounds, including a mix of academics and those with programmatic experience in developing countries. Each Committee aims for a gender balance, and broadly speaking women make up 30-40% of the membership.
- All three organisations report challenges in identifying an appropriately qualified, sufficiently diverse range of experts to be available for at least three years. Given this, and the need to avoid conflict of interest, it is not feasible to always match reviewers precisely in terms of expertise and geographic experience. All three acknowledge the operational paradox, that those most familiar with the country programme cannot be involved in reviewing it.
- There is an overlap between Committees across these organisations. For example, the current TRP chair and several other members are also members of GAVI IRCs (new proposals and monitoring), and some Global Fund TB members are also Global Drug Facility TRC members. This is viewed a strength, to promote lessons learned, reduce potential duplication and build synergies. However, there is no joint or public statement from the partnerships that sets out the advantages and systematically ensures overlap.

There are some significant **differences**:
- The Global Fund TRP is not responsible for review of performance, although monitoring data helps to inform judgements made. The Global Drug Facility TRC (as a single group) is responsible for reviewing some, but not all, performance reports, particularly those deemed by its Secretariat's independent technical auditors to have performance issues (e.g. 39% of total submitted in 2009).
- While new members are approved by each organisation's board (or delegated Committee), the GDF and Global Fund select new members for a pool of potential members through an open, transparent and competitive process i.e. a public call for nominations and submissions of CVs (managed by an external agency, in the GFATM's case).

Table 6: Summary of Committee Design Features

Key current features of Committees	GAVI IRC New Proposals (integrated)	GAVI IRC Monitoring	GDF TRC	GFATM TRP
Main purpose	Review of new proposals	Review of annual performance reports	Review of new proposals and some monitoring reports	Review of new proposals and some requests for reprogramming
Information in public domain (website)	TORs;	TORs	TORs; TRC names; some TRC information	TORs; names and CVs; detailed TRP reports
Size	7-12 (currently 15)	6-12 (currently 15)	12-15	40
Selection process	Nominated by partners; proposed to Board/EC by Sec	Nominated by partners; proposed to Board/EC by Sec	Public call for nominations, externally managed, selected by Board Committee	Public call for nominations; selected by Board Selection Committee
Chairs	Selected by Sec	Selected by Sec	Selected by TRC	Selected by TRP
Remuneration	Meeting honorarium, per diem, travel	Meeting honorarium, per diem, travel	Per diem, travel	Meeting honorarium, per diem, travel
Expertise mix	Range of skills in TORs but composition not specified	Range of skills in TORs but composition not specified	Range of skills in TORs but composition not specified	Composition meets specifications in TRP TORs
Regional mix	5 of 6 WHO regions	5 of 6 WHO regions	Not specified or reported	6 of 6 WHO regions
Gender (% women)	approx 30%	approx 30%	30%	>40%
Period of tenure	3 years, some exceptions	3 years, some exceptions	Most serve max of 6 years	4 Rounds
Turnover	approx 30%**	22%**	approx 20%	approx 30%
Accountability, independence and prevention of COI*	Reports to Board; robust COI policy	Reports to Board; robust COI policy	Reports to Board; robust COI policy	Reports to Board; robust COI policy

* Conflict of Interest; **The use of averages masks a wide range of values on % of turnover per Committee meeting

- The TRP and TRC Committee members select their chairs; IRC chairs are selected by the GAVI Secretariat.
- While all three organisations have posted Committee TORs on their websites, GDF and Global Fund also have full details of membership over time and current CVs.
- TRP members are required to declare their organisational involvements and any other issues that may give rise to conflict of interest to the Ethics Committee, which are kept on file. They must also not be involved in country level activities until 12 months after they have left the TRP.

4.3　Execution

Review Question**: Execution**: *To what extent have the management of the IRC by the Secretariat and the conduct of the pre-review by WHO and UNICEF been appropriate and effective? Furthermore, to what extent has the IRC appropriately executed its internal work processes in reaching decisions*?

A range of matters concerning IRC process and function are addressed in this section. To assist clarity and shared understanding, an overview of key process steps and roles /responsibilities from country application to GAVI Board decision is mapped out. This is followed by a specific examination of the pre-review process and the roles of technical partners, followed by a review of Committee patterns and processes, including issues of workload, decision making and cost.

4.3.1　Process Map:　Country Application to GAVI Board Decision

A mapping of key activities, including the roles of relevant parties, from country application submission to GAVI to Board decision was completed for both the integrated New Proposals IRC and the Monitoring IRC. The purpose of this mapping was to document current process steps and activities against GAVI responsible structures for governance and execution.

The IRCs review process requires a fairly complex sequencing of management and administrative inputs, from screening by the Secretariat, and pre-review by WHO and UNICEF, to organising multiple documents for review by the IRCs, setting up meetings and review schedules, calculating programmatic and financial implications for GAVI as a whole and for countries (on the basis of IRC recommendations), preparing for review by GAVI Board and/or Executive Committee (EC) as appropriate, and liaising with countries with respect to their approval rating and next steps.

The process flow was mapped internally by GAVI in 2008, and staff in the Programme Department are fully familiar with it. However, as recent changes in GAVI governance, management and operations have been implemented, staff in other departments are less conversant with how recent changes have affected the overall process.

(Note re process map: [1] Approval request (AR) consists of the US$ rounded-up to the highest $500.00 and is based on: Years of support; support code; type of vaccine; target number of children; number of doses per child; vaccine wastage rate; buffer stock; left-over balance from previous year (relevant for the Monitoring IRC); number of doses; number of AD syringes; number of re-constitution syringes; number of safety boxes; price of vaccine; price of ADs; price of re-constitution syringes; price of safety boxes; freight cost of vaccine; and freight cost of devices.)

Table 7: Process Map - IRC New Proposals

Stage	Functions	Board	EC	PPC	F&A C	IRC NP	IRC M	WHO/UNICEF	CEO Office	MD	SS-P	SPM	CRO	SS-AR	PA	TAP	Finance Office
Screening / Pre-Review	Receipt of new country proposals										X						
	Open/update electronic country application file (1 file per country)														X		
	Acknowledge receipt to countries										X						
	Screen proposals for completeness against minimum requirements												X				
	Invite countries to provide material or correct applications failing minimum requirements										X						
	Update applications with new information										X						
	Submit for pre-review														X		
	• WHO for NVS, HSS, ISS (re: population coverage data) assessment							X									
	• UNICEF for vaccine supply /procurement assessment							X									
	• TAP for assessing financial management arrangements for cash support requests *															X	
	Receive pre-review reports														X		
	Manage translations														X		
	Prepare electronic country folders for IRC (pre-reviews, relevant applications and /or APRs)										X						
	Final assessment of country folders for completeness										X						
	Managing Director PD submits only complete proposals for review									X							
	Prepare timetable/allocate IRC reviewers (to be confirmed and agreed by IRC in plenary)										X						
Review	IRC induction and briefing					X				X							
	IRC small group and plenary reviews; 3pp country reports compiled by lead reviewer					X											
	IRC technical queries (WHO and UNICEF); country clarifications (CRO) and financial queries (TAP)							X					X			X	
	Assist IRC reviewers with country review reports												X				
	Draft / finalise IRC General Report					X											
	Submit IRC General Report to CEO					X											
	CEO receives IRC General Report								X								
Prep for Board	Managing Director/PD comments on IRC General Report recommendations									X							
	Managing Director/PD submits IRC General Report and proposes comments to CEO									X							
	CEO endorses/amends comments on recommendations								X								
	Managing Director/PD submits Gen Report and comments to PPC			X						X							
	Prepare /send Decision Letters (DLs) for Conditional Approvals and Re-submissions														X		
	Calculate programmatic and financial implics. of IRC recs. and prepares approval requests (AR) [1]											X					
	Submission of AR to Finance for preparation of Cash Management Plan (CMP)											X					
	Prepare CMP																X
	Submit CMP including AR to F&A Committee (IRC General report available on request)					X											X
	Recs. from PPC and F&AC submitted to EC (or Board) (i.e. IRC Report, the CMP including AR)			X	X												
Board	Board or EC decisions on funding Approvals	X	X														
Disbursement	Preparation of DLs for funding Approvals												X				
	Distribution of DL letters of funding Approval to countries														X		
	Financial management assessment (FMA) commissioned by TAP															X	
	Verify and update country banking details (BD) for cash transaction												X				
	Schedule of cash payments to countries with CSU											X					
	Disbursement requests checked against schedule and approved funding. Requests for cash payments.											X					

* Text in blue indicates activities commenced in 2009

Table 8: Process Map - Monitoring IRC

Stage	Functions	Board	EC	PPC	F&AC	IRC NP	IRC M	WHO/UNICEF	CEO Office	MD	SS-P	SPM	CRO	SS-AR	PA	TAP	Finance Office
Screening / Pre-review	Receipt of country APRs														■		
	Acknowledge receipt to countries													■			
	APR screening *																
	• for completeness against minimum requirements (incl. availability of financial statement)													■			
	• for eligibility of request and completeness of reporting												■				
	• of financial statement															■	
	Invite countries to provide missing APR data identified during screening												■				
	Update APRs with missing data provided by countries												■				
	Assessment of country grants to be reviewed (in terms of complete/incompleteness of data)												■				
	Submit APRs to WHO and UNICEF for pre-assessment														■		
	Pre-review by:																
	• WHO for NVS, HSS, ISS							■									
	• UNICEF for vaccine supply /procurement							■									
	Finalise pre-review of APRs (performance report, financial statement, expenditure, budget)													■			
	Receive pre-review reports														■		
	Manage translations														■		
	Review CRO analysis of APRs screened and put forward for review													■			
	Managing Director PD submits only complete APRs for review													■			
	Prepare timetable, allocate IRC reviewers to sub groups, to be agreed by IRC M in plenary													■			
	Inform countries about grants not to be reviewed by IRC													■			
IRC Review	IRC induction and briefing									■							
	Briefing sub groups (two IRC members) on each APR												■				
	IRC member sub groups review APRs						■										
	IRC members draft individual country reports and discuss/agree recs. in plenary						■										
	Technical queries (WHO and UNICEF); country clarifications (CRO) and financial queries (TAP)							■					■			■	
	IRC members prepare, update and finalise country draft reports						■										
	IRC prepares IRC General Report						■										
	Submits IRC General Report to CEO						■										
Prep for Board	CEO receives IRC Gneral Report								■								
	Managing Director (MD/PD) comments on IRC Report recommendations									■							
	MD/PD submits IRC Report and proposed comments to CEO									■							
	CEO endorses or amends comments on IRC Report recommendations								■								
	MD/PD submits IRC Report and comments to PPC			■						■							
	Prepares/sends DLs to countries with Insufficient Information outcomes from IRC decision													■			
	Calculates programmatic and financial implics of IRC recc and prepares approval requests (AR) ¹											■					
	Submission of AR to Finance for preparation of Cash Management Plan (CMP)											■					
	Prepare CMP (including AR) and submit it to F&AC (IRC General Report available on request)				■												■
	Recommendations from PPC and F&AC submitted to EC (or Board) (IRC Report, CMP including AR)			■	■												
Board	Board or EC decision on funding Approvals	🟥	🟥														
Disbursement	Preparation of DLs for funding Approvals for countries													■			
	Distribution of DLs to countries														■		
	FMA commissioned by TAP (in liaison with CRO) for countries identified with issues												■			■	
	Verify and update country banking details (BD) for cash transactions													■			
	Schedule of cach payments to countries with CSU											■					
	Disbursement requests checked against schedule and type /amount of approved funding.											■					
	Requests sent to Finance for cash payments.											■					

* Text in blue indicates activities commenced in 2009

Key observations are summarised below:

- The IRC review processes are clearly set out and form a well sequenced and logical progression of activities which are largely well managed by the Secretariat.
- Process management and the majority of functions are located in the Programme Department (PD), which liaises with other teams in the Secretariat (mainly the Finance Department, the Transparency and Accountability Policy Team, and the Chief Executive Officer's Office - CEO), as required.
- The process has benefited from improvements over time, with major changes introduced in 2009. These include clarifying how the new governance structure affects the process (e.g. the role of the Programme & Policy Committee and the Executive Committee), the role of the PD, and the important contributions from the new Transparency and Accountability Policy Team.
- Electronic forms for country submissions were also introduced in 2009, and checklists and document organisation by the Secretariat have been improved over time.
- From 2009, the Secretariat has appropriately become more rigorous in screening out submissions that fail basic requirements for IRC review. Prior to 2009, only a few were not put forward for review. For the two new proposals IRC meetings, 17% and 19% were sent back to countries. For the monitoring Committee, in 2009, a few APRs were not submitted for IRC review (whereas previously none were sent back before review). This does raise a question about ensuring the efficiency of the IRC process prior to 2009, as it is costly to review proposals that should have been screened out.
- New activities are being introduced, such as the Financial Management Assessment in 2009 (i.e. for all new proposals, and for ongoing country grants with APR issues).
- No major bottlenecks in the process have been reported, although the workload has grown over time, and some functions have been subject to fairly high staff turnover (e.g. IRC Monitoring). This is borne out by evidence that, to a large extent, both the proposal and APR review proposal consistently take about 3-4 months from submission by the country through to decision letter (for those receiving approvals with or without clarifications) and 5-6 months for a conditional approval (if the country meets the deadline set for its response)
- Staff continuity and experience supporting the New Proposals IRC have been invaluable to the process' effectiveness.
- In terms of Committee orientation and standardisation, the adoption of a formal induction and briefing session at the outset of each Committee meeting is an asset. Also, efforts to partner new members with established /experienced Committee members are useful practice.

Issues identified were:

- **Lack of appeal against IRC recommendation**
There is no mechanism in the process whereby countries can formally raise any concerns about IRC performance or decisions. This is potentially a missed opportunity for quality assurance of IRC decisions made.

- **Turn Around Time on APRs versus Country Proposals**
The turnaround time for proposals and APRs is approximately 3-4 months. Whilst appropriate for the approval of a new proposal, this arguably represents less efficiency for annual reviews, and has been the source of frustration at country level. Wider considerations for monitoring are addressed elsewhere in this paper.

- **Value for Money – a Missing Link**
The introduction and contribution of the TAP (Transparency and Accountability Policy) team to the pre-review process, and its role in commissioning financial management audits (FMAs), to ensure financial management capacity and accountability have been welcomed. However, a missing link (which is gaining greater attention in the Alliance and by the IRCs) is assessing value for money in budgets. In the current process, it appears that the IRCs are expected to do this, yet they are not

well equipped to do so (e.g. there is no price benchmarking data for common big ticket items such as vehicles). This activity is not currently covered during pre-review.

- **Secretariat Staff Supporting IRCs**

The staff team mainly responsible for supporting the IRCs and managing the process is small. The rationale for allocating some tasks to this team is unclear. For example, tasks include the management of the schedule and monthly request for cash payment, following grant approval. The senior programme officers supporting IRC Committees have busy and responsible roles and are stretched. This review has identified weaknesses in the system (e.g. the compilation and synthesis of core Committee lists and decisions – see Section 5). Yet this should not be interpreted as a reflection on individuals.   Staff turnover in terms of the senior programme officer post supporting the Monitoring IRC (i.e. three people in four years) may have contributed to the unsystematic nature of Committee core documentation.

- **IRC review approaches**

Over time, and mainly depending on the workload and the chairs, the IRCs have adopted slightly different approaches to proposal review. Currently, in the Monitoring IRC, the nominated individuals first review individually and then in pairs/small groups before presenting to plenary. In the New Proposals IRC, teams of three people review proposals independently (and are not allowed to discuss views with each other) and then each present to plenary. There are pros and cons to each approach, in terms of independence and time considerations, but more guidance from the Secretariat would be helpful.

4.3.2 Pre-Review Process: Country New Applications & APRs

WHO and UNICEF undertake a pre-review of new country applications, as well as APRs, for GAVI. The pre-review process principally serves a quality assurance and data synthesis function in terms of:

- ensuring data completeness according to specified minimum standards, and data consistency both within the document and with external data sources, such as Joint Reporting Form (JRF).
- including and summarising key issues from background documents that are referenced in new proposal applications.
- commenting on whether the proposed activities are in line with major reviews of the health sector and immunisation program

The scope of the pre-review does *not* encompass any technical assessment of the merit, validity or judgement of feasibility or performance of what is proposed – that is the job of the respective IRC. The pre-review phase in application processing and review is conducted for new proposals considered by the integrated New Proposals IRC and for APRs reviewed by the Monitoring IRC.

In terms of the division of labour, WHO is responsible for undertaking pre-reviews on NVS, ISS, INS and HSS applications for the integrated New Proposals IRC, in addition to, covering these same funding streams (excluding HSS) in APRs for the Monitoring IRC. With regards to UNICEF, its Supply Division (Copenhagen Office) is responsible for undertaking pre-reviews on NVS applications /APRs with particular attention to vaccine stocks and supply issues.

The pre-reviews completed by WHO are conducted in Geneva by two different teams in WHO, namely, the immunisation team and health systems teams. Both teams manage the pre-review process by contracting suitable consultants on a short term basis. For example, typically the HSS pre-review will engage between 6-10 consultants for approximately 7-10 days (depending on the number of applications).   UNICEF on the other hand, conducts their pre-review in-house (i.e. they

do not contract consultants).   The pre-review does not include contributions by IRC members – this separation of tasks contributes to IRC independence.

Regarding need, clarity of task, quality of service, and value for money, the following points may be made:

- **Need**: The pre-review was identified by IRC members as useful. It saves Committee time because data discrepancy and inconsistencies are already addressed, and provides a degree of external data validation by cross referencing with other relevant data sources, where relevant. Summaries of application background and supporting documentation were also deemed very useful.   The fact that text from pre-review reports is sometimes copied /pasted into IRC Country Specific reports is also an indication that information provided is useful.

- **Clarity and Specificity of Task**: Essential points about the pre-review process are covered in a sub-section of the ToR for the Integrated New Proposals IRC in a highly succinct fashion. More detail in the ToR could be beneficial for IRC expectation management, as well as enhancing a shared understanding of the pre-review scope.   Areas that may benefit from further specification are:
  - Nature of pre-review outputs (i.e. one pre-review report per country);
  - How and when pre-review outputs are made available to the relevant IRC;
  - Where pre-review services differ across Committees, this should be made clear (e.g. previews for HSS/CSO applications are available for HSS/CSO new applications but not for APRs).

- **Quality of Service**: Key informants (IRC members and technical partners) identified a number of process matters:
  - The quality and consistency of pre-review reports was identified by some IRC members as generally good but yet sometimes patchy in quality. Some also reported that the complex nature of HSS support means that HSS pre-review can be more challenging methodologically, and therefore the pre-review report may be less helpful.
  - The late arrival of applications has implications for the quality and thoroughness of the pre-review undertaken
  - A member of the WHO team explained how the expectations of what IRC members expected from the pre-review process differed by Committee and membership.   For example, whether WHO should comment on unit costs or pricing matters in proposal budgets has been a topic of discussion and different opinions. More detailed ToRs may achieve a more shared and consistent understanding on roles and responsibilities in this and other respects.

- **Value for Money:**   In terms of payment, UNICEF Supply Division does not charge for completing their pre-reviews.   WHO immunisation team (Department of Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals) charges $25,000/year and WHO HSS team approximately $60,000 per review session. That UNICEF Supply Division conducts its pre-review for no additional cost is clearly valuable.   The charge of $25,000 /year by the WHO immunisation team means it cost in the order of $100 per submission (new proposal and APR respectively) for a pre-review by the WHO immunisation team.

WHO's cost to GAVI for immunisation related pre-review is good value compared to what it would likely cost if undertaken by a private sector company. If two applications /APRs are reviewed per day (i.e. although one would expect more APRs to be covered per day than the review of new proposals which is more work intensive), this implies an approximate daily charge of around $300-$400 (i.e. a rough estimate). This represents extremely good value for money on the basis that a comparably experienced consultant sourced via a US/European consultancy firm is likely to cost in the order of $770-$930 per day.

As for the HSS/CSO pre-review, at a cost of $60,000 per round, this is more commercially costed, and falls within the range of what it would cost if undertaken by a private sector company. Value for money for the HSS/CSO pre-review is arguably more questionable, given some concerns about the utility and quality of the HSS/CSO pre-review. It is estimated that the pre-review cost per new application is currently $3,300 (based on a yearly average of 18 HSS/CSO new proposals). Pending volume, it is reported it takes between 7-10 days for 6-10 people to conduct these reviews. This means there is a need for between 42-100 days per year to undertake these reviews. A similar venture sourced via a US/European consultancy firm with a consultancy rate of $770-$930 per day would cost in the order of $35,700 - $85,000 (i.e. based on a consultancy fee rate of $850 /day). These are only rough cost estimates, but indicate that the HSS pre-review is a more commercially costed endeavour. A much wider challenge for HSS relates to HSS design, M&E and reporting concerns, which are broader issues for GAVI, as discussed in section 5.3, and also in the findings of the HSS Evaluation, 2009.

An overarching and important concern with the pre-review process relates to both an *in principle* and *in practice* issue with the design of the model as it exists. The pre-review partners (WHO and UNICEF) are simultaneously development partners at the country level, who support and assist countries with proposal development, and subsequent programme implementation. At the regional level, the regional working groups (which include these partners) also provide a very useful function to countries by conducting mock IRC reviews on proposals, if countries wish to avail of this, which can also strengthen their applications.   Yet simultaneously, at the global level these same partners perform an assessment function on the proposals submitted for review. In effect, the partners provide pre-review support to countries prior to the application submission and in that way provide countries the opportunity to strengthen their applications and reports prior to final submission to GAVI. Those same partners are then involved in the pre-review process, albeit involving a different part of the organisation and personnel.

In principle, it could be argued that there is an inherent weakness in the model because these roles are *potentially* conflicting. There is a possible conundrum in having WHO perform quality assurance checks on proposals that its country offices have been instrumentally involved in advising or developing. As well as, commenting on data (e.g. coverage data) from different sources, which at the country level, rely on WHO involvement to a greater or lesser extent.   The nature of the potential conflict being that, WHO global may be uncomfortable identifying deficiencies /inconsistencies in applications (or data) supported or generated by their country or regional offices. Having said that, given the role and scope of the pre-review is at the level of 'mechanical' checks of data completeness and consistency, this is arguably manageable. A view held by some IRC members, and WHO themselves. Some pointed out that the large and amorphous structure of WHO did not lend itself to this being a problem.

Yet in practice, execution can be more complicated.   For example, other IRC members mentioned that sometimes comments made in pre-review reports 'overstepped the mark' and ventured into the area of appraisal. Where this occurred this was pointed out by the Committee.   Language used to refer to the pre-review phase often reflects this matter, with IRC members and others, using the term pre-assessment which has different semantic connotations than the term pre-review.

It is possible that the dividing line between application development and pre-review can become blurred when it is conducted by the same agency.   In interview it was mentioned that sometimes data gaps or inconsistencies were corrected (not merely identified), with country consultation, during the pre-review process.   This raises a question about the very nature and scope of the pre-review process – is it part of the proposal development or actually part of the proposal assessment process? If the former, fine but this needs to clearer in terms of the function /role of the pre-review process. If the latter, is it reasonable to expect WHO to be simultaneously an impartial checker of information, when it has a mandate and strong commitment to assisting countries?   It should be

noted that the ToRs for the pre-screening process in HSS Proposal Development specifically states that the mandate is *not* "to replace the TA provided in-country or the pre-review".

The use of consultants by WHO to undertake the pre-review process is one way of managing and distancing WHO from this.   Arguably, the NVS and ISS review process may have clearer bench marks to assist the pre-review of proposed targets etc compared to HSS which may require more qualitative judgement.

Issues raised above are relevant to both WHO and UNICEF, although are possibly more marked for WHO given its wider role at country level.   As WHO (via the immunisation team) expressed an interest in a review of the current approach, possibly the time is ripe to consider these matters.

4.3.3 IRCs in Action

4.3.3.1 Number and Length of Meetings (2006-2009)

Generally speaking, there are two meetings per Committee per year. For the purposes of this review, the number of meetings differs across Committees because of the different life spans of the respective Committees. The number of meetings over the review period per Committee has varied from 2 to 10 (Table 9) and is influenced by Committee life span factors.

Table 9: Number of Meetings per Committee (2006-2009)
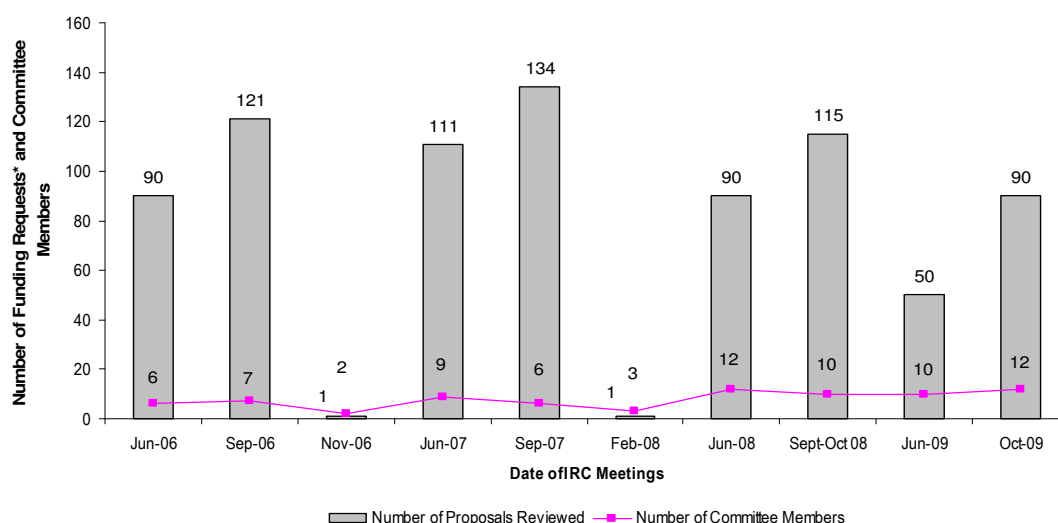
Type of Committee Meeting	Number of Meetings during 2006-2009
New Proposals (NVS, ISS, INS)	9
New Proposals (HSS/CSO)	6
Integrated New Proposals	2
Monitoring IRC	10
Total	**27**

The length of these meetings in terms of the average number days per Committee, ranged from 7-15 days, with the New Proposals (NVS, ISS, INS) on average having the shortest number of days per meeting (7 days), and the integrated New Proposals Committee having the most number of days per meeting (15 days). Meeting lengths would be expected to vary in accordance with the volume of work to be covered (see 4.3.3.2) and with task complexity.   The assessment of new proposals for health systems being possibly more time intensive, which is reflected in length of New Proposal (HSS/CSO) meeting time, and in the length of the Integrated New Proposals meeting that covers all funding streams, i.e. NVS. ISS. INS, HSS, CSO.   These average lengths of Committee meetings refer to Committee time reviewing new proposals /APRs (see Annex 8, Figure 1), other Committee activities, such as induction time and Secretariat de-briefing meetings, are excluded from these figures.   Comparisons with other peer review models suggest that the time taken to review GAVI IRC new proposals is on average longer application per reviewer than other comparator Committees, suggesting it could be useful to appraise whether the use of meeting time could be 'tighter' and shorter (see 4.3.4).

4.3.3.2 Work Volume & Type

In terms of a work load assessment, the number of proposals per round by Committee was examined against the numbers of members in a given Committee session. It was striking that the number of Committee members per session appeared to have no bearing on the size of the workload for the particular Committee. Figures 2 – 5 (Annex 8) show this clearly, with the graph for the Monitoring IRC also shown here for illustrative purposes. In part this was reportedly due to some members' inability to participate at short notice, and it has been very difficult for the Secretariat to replace members (with specialised skill sets) with little lead-time.

Figure 6: Committee Workload (2006-2009) – Monitoring IRC

(*) The term 'Funding Requests' refers to the total number of funding requests made per round. This is different to the 'total number of APRs' reviewed by the Committee, as APRs may comprise of performance reports and funding requests for a number of different funding streams.

From an efficiency, effectiveness and quality of review perspective, the lack of calibration of Committee size to workload is not good, and creates challenges for each IRC. There is some unpredictability in the model, in that it is difficult to know – particularly for new proposals – how many submissions will be made. This is not the case for the Monitoring IRC, where the predictability of workload is more certain, and where the disparities of work volume to persons available were more pronounced.   It is appreciated that the person to work ratio does not need to be identical across Committees because the nature of the review is different by Committee (i.e. APR documentation is not as extensive as that for new proposals), even still this does not explain the patterns found.
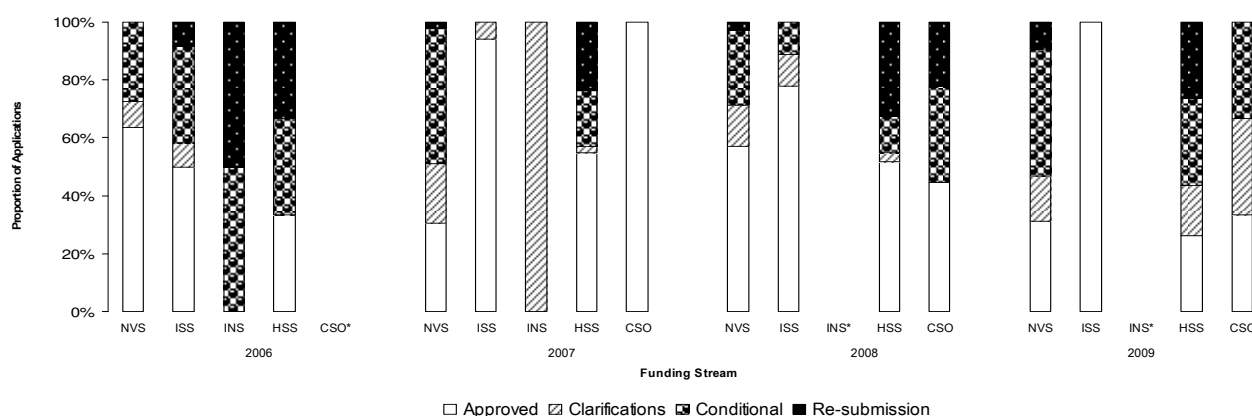
4.3.3.3   IRC Decision Making Patterns

The nature of IRC decision making is central to the integrity of the model. What follows is an examination of Committee trends and patterns in terms of application /APR review and recommendations (Figures 6-7 and Annex 8).

Figures 6-9 (Annex 8) show patterns of grant approvals /re-submissions over time by different IRCs.   Levels of approvals are consistently higher than rejections that result in a recommendation of re-submissions or insufficient information.

Figures 6-7 below show IRC recommendations for different funding streams for all new proposals. Patterns vary across funding streams and from year to year within funding stream. Broadly speaking, levels of approval for NVS (including approvals with clarifications) are around 50% or higher each year.   ISS show particularly high levels of approval in some years, whilst INS shows a more chequered history. The levels of HSS approvals have shown some improvement, though with variation on the levels of approvals ranging year to year from roughly 35%-60%.   It is not easily possible to explain this year on year variation within a given funding stream, i.e. are submissions better /weaker in a given year, or is the variation attributable to different benchmarking applied by the Committees?   It is noticeable that with the exception of INS recommendations (2007), the use of the decision band 'approval with clarification' is comparatively less used.
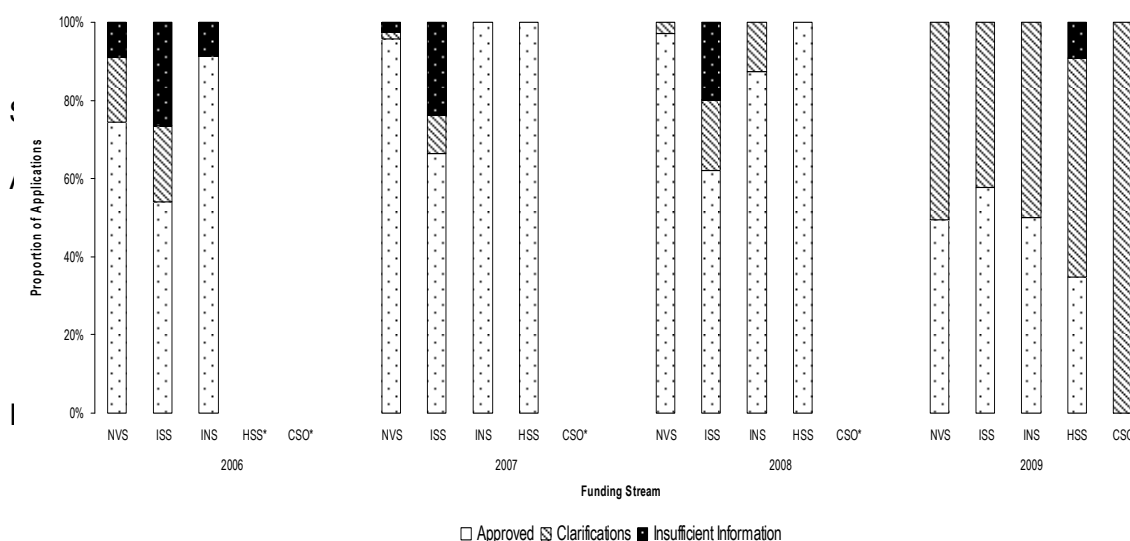
Figure 7: IRC Recommendations by Funding Stream by Year for New Proposals

□ Approved ▨ Clarifications ▣ Conditional ■ Re-submission

* No applications were reviewed for these funding windows

Generally speaking, the levels of APR approval are strikingly high for the years 2006-2008, with comparatively few reviews concluding with a recommendation of insufficient information.   Whilst the levels of approvals with clarifications have noticeably increased in 2009, actual rejections in terms of insufficient information remain very low.

Figure 8: IRC Recommendations by Funding Stream by Year for Monitoring IRC

□ Approved ▨ Clarifications ■ Insufficient Information

More broadly, the review highlighted an issue regarding the use of decision bands by the Monitoring IRC.   The Monitoring IRC has a three tier decision band system, which spans "Approved", "Approved with Clarifications", or "Insufficient Information."   Unlike the New Proposals IRC the Monitoring IRC does not have the option to conditionally approve an APR.   Having said that, in some IRC reports reviewed, recommendations are sometimes made, that seem to be conditional, and pose a difficulty in terms of decision band classification, and more importantly, in terms of the management and oversight of the country response to the concern.
Furthermore, the message conveyed to countries could be judged to be potentially confusing.   On the one hand, they receive an approval with clarification (which is interpreted as an approval), yet on the other hand, there is a concern which may or may not be understood to be of significance by the country, given the formal decision point.   For example, in the June 2009 Monitoring IRC, 16 countries were given a recommendation of 'Conditional [approval] on certified financial statement.' In other IRC meetings countries may be informed they will receive ISS rewards 'pending data quality audit' (DQA). If funding recommendations are in fact contingent on various factors being satisfied, if may help the Committee and countries to harmonise the decision bands across both

Committees, to allow for conditional approvals in the Monitoring IRC, in the same way used by the New Proposals IRC.

What follows next is a series of sub-analyses on specific issues - principally, patterns of approval related to proposals re-submissions, as well as a comparison of approval /re-submission levels for LICUS/non-LICUS countries, and patterns by country language group.

- **Proposal Re-Submissions: What is the Likelihood of Approval on Re-Submission?**

Of those new proposals that are recommended for re-submission, Table 10 shows that few of these have been ISS, INS and CSO proposals. For NVS and HSS proposals, where countries are asked to re-submit, roughly 40-50% are slow or have not yet done so. Where countries have submitted, a reasonable proportion is approved on re-submission.   Proportionally speaking, the extent of re-submissions for HSS is higher than for the other funding windows (about 1 in 5). Of those, there continue to be a group of countries (15%) who are struggling to get approved, and have been asked to re-submit twice. These outcomes remain unknown as they have not yet re-submitted.

Table 10: Numbers of Approvals on New Proposals Requested to Re-submit for NVS, ISS, INS and CSO (2006-2009).

Funding Stream					
Total number of proposals reviewed 2006-09	ISS (n=52)	INS (n=3)	NVS (n=102)	HSS (n=98)	CSO (n=12)
Total number of proposals recommended for resubmission at least once	2% (n=1)	33% (n=1)	5% (n=5)	27% (n=26)	17% (n=2)
Approved proposals after the first resubmission*	1	1	2	11	1
Proposals that have still not resubmitted after being recommended to resubmit once			3	11	1
Proposals that have still not resubmitted after being recommended to resubmit twice				4	

- **Approval Patterns by LICUS/non-LICUS Countries**

Patterns of approval /re-submissions for LICUS /non-LICUS countries were examined across IRCs for the period 2006-2009.   Generally speaking, there was no significant difference found in levels of approvals /re-submissions by LICUS status. The largest difference was an 11% increase in the proportions of grants required to re-submit for NVS proposals from LICUS countries compared to non-LICUS countries.   Differences were less than this for other funding streams (Annex 8, Figure 10). This is an important finding as overall it means that LICUS countries are not excessively less successful than non LICUS countries.

- **Approval Patterns by Applicant Country Language Groups**

There has been a perception voiced that non-English speaking countries may be more disadvantaged in applying to GAVI for funding, and that funding approval levels may be lower compared to Anglophone countries. An examination of proposals /APRs for the period 2006-2009 found no evidence of this. (Annex 8, Figure 11).   Having said that, there was some indication that Lusophone and Hispanophone countries had poorer levels of success in the IRC New Proposals Committees for NVS and for HSS. This is was not evident in the new Integrated IRC New
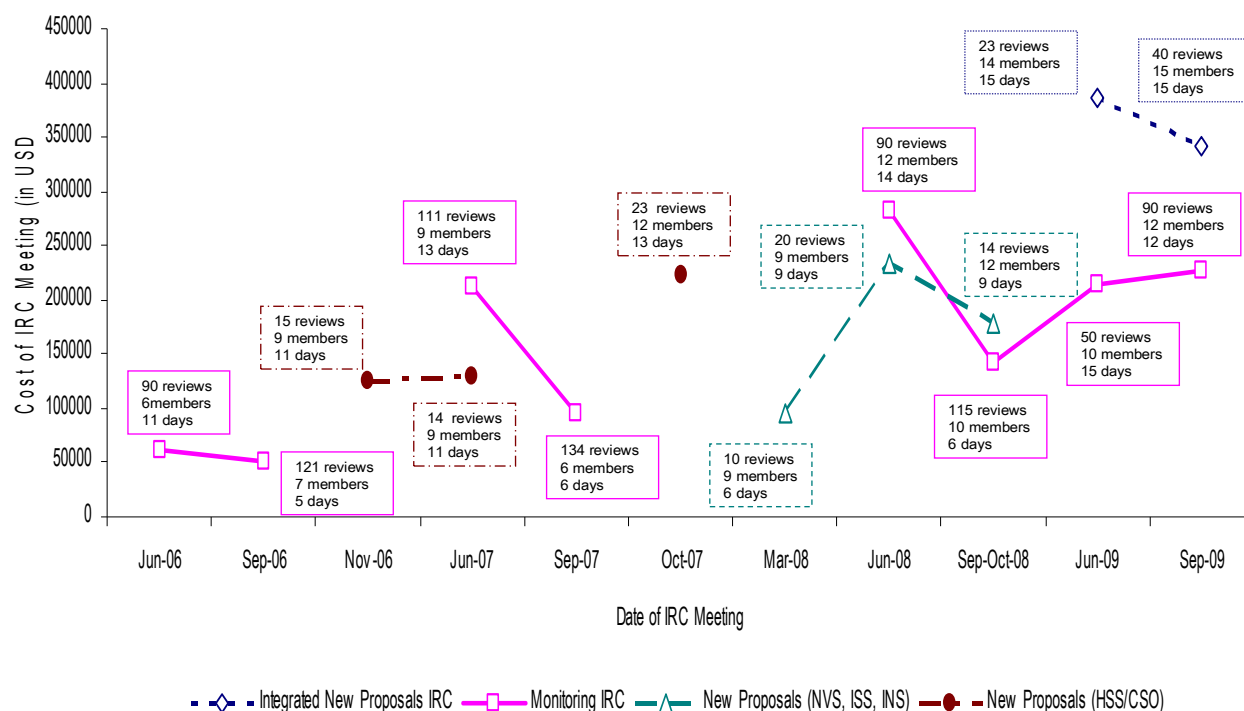
Proposals. As the actual numbers of Lusophone and Hispanophone applications are far fewer than those in English and French, it would be premature to draw conclusions on this small sample. This should be monitored going forward.   Patterns of approval /re-submission were remarkably similar for English and French speaking countries.

4.3.4 IRC Committee Cost & Efficiency

IRC Committee costs per round have increased over the period 2006-2009, starting off very modestly at around $50,000 per round rising to approx $400,000 in 2009. In terms of cost calculations, honorariums, per diems, flights are included, as well as hospitality costs, and other key variables such as translation costs.   What is evident from Figure 8 is that within a general trend of rising cost over time, there is significant cost variation both between Committees, and within Committees, over different rounds. The integrated New Proposals Committee has cost more than other Committees but then it is larger than other Committees. From the data, it is difficult to draw conclusions on what is driving this cost variation, and it seems to be different items at different times:

(a) The length of Committee meetings is not adjusted by work load to be covered. For some meetings, this means they are 'time rich,' which also has monetary implications..

(b) This does not hold true for other Committees, who have a larger volume of work to cover, but with a similar allocation of days and workforce.

(c) Translation costs vary and account for between approximately 14-30% of costs.

(d) Flights /transports account for approximately between 10-35% of total costs

(e) Honariums account for approximately 38-40% of total costs

Figure 9: IRC Committee Costs (2006-2009)*

There are explanations for some of these variations. For example, differences in the 2009 costs for the Integrated New Proposals IRC are explained by the hotel accommodation for IRC members being procured in a different way from one meeting to another. This type of explanatory detail is not available for other meetings but similar reasons may explain what otherwise looks like surprising cost variation. This also illustrates the efficiency gains that can be achieved by more stalwart procurement practice.

When considering the IRC model in terms of efficiency, this can be considered in terms of time, monetary cost and weighing up whether or not efficiency gains can be made by approaching 'business' in another way.

- **Efficiency & Time**: One way of examining this issue is to compare workloads and time spent by the IRCs with other similar peer review Committees. Table 11 shows that when compared to other peer review Committees, workloads per Committee member are roughly comparable. Detailed cost data were not publicly available for comparison, although a comparison of person days per new proposal, or monitoring report, is provided below. Whilst the nature of technical appraisal differs across Committees, it could be argued that the order of task complexity is similar for GAVI's NP IRC and the GF TRP.   Bearing this in mind, it is worth noting that, the GAVI IRC NP has about half a day more per member per proposal than the GF TRP which might suggest it is not as time efficient as the GF TRP.   The Committees involved in monitoring have fewer days per report but it could be contended that this is a less time intensive task, than the review of a new request for funding. The figure for the GDF TRC which reviews new proposals, as well as grants with performance challenges, is very similar to the GAVI Monitoring IRC.

Table 11: Committee Workload by Technical Review Committee

	GAVI New Proposals IRC	GAVI Monitoring IRC	GDF TRC	GF TRP
Meeting frequency and length	10 days twice pa (20 days)	10 days twice pa (20 days)	3 days twice pa (6 days)	10 days once pa (10 days)
Number proposals/reviews	Average 78 pa	Average 187	Average 50-60	Average 170
Person days per annum	220 (average of 11 members x 20 days)	220 (average of 11 members x 20 days)	72 (12 members x 6 days)	400 (40 members x 10 days)
Workload	2.8 days per member per proposal	1.2 days per member per review	1.3 day per member proposal/review	2.3 days per member proposal

Note: The number of days is not adjusted for induction/briefing time, plenaries, or size of review sub working groups.
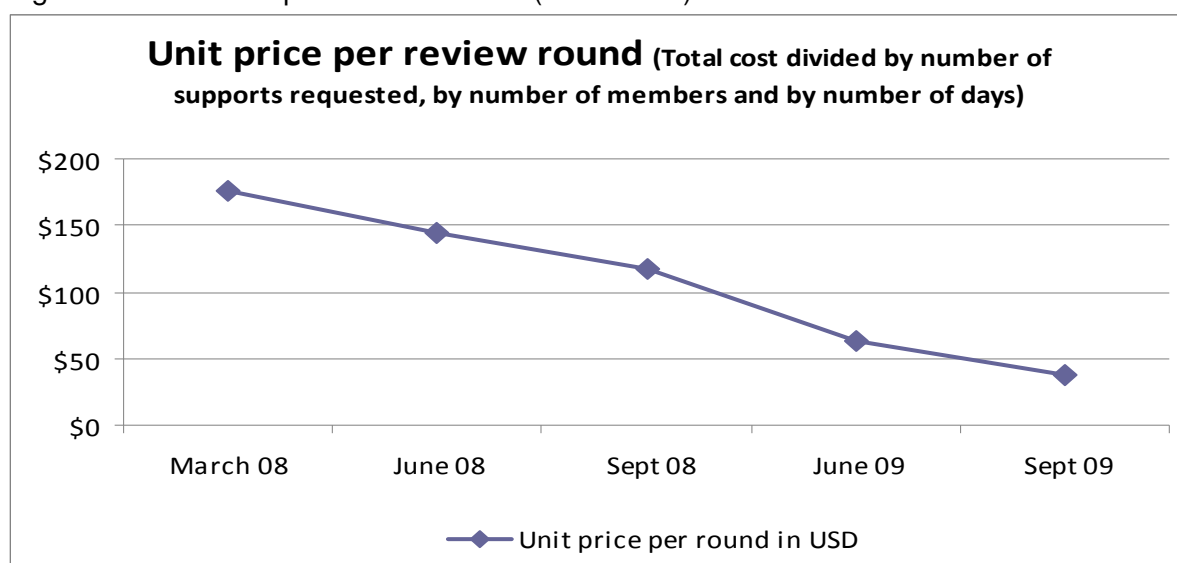
Other measures, such as the tightening up of the pre-screening process to screen out country applications or APRs that do not satisfy specified minimum standards, as well as the conduct of a pre-review of applications by Technical Partners, are activities intended to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Committee time.

- **Cost Efficiency**: In terms of broader efficiency considerations, the average proportional cost of all IRC Committees per year is 0.15% of the value of the financial portfolio advised on by the respective Committees a year[17]. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities are commonly accepted to be around 8-10% of programme costs. Therefore, this cost at the global level could be considered suitably low and proportionate, given the bulk of M&E costs should be at the country level. It could be argued to the contrary (i.e. for more resource allocation 'upwards') because of global oversight and stewardship responsibilities. The figure 0.15% is a proportional cost for both New Proposal and Monitoring Committees. Technically speaking, the process for deciding upon new proposals is not an M&E cost, and therefore the proportional cost is even smaller if the Monitoring IRC is considered alone.

  It should also be noted that with rising country demand and an increasing number of applications to review per round, the actual unit price of each review round is actually decreasing making the cost of each round increasingly better value for money. Figure 10 shows this for the review of new proposals over the period 2008-2009.

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[17] This is calculation is based on deriving an average Committee cost per year for all Committees, for the period of the review, i.e. based on available data of Committee costs. The annual financial portfolio cost was simply derived by dividing the total amount of grants recommended for GAVI Board approval (nearly 2 billion dollars) by the number of years in the review period to obtain a yearly figure. In practice, the scale of funding recommendations varies year on year. This approach was used for illustrative purposes, because even if distributed differently over the years, the fact remains that the cost of IRCs Committees is proportionally low against the financial envelope they are advising on.

Figure 10: Unit Price per Review Round (2008-2009)

On balance, these findings suggest the IRC model is reasonably efficient, although there is room to improve efficiency. For instance: (1) Inter meeting cost variability needs to be monitored and managed more effectively; and (2) There is a need to examine the use of New Proposals IRC time with a view to seeing if it can be better optimised.

- **Efficiency Gains by Alternative Approaches**: When considering efficiency it is useful to consider what gains (if any) could be achieved by alternative ways of doing business. A cornerstone value of the IRCs is the independence they represent in terms of advising the Board on funding approvals for country programmes. This independent advice remains valued by the Board. Other peer review models (e.g. GF and GDF) have independent technical bodies for advising on new proposals. Whilst the GDF TRC also deals with a proportion of grants with challenging problems, both the GDF and GF deal with the monitoring and performance based disbursement of approved grants in other ways (i.e. not via an external independent body). Considering this in terms of GAVI's Monitoring IRC, are there benefits for bringing this in-house to the Secretariat?

In terms of cost, it is estimated it would be more or less cost neutral to manage this in-house in the GAVI Secretariat, resulting in no significant financial imperative for doing this (Box 5).

Box 5: Grant Monitoring by Monitoring IRC vs In-House Management by the GAVI Secretariat

Presently: Grant Monitoring by the Monitoring IRC
• 20 days of time per year (divided over two meetings), to cover an average of 187 funding request per year, with 220 person days per annum (see Table 10).
• At an approximate cost of $ 200,000 dollars per round for a Monitoring IRC meeting (based on 2009 figures), the yearly cost for the Monitoring IRC is in the order of $400,000
Alternative: Grant Monitoring In-House at the GAVI Secretariat
• At current work load volumes, 220 person days per annum would equate to work for about one full time equivalent staff member. However, given the work intensity, lack of task diversity and the skill mix/experience needs. It is unlikely this could be fulfilled by one person but would require two people
• At a salary of CHF 120,000 (with an additional 50% overheads), the annual total cost would be in the order of CHF 180,000 ($ 167,000) for one person, and double that for two people.

However, cost considerations may not be the sole or only determinate of efficiency gains. For example, continuity of support, or being able to service country timetables and schedules better, could be other important considerations that may have a bearing on maximising country level efficiency, not only GAVI Alliance and Secretariat efficiency. Such factors may have a bearing on decision making when weighing up the pros and cons for this.

Working on the premise of two rather than one member of staff to do this job, there is no current significant cost saving for bringing this function in-house. For reasons explained (Box 5), it is not considered desirable to have one person undertake this job. Yet even with two people, there would also be significant skills and experience dilution compared to a Committee. Other considerations are:

- Given the current volume of work, there is probably not enough work to occupy two full time equivalent staff members, so other work would be required.
- It would also increase the head count of the Secretariat
- Management support requirements would certainly increase

Alternatively, the option of adding this work to already busy staff work schedules would appear unfeasible. There is also a question about whether current expertise and skill mix to undertake this job are suitable.

On balance, there seems to be no current compelling reason to pursue this route.

4.3.5 IRC Self Assessment

Both the integrated New Proposals IRC and the Monitoring IRC engaged in a self assessment exercise with members of the review team in September /October 2009. They reflected upon the strengths and weaknesses of the respective Committees. Figures 12-13 (Annex 8) summarises the top four strengths and weaknesses identified by members for each Committee.

For the **Integrated New Proposals IRC**, strengths were identified as: its independence, diverse skill mix in the group, meeting style (collegiate with spirit of co-operation amongst members), and the support of the Secretariat (good organisation and support of the meeting process, including documentation). Drawbacks were: issues related to policies, guidelines and documentation provided to the Committee, group dynamics, some process issues, and the provision of technical assistance to countries.

- In terms of the comments on policies, guidelines and documentation challenges, members felt GAVI policies and rules were sometimes not clear; guidelines were not very directive; yet simultaneously, there were challenges applying such guidance to countries in complex emergency and special situations; also there was an overwhelming amount of supporting documentation with applications.
- As for the comment on group dynamics, it was felt that some members were intolerant of differing opinions; reaching compromise was difficult; with issues for some about chairing style.
- Regarding concerns expressed about some process issues, some members felt the management of the review process within the group was not optimum – specialism in the group is not maximally optimised and the review of a proposal in depth by three members does not result in a Committee wide consensus or engagement on a particular proposal, unless everyone is committed to skim review of each proposal and can contribute to plenary discussion.
- The group also expressed concerns about the quality of technical assistance that they perceived the countries to be receiving and which impacted on the quality of the proposals.

In addition to the 'top four' themes expressed by Committee members, other issues were also raised. For example, some believed that the Committee had sufficient time to do its job; yet others felt there was not enough time.   Others considered the French translations not to be of a good standard, whilst others expressed a concern about the lack of country 'hands on' knowledge in the group, as well as a view by some that the pre-reviews from WHO/UNICEF sometimes overlapped.

For the **Monitoring IRC**, identified strengths were somewhat similar, with the diverse skill mix, and independence and accountability of the mechanism, and commitment of members considered positive. Time pressures, the support from the Secretariat, and methodological challenges related to the review were considered more challenging.

In summary:

- A large proportion of members expressed a concern that the pressure of time and work affected the quality of analysis they were able to undertake
- A majority of members also expressed a view that the support the Committee got from the Secretariat could be better. They felt they were insufficiently briefed, documentation was unstructured, incomplete and confusing, with some problems with the timely provision of material
- Concerning methodological challenges, members identifying this as an issue expressed concerns about the organisation and presentation of information in the APR form which made the review process more challenging. For example, the mixing of technical and financial performance in the APR was not considered helpful by some; and the coupling of vaccine support and HSS support was also not considered helpful by some because it relates to two different types of inputs. The Monitoring IRC also had some concerns about the usefulness of HSS pre-reviews.

Other issues that were identified by some but not ranked in the 'top four' themes were: selection of members and Chair; and the quality of pre-reviews.

Interestingly, the different Committee views on time pressures and work load are validated by the data shown above. Similarly, it is arguable that the Monitoring IRC may not have been as well supported as the New Proposals Committee by the Secretariat, given staffing turnover etc. Moreover, observations made by the review team based on the "Benefit of Hindsight" Grant Review, and other Committee documentation, concur with the view that the systematic organisation of key Committee and grant documentation could be better.

4.3.6 Country Views

The findings from the consultation with countries about views concerning IRC process or execution matters are summarised below (Box 6):

- **Clarity and Quality of IRC Related Communication with Countries:**

Communication of the Decision Point: Seven of fourteen respondents felt that IRC decisions were clearly communicated, or were clear enough. Others felt differently and thought there were significant problems with the way the IRC communicated with countries.   One respondent commented that he thought "communication was definitely a weak point of the IRC."   In some cases, the reasons given for IRC decisions were not as clearly explained as they could be. Although it was acknowledged that the quality of communication has improved over time. On the matter of language, one French speaking respondent remarked that initially the IRC communicated exclusively in English, which made it much harder for them to understand the message. Now that high quality communications in French are available this is much better.

Adequacy of Funding Decision Explanation: Similarly, around half of respondents felt the IRC explained its decisions clearly or clearly enough. Of those who thought decisions were insufficiently explained, a respondent remarked that "sometimes we have to read between the lines to figure out what motivated the IRC's decision." Views included a feeling that the IRC "nitpicks" and makes unreasonable demands given the realities and lack of resources at the country level.

Country views on the nature and quality of communication – and IRC related communication – has been a long standing criticism.   The quality of communication has improved over time but clearly remains a topic that elicits comment.

Other issues raised by countries touch on issues echoed elsewhere this in review, as well as other GAVI evaluations (e.g. HSS Evaluation, 2009). For example: the need for better IRC understanding of country contexts; the challenges of providing good quality data from country health information systems; the desire by countries to be able to respond to IRC comments and recommendations via a more 'real time' modus operandi.

Box 6: Suggestions from Countries about Issues Concerning IRC Execution

- There should be greater representation of GAVI at the country level in order to promote greater understanding of individual country contexts and to foster better communications between countries and the IRC.
- IRC should improve the quality of its communications and produce more precise and clearer recommendations.
- Ensure that decision letters are always copied to the EPI manager as well as senior MoH officials and the minister.
- The GAVI Secretariat/IRC sometimes could provide key information in a more timely manner. For example, when a decision is made to stop incentive payments countries should be informed, as soon as possible, to allow them time to find alternative funding arrangements.
- The IRC need to give greater recognition to the problems that MoHs' have in providing accurate data. Improving data accuracy & availability is an on-going battle.
- Countries need to be provided with greater opportunity to respond to IRC comments & recommendations.
- Fragile or collapsed states face particularly challenging circumstances and should be afforded special consideration and greater flexibility.

4.3.7 Other Considerations

- **Other Peer Review Models**

For comparative purposes it is useful to examine how shared or different some of the process issues described above are with the TRP (GFATM) and the TRC (GDF)

Each Committee undertakes its work through broadly **similar processes**:

- A pre-screening managed by the secretariat ensures that a complete dossier of information is provided to the Committees and that all eligibility requirements are met.
- The Committee's work is organised, through annual or biannual face to face meetings, where review is delegated to small groups of two to four people, prefaced by a Committee induction and briefing sessions, and concluding with a plenary.
- Recommendations are consensus driven. Where a small group fails to reach consensus, each Committee has an internal process for assigning additional reviewers to the proposal, so that agreement can be reached.
- Each Committee is supported by secretariat staff who provide information when requested to the review sub groups, as well as the wider Committee meetings. They are also present at the

final session, where recommendations for each country are reviewed, and any queries or lack of clarity addressed.

- Each Committee produces a report for the Board, which includes observations and recommendations for improving the overall process, as well as individual country reports and recommendations for funding.

Other similarities of business execution are:

- **Upward trend in demand**: While numbers of proposals reviewed per annum from 2006 – 2009 across all windows vary for both GAVI and the GF, both have seen an upward trend. This has implications for Committee workload and maintaining quality of review. Committee sizes have also increased over the years in all three. However, the GF five year evaluation also comments that the TRP has probably reached an optimal number, and that further expansion would have implications for quality control (in particular confidentiality and independence).
- **Application approval rates**: Both organisations have similar overall approval rates (GFATM categories 1 and 2, and GAVI Approvals and Approvals with clarifications), which have also increased over time (Table 12). This, according to interviewees, Committee reports, and the GF evaluation, reflects improvements in proposal standards. Resubmission approval rates are also higher than the overall approval rate. Proposal rejection rates are also of a similar magnitude (+/-10%), although a little higher for GAVI.
- **Confidentiality of Results Pre-Board Decision:** GFATM and GAVI Committees are reported as facing challenges with regard to confidentiality of results, given that board members (and their delegations) are sent preliminary reports. There is therefore a risk of pressure on board members.
- **Balancing & Managing Conflict of Interest**: Equally, all three organizations face challenges about maintaining the independence of the process, as their workloads and Committee size grows, and it becomes harder to maintain the balance between maintaining knowledge of country context and limiting conflict of interest (i.e. given the limited field of experts available for Committees such as these and the need for some turnover).
- **Committee Decisions & Quality of Communication**: According to recent GFATM and GAVI evaluations, and country feedback, both organisations continue to face criticism from countries about the clarity and consistency of Committee feedback. For the GFATM, the Secretariat proposals unit now checks the TRP comments for clarity, and countries can respond to comments and go back and forth with the TRP's clarifications panel.

Table 12: Number of Proposals & Recommendations for Approval

	GAVI New Proposals IRC	GFATM TRP
Number of new proposals /year 2006 – 2009	2006 41 2007 110 2008 84 2009 72 **Average: 78**	Round 6 196 Round 7 150 Round 8 174 Round 9 159 **Average: 170**
Proposals recommended (incl. GAVI approvals/with clarifications and GF Categories 1 and 2)	2006 49% 2007 62% 2008 56% 2009 58% **Average: 56%**	Round 6 43% Round 7 49% Round 8 54% Round 9 53% **Average 50%**
Proposals not recommended	2006 5% 2007 9% 2008 15.5% 2009 12.5%	Round 6 7% Round 7 2% Round 8 10% Round 9 6%

- **Country Level Technical Assistance:** All three Committees have consistently and over time raised the need for technical support needs at country level to be better addressed in proposal and review preparation, especially to identify and prevent a persistent failure for a sub set of countries. This view is also reflected in external reviews and evaluations. GF's five year evaluation suggested that the TRP should review the adequacy of technical assistance plans, including the development of such capacities at the country level.
- **Committee Performance Appraisal**: None of the organisations have formal processes for review of Committee performance in place, of either individual members or the group as a whole. Chairs and secretariat staff undertake informal assessments, and all three Committees have carried out some form of informal self assessment as a group. The GFATM TRP piloted but decided not to institutionalise formal 360 review, as the vast majority of members preferred the less formal route.

There are also **significant differences**.

- **Approaches to Pre-Screening Proposals /Reports**: For the GDF and GAVI, secretariat staff pre-screen proposals and monitoring reports. Whereas the GFATM Secretariat employs an external team which is deployed for a time limited period. During this period, according to the five year evaluation, 20-35% of proposals were (rightly) screened out due to non-eligibility or lack of compliance with requirements. Until 2009, GAVI was not screening out such proposals. However, since beginning to be more rigorous this year, nearly 20% have been returned to countries.
- **Approaches to Pre-Review of Applications / Reports & Grant Monitoring:** GFATM and GDF do not involve technical partners at the global level in technical pre-review of proposals and monitoring reports. The GDF contracts out its independent monitoring function to external technical auditors. Its three-tier system includes: a) country mission (which may include a TRC member specifically contracted for the role); a mission report submitted to Secretariat; b) a desk audit (by the technical auditors) of the monitoring dossier, including the mission report; c) a TRC review of country reports with major performance issues.
- **Approaches to Data Validation**: Each organisation undertakes technical and financial validation of data provided to the Committees by countries in different ways. The GDF validates its desk review with country visits. Country 'pre-delivery' visits take place following TRC approval, to assess and ensure financial and drug management capacity, after which Secretariat prepares the official grant agreement.   The counterpart activity for this at GAVI is possibly the FMA process. Annual country monitoring missions take place as well. The GFATM relies on its independently contracted in-country Local Fund Agents to provide capacity assessments of grant recipients and 'performance evaluation tracking' reports. For each organisation, the technical partnership at country level is expected to provide technical support and validation functions for both proposals and monitoring reports.
- **Secretariat Support:** The way in which the Secretariat staff provides support also varies. For the GFATM, since 2006, the function of communication (clarifications etc) between countries and the TRP has been managed by a proposal unit (acting as an intermediary), rather than directly with the country managers, with the aim of reducing any perceptions or risk of advocacy by programme staff on behalf of countries. In GAVI, this is managed by a team within the Programme Department.
- **Honorariums:** GAVI and the GFATM pay a daily fee or honorarium, based on appropriate UN rates, in addition to travel and per diem costs. The GDF does *not* remunerate its TRC members. However, it is not clear that level of honorarium affects willingness to serve on these kinds of review committee: this was not highlighted as an issue among those interviewed. UN rates are roughly in line with other agencies, with the EU at the lower end and some bilaterals at the higher end.
- **Quality Assurance & Committee Decisions:** All three organisations recognise the methodological challenge of validating the results of Committee processes as technically robust and fair. Up until now, only the GFATM TRP has been formally evaluated (as part of its

overall five year evaluation), but Committee results were not assessed on these aspects. However, the GF Board US delegation has publicly stated that it has carried out parallel reviews of the proposals, and has agreed with recommendations made. In this case, the process validates the TRP's recommendations, but equally it may have raised questions about the Committee's robustness, if the results of the parallel process had not concurred.

- **Committee Reports – Detail & Access to Information**: The general reports produced by Committees vary in content and detail. The GFATM TRP publishes its detailed report to the Board on its dedicated website, which includes time trends for proposals approved, as well as Committee composition and names. Neither the GDF nor GAVI Committees do this.

- **Feedback Loops:** Processes vary for ensuring that general recommendations made by Committees are followed up and reported back to the Committee to promote continuous learning. In general the feedback loop is not considered to be a strong as it should be. The GFATM has recently introduced a new (likely to be annual) event to bring together technical partners and some TRP members to review TRP recommendations.

- **Country Appeal Process:** Only the GFATM has a formal process for country appeal, allowable in specific and limited circumstances[18]. The appeal mechanism usually comprises five experts, including two TRP members. It is not intended to re-appraise the technical merit of the proposal, but rather assesses if the TRP made an error, and is therefore acts as a quality control. According to the five year evaluation, between R3-6, 224 proposals became eligible for appeal (30% of the total of 751 proposals reviewed during the four rounds). Fifty-six appealed with a success rate of 20%. This level of appeals on such narrow grounds justifies the function of the mechanism as a TRP quality assurance process.

4.4　Results

Review question: Results: *To what extent have IRC decisions regarding country applications and Annual Progress Reports and recommendations regarding policies been robust, independent, appropriate and well justified?*

An examination of IRCs results was pursued by investigating several avenues of enquiry. These included: a consideration of 'confidence markers' in IRC decision making; the conduct of a 'benefit of hindsight grant review;' a review of the IRCs contribution to GAVIs policy development process, and an external look at other peer review models in order to benchmark findings, as far as feasibly possible.

4.4.1　Markers of Confidence in IRC Recommendations

During its ten years of existence, GAVI has contributed to reaching more than 250 million children and saving five million lives by improving immunisation coverage rates in developing countries, and facilitating the use of previously underused vaccines in poor countries. As an integral part of GAVI's resource allocation process to this end, the IRCs have contributed to this, by their technical review of country applications / APRs and funding recommendations to the Board.

A marker of the Board's confidence in the integrity and technical soundness of IRCs recommendations is a track record of only two occasions[19], in the course of ten years, when the Board did not accept the recommendations of IRCs.

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[18] 'A country is eligible for appeal if its proposal has not been recommended in its current form (category 3) and/or rejected (category 4) by the GF Board twice in consecutive rounds'. Study Area 1, Five Year Evaluation

[19] In 2003 the Board did not agree with the IRC's recommendation to fund a request from Sudan for Hep B (see Board Minutes, Dec 2003) because of equity concerns related to the introduction of the new vaccine in a country context with low basic immunisation in certain areas. An extra-ordinary sub-group of the IRC was convened to develop a revised report with clarifications, which was subsequently sent to the country. A satisfactory response from the country resulted in the approval of the award in February 2004. The case in 2008 related to the deferment (not rejection) of funding

An additional marker of confidence in IRC recommendations would be the extent of country appeal or protest at decisions made. As there is no country appeal mechanism to GAVI about IRC recommendations, it is not possible to gauge this. Other institutions with peer review models (i.e. GFATM) have an official country appeal process which is not intended to re-appraise the technical merit of the proposal, but rather assesses if the TRP made an error, and therefore acts as a quality control mechanism. According to the five year evaluation of GFATM, 224 proposals became eligible for appeal between funding Rounds 3-6 (i.e. 30% of the total of 751 proposals reviewed during the four rounds). Fifty-six of these appealed, with a success rate of 20%. It is clear that the existence of the appeals mechanism provides a quality assurance mechanism for the TRP.

4.4.2 'Benefit of Hindsight' Grant Review

A 'benefit of hindsight' review of 15 country grants was conducted as part of this review process. This explored to what extent, based on information available to the IRC, were 'flags' identified, managed or missed, for issues that subsequently transpired to challenge grant performance. As a review Committee charged with the technical appraisal of new grants, or subsequent grant performance, the ability of the IRC to detect and raise flags is central to their value of advising on sound investment decisions, and to the organisation's management of risk.

For the purposes of this review, it was considered more useful to focus on common challenges of grant performance. For that reason, the team reviewed a purposeful sample of country grants across different funding streams (NVS, HSS and ISS), and which represent resources provided in cash or in kind (i.e. vaccines). The criteria and methods by which these grants were identified, and the meaning of flag designations and options, have already been described in Section 3.

It is important to acknowledge that as a technical review body, part of the job is to identify such flags and make recommendations for how such challenges /risk may be addressed or managed in order to enable funding. On that basis, the raising of flags and associated management action /recommendations of the IRC is a sign of a working mechanism. Nobody could expect the IRC to identify flags, or foresee events, where information at the time gave no indication of a problem down the line. Yet where flags are present and appear to have been missed that indicates a weakness in the mechanism. The reasons for this are possibly multiple but are likely to be influenced by factors such as: expertise on the Committee and factors that influence the quality of the review process (e.g. availability and *use* of data on previous grant performance; knowledge of country context, adequate time to conduct a review, a particular GAVI policy, or an application or progress review template that does not request the necessary information).

Tables 14-15 summarise the findings from the review of 15 grants and Table 13 provides a further summary of flag status by Committee.

Table 13 Summary of Flag Status by IRC Committee

Flag Status	New Proposals IRC$^\Delta$	Monitoring IRC	
No Flag	2		
Flag Raised /Addressed		1	
Flag Raised /Partially Addressed	2	2	
Flag Raised /Not Addressed	1	2	
Flag Partially Raised/Not Addressed		2	
Flag Missed	4		

$^\Delta$ (a) The New Proposals IRC referred to here were those before 2009 (i.e. New Proposals NVS, INS, ISS and New Proposals HSS/CSO). The integrated New Proposals IRC was excluded from this sample because

decisions by the EC for seven new programmes of ISS support recommended by the IRC, until concerns about coverage discrepancies that came to light at the end of 2008 were examined. In April 2009, ISS continuation programmes for seven countries were approved, although near-term funding for these programmes would not be requested until countries reported on additional children reached with three doses of DTP in 2008.

of its recent formation and grants associated to its funding recommendations are too young. (b)The reasons for reporting the status of 9 and not 8 flags (i.e. given 8 grants were reviewed) is that one grant had two flags;

In two of the 15 cases reviewed, there was no flag present in the documentation that could have alerted the IRC to future problems. Overall, the IRCs raised or partially raised ten of the 14 flags noted (with the benefit of hindsight) by the review team. In eight cases, the IRC detected and raised the flag. In two further cases, the IRC detected and reported the potential problem to some extent. The review team concluded that, only in four cases, the IRC report missed the flag – it did not mention the information that could have alerted GAVI to future challenges. The new proposals review process has room for improvement in this respect.

It is striking that, although the majority of flags present in the documents were raised or noted, the issues were not consistently or directly addressed by the IRCs in their recommendation rating. Despite recognising the problem, the country report did not raise the issues as clarifications or conditions, or request/propose strategies for the management of the problems or risks identified. In total, of the ten flags raised, just one was deemed to be fully addressed, four were partially addressed, and five were not addressed (in addition to the four flags missed).

Furthermore, it appears that the pattern between the Committees is slightly different. The new proposals IRC had a tendency to miss clues, that could be indicative of future grant performance (i.e. 4 out of 7 flags were considered missed flags).   On the other hand, the Monitoring IRC was considered to be better at detecting flags but these were not always addressed or acted upon.

In terms of flags that were missed by the New Proposals IRC, some further explanatory details are provided below:

Country 1:   This country was selected for review because of a major delay in the start of the introduction of a NVS grant. A review of grant documentation found a two fold problem – one that could have been anticipated in the opinion of the reviewers, the other not, hence why this country had a dual flag designation status of 'missed' and 'no flag.'   A flag was considered missed in terms of the feasibility and ambition of the plan proposed by the country, especially compared to the timeline of a previous new vaccine introduction, and wider country events which were known internationally.   This grant was originally awarded a 'conditional approval' recommendation by the IRC, yet the Plan of Action was not updated by the country (nor requested to be so by the IRC) when responding to conditions which impacted upon their timeline.   This is likely to handicap subsequent monitoring and performance tracking. A change in the procurement arrangements also contributed to the delay. This could not have been foreseen by the IRC at the time of the original proposal review (i.e. hence a no flag status for this determinant of implementation delay).

Country 3: This country was selected for review because of a major delay in the start of the introduction of an NVS grant. A review of grant documentation found weak cross referencing between IRC Committees (via documentation) in terms of the 'phase in' and 'phase out' of vaccine stocks.   This matter was considered by the reviewers to be a key variable to explaining the slow start to the NVS grant.   A similar challenge with what seemed to be a highly ambitious implementation plan by any country standards was noted. This grant was originally awarded a 'conditional approval' recommendation by the Committee but again the Plan of Action was not updated and adjusted, given the time lost responding to conditions requested by the IRC.

Country 4: This country was selected for review because of low use of ISS funds. Following a review of relevant country grant documentation (including earlier APRs and IRC Country Specific Reports), it was clear that there was a country history of low ISS spend. However, past history was not highlighted in the grant application (for Phase II) nor did it appear to be referred to in IRC documentation. Whilst earlier APRs noted the problem of under spend and urge the country to spend, no active steps were taken to examine why this was so, or why it did not improve over time. At a strategic level, given this is problem is experienced by other countries with ISS awards, it is

possible the Committee could have sought guidance on 'when' and 'how much' funds to disburse to countries with a continual history of significant under spend.

Country 8: This country was selected for review because of a major delay in using its first disbursement for an approved HSS grant. Following a review of relevant country grant documentation, the reviewers considered a flag had been missed by the Committee because of issues to do with governance and implementation. The proposal description appears to have been led and developed at the 'centre' with implementation very much dependent upon the co-operation of a decentralised structure, which did not seem evidently part of the planning process. At another level, the implementation and M&E plan were not detailed. In terms of the M&E plan activities were aggregated at a very high level and outputs were not always linked to objectives. These items whilst not responsible for the designated flag status indicate that it would be difficult to use the proposed frameworks to identify where any subsequent delays or bottlenecks in implementation are occurring (i.e. a problem for the Monitoring IRC).

To conclude, this review found that the assessment or 'detection' levels of both Committees are broadly adequate, while responding to and managing these issues when they arise appears weaker. This also begs the question: where does the responsibility for such management lie? It is beyond the scope of this review to fully address this issue, but it warrants further examination. It is possibly the responsibility of no single entity or agency and that is where the weakness and challenge to improving this lies. These are shared matters between the IRCs, the countries, the Alliance Board and Secretariat and key technical partners.

For example, GAVI policy permits the continued disbursement of funds even when substantial under spends are reported by the country. What does this mean for the IRC's role in making apparently contradictory recommendations about ISS or HSS awards while advising (or not) on the management of under spends? Coverage data discrepancies were often noted prior to Murray's evidence of reliability problems in late 2008, but were not always proactively addressed with respect to making ISS awards until 2009. Vaccine supply data is not always consistently updated or reported on across proposals and APRs, so that transition between new vaccine combinations apparently results in over/under stocks of new and previously used supplies.

What is important to highlight here is that the tools, procedures and process of the IRC Committees are not used to maximal effect to better addressing these matters. A clearer definition of roles and responsibilities is required in addition to a more stringent approval process.

Moreover, pressure (even if subliminal) on the IRCs to approve and disburse money cannot be discounted. There is an admirable and keen responsibility felt to be a predictable and reliable donor, yet good donor practice (and that of recipients) is about ensuring maximal aid effectiveness too. For example, it was not clear to the reviewers why in cases of some countries experiencing problems with significant under spend, why more resources were recommended for approval by the IRC. In the spirit of shared responsibility, it is also important to note that some of the issues examined by this review have already been acknowledged by the GAVI Board. For example, on the matter of data and coverage discrepancies related to ISS awards, it was noted in the December 2003 GAVI Alliance Board meeting that:

> "The discrepancies in data and information submitted from countries through the WHO/UNICEF Joint Reporting Form and the GAVI Progress report is worrying. WHO is committed to increase its efforts to provide the technical support countries need to ensure stronger and more accurate reporting. Efforts to rationalize and harmonize the two parallel reports may also be needed"

At an operational and policy level some specific issues were identified by the grant review process. Several of these items have been raised via other routes of investigation in this report and so provide a level of cross validation.

Operational issues

- **Committee Decisions Bands**: For the Monitoring IRC, there are only three recommendation bands. It appears that some APRs may warrant a conditional approval (i.e. more than a clarification). Indeed IRC reports sometimes use this language (referring to conditions), even though they do not have conditional approval as an option. This leads to a mix of less and more serious country requirements, and also means the Secretariat is tasked with signing off items which are classified as 'clarifications' but are more substantial than the term implies.

- **Need for Improved Committee Linkages**: There appears to be limited read across between the New Proposals IRC and the Monitoring IRC, especially concerning the use of previous APRs to inform judgements on Phase 2 ISS, or new vaccines transition, or the use of original proposal documentation to inform subsequent judgements on APRs (especially the first and second APRs following new proposal approval).

- **Use of Pre-Review Observations**: In several instances, pre-review reports noted potential flags. Although the IRCs do refer to the pre-reviews (e.g. copying sections), it is not clear why they do not refer to key issues raised in the reports, and indicate whether or not they agree with them.

- **Proposal /APR Forms**: Given the country case for funding is largely made via the relevant application form, the importance of this and the accompanying guidelines cannot be overlooked.

- **Standardisation of Committee Decision Making**: There are some inconsistencies in what IRCs identifies as conditions or clarifications. For example, our review noticed that several countries use out of date vaccine prices in their calculations but not all countries are asked to provide updated figures. For some this is requested as a condition, for others it is not and that difference can occur within the same IRC meeting /round. This also returns to the issue about what constitutes a 'condition' and what constitutes a 'clarification' and having a shared and standardised interpretation and application of these definitions.

- **Turn Around Time:** The review of 15 grants (eight new proposals, seven APRs) showed that to a large extent, both the proposal and APR review proposal consistently take about 3-4 months from submission by the country through to sending the decision letter from the Secretariat (for those receiving approvals with or without clarifications) and 6 months for a conditional approval (if the country meets the Secretariat's deadline set for its response).

For example, where an annual APR is submitted in April, the review typically takes place in May or June, and the decision letter (for approval or approval with clarifications) is sent out following Board or EC approval in August or early September. Similarly, if a new proposal is submitted in September/October, the decision letter is most often sent out in December or January the following year.

While this is acceptable for new proposals review, it is arguably too long for recommendations concerning annual review.

- **Data Management & Accurate Record Keeping**: On the basis of reviewing 15 sets of documents linked to individual proposals and grants, there are several issues concerning document management:

  - There are a few discrepancies between the recommendation in the IRC report and the record of the decision made captured in the Secretariat's summary data spreadsheet of decisions of the New Proposals IRC over time.

- Differences were found between the record of the IRC Committee recommendation and associated decision letter (e.g. an additional condition was requested)
- Lack of consistency in what constitutes a clarification and a condition (already mentioned)
- Reports were mis-titled with unclear file labelling system. This may sound petty but in fact impacts significantly on the ease of data retrieval and access. Furthermore, the mis-titling of reports (e.g. one country report had another country name on it) is confusing. This data management issue is something that both the respective IRCs and the Secretariat need to pay attention to.
- Further, lack of overall data management (including a spreadsheet that summaries APR status for grants over time) is a challenge for monitoring trends in the overall portfolio and for the IRC Monitoring, in particular, with regard to developing its general report.

Policy issues

- **Strengthening country data validity**: Discrepancies in country immunisation coverage data were not consistently noted or addressed in IRC recommendations until after the publication of Murray's research in late 2008. The whole area of how data validity may be best strengthened and assured is now being addressed by the IRCs and the Board. While there are capacity challenges to data accuracy and availability, APRs are submitted on a yearly basis, which provides countries and partners with time to address issues raised by the IRCs. Some ideas on this are presented later in the Recommendations section of this report.

- **Governance expertise:** It is notable that a substantial proportion of countries with delayed start-up for HSS are those with federal or decentralised governments and/or fragile contexts. Although challenges to governance and implementation can be diagnosed with hindsight, it is particularly difficult to assess the potential effectiveness of structures described in a grant proposal, especially if they are new or the country does not have an existing sector programme. However, where a Committee notes potential problems, it is surprising that these are expressed as clarifications, rather than conditions. It may be worth considering the inclusion of governance expertise in the Committee, although there is a trade off to be made with Committee size and efficiency.

- **Pressure to spend:** Several APRs and IRCs report significant under spends as well as achievements in immunising additional children. Committees tend to comment on low utilisation and encourage increased spending, but continue to recommend future awards/disbursements, without always recommending or requiring appropriate action to manage the problem. In 2009, some reports recommended delaying or lowering disbursements but it is not clear what the policy is on this.

- **Making better use of planning and management tools:** A costed implementation plan or plan of action is now required, but it has not been used consistently as a management or monitoring tool. As noted in the HSS evaluation, the monitoring plan may be weak and activities are aggregated at too high a level to enable analysis or identification of bottlenecks.

Table 14: Summary of a Benefit of Hindsight Grant Review (8 new proposals 2007 - 2009)

Country Number	IRC & Grant Type	IRC Recommendation	Performance Criterion	Flag Status	Rationale for Flag	Other Comments
				GRANT START UP PERFORMANCE		
1	NP* IRC - NVS	Conditional Approval	Major delay to grant start	(a) Missed (b) No flag	(a) Plan of action (POA) not updated and ambitious (b) Next APR cites change of procurement agent as cause of delay (not mentioned in proposal)	POA for new vaccines and HSS often out of date and/or not updated as part of re-submission. Countries only respond to conditions, it not part of conditions to update POA. Out-of-date POAs can mean countries are technically delayed before they even start.
2	NP IRC – NVS	Conditional Approval	Major delay to grant start	Raised but not addressed	Significant issues potentially causing delay raised in pre-reviews (e.g. lack of within country consultation); partially recognised in IRC report but not included in conditions	Appears to be no requirement by the IRC to comment on issues raised in pre-review (whether IRC in agreement or not)
3	NP IRC – NVS	Conditional Approval	Major delay to grant start	Missed	- POA not updated; - Delay introducing penta. because need to use Hep B stocks (but not noted until next APR)	Weak cross referencing between APRs concerning existing new vaccines and new proposals requesting transition to pentavalent vaccine
4	NP IRC – ISS	Approval	Low use of Round 1 funds	Missed	Under spend noted in several APRs prior to Phase 2 proposal; not mentioned in country proposal or noted by IRC – i.e. precedence should have been considered	IRC general and country recommendations note under-utilisation of ISS funds, and encourage expenditure but management action is rarely recommended (e.g. delay in awards) until 2009.
5	NP IRC – ISS	Approval	Low use of Round 1 funds	Flag raised and addressed	Relevant APR notes and explains reasons for under spend; FMA commissioned	As above – same as for Country 4
6	NP IRC – HSS	Approval with Clarifications	Major delay in using first fund disbursement	Flag raised and partially addressed in clarifications	Governance and implementation issues raised only as (minor) clarifications by IRC; noted as major issue in next APR	Mix of minor and major clarifications in IRC report (unclear use of recommendation criteria by IRC)

		GRANT START UP PERFORMANCE				
7	NP IRC – HSS	Approval with Clarifications	Major delay in using first fund disbursement	No flag	Proposal gave no indication of potential start up problems – proposal gave what appeared to be an adequate governance and management arrangement	Arguably, more 'hands on' knowledge of this country context could have been informative here.
8	NP IRC HSS	Approval with Clarifications	Major delay in using first fund disbursement	Missed	Proposal implied issues for governance and implementation	

* NP = New Proposal

Table 15: Summary of a Benefit of Hindsight Grant Review (7 ongoing grants 2007 - 2009)

		GRANTS IN MOTION – IMPLEMENTATION PERFORMANCE CHALLENGES				
Country Number	IRC & Grant Type	IRC Recommendation	Performance Criterion	Flag Status	Rationale for Flag	Other Comments
1	Monitoring IRC - NVS	Approval	Stock outs and overstocks	Partially raised in some Monitoring rounds but not addressed (overstock)	Confusing picture presented in consecutive APRs and IRC reports regarding stocks in hand and orders; new proposal pre-review suggested that coverage targets challenging to sustain	Weak cross referencing between proposal and APRs with respect to transition from Hep B to penta

These case studies raise issues around stock management – not always monitored by IRC and partners |
| 2 | Monitoring IRC - NVS | Approval | Stock outs and overstocks | Flag partially raised in some Mon rounds but not addressed (overstock) | Confusing picture presented in consecutive APRs and IRC reports regarding stocks in hand and orders | Limited reference to previous APRs – no obvious attempt to reconcile data across APRs |
| 3 | Monitoring IRC - NVS | Approval | Stock outs and overstocks | Flag raised and addressed (under stock) | APR and IRC notes that immunisation targets for year 1 were low (based on population estimates etc) | Issue not raised in new proposal. This is possibly an example where targets assessed /reviewed proposal submission by the New Proposals IRC (including the pre-review process) has implications for grant implication and the Monitoring IRC |

				GRANTS IN MOTION – IMPLEMENTATION PERFORMANCE CHALLENGES		
4	Monitoring IRC - ISS	No awards	Coverage discrepancies	Flag raised but not addressed until 2009	Data discrepancy issues noted but no action requested in APR 08	Coverage discrepancies not robustly addressed until 2009
5	Monitoring IRC ISS	No awards	Coverage discrepancies	Flag raised but not addressed until 2009	Data discrepancy issues noted in review of Phase 2 proposal review, but not in following APR 07; strong recommendation in 2009	Coverage discrepancies not robustly addressed until 2009
6	Monitoring IRC HSS	Approval with Clarifications	Low use of funds	Flag raised and partially addressed	Socio political context caused delays; IRC requested revised plan	Given build-up of funds, should 50% disbursement have been approved?
7	Monitoring IRC HSS	Approval with Clarifications	Low use of funds	Flag raised and partially addressed	Substantial funds build up, partly due to late disbursement. FMA underway.	Given build-up of funds, should 50% disbursement have been approved?

Note: Given that sample performance criteria were developed for the purposes of this review but have not been endorsed by GAVI, the review does not name the country examples whose documentation was reviewed for this exercise.

4.4.3 IRCs & Policy Recommendations

The IRCs have a policy contribution role to the Alliance, as mandated by their ToRs.   All the Committees have made a substantial number of general recommendations to the GAVI Alliance Board and Secretariat, using the IRC General Report as a vehicle for these. For the four years under review, all the IRC reports were reviewed and their recommendations mapped over time.

In general, IRC reports were of adequate quality, but the review found that their consistency in terms of structure and table formats, and data provided, varied greatly over time and by committee. Elsewhere this report highlights inconsistencies in how the recommendation categories are used across proposals and reports, and in the definition of clarifications and conditions. It is, however, noted that weaknesses in data management across the portfolio by the Secretariat is likely to have hindered effective IRC performance in some aspects of this role.

The proposals and monitoring IRCs made about 120 recommendations (see Table 16). These recommendations concern all aspects of the proposal and APR development process, as well as more overarching grant management and policy issues. Each report and its recommendations are reviewed by the Director of the PD, who submits both the report and comments on it to the CEO office. Following CEO review and endorsement of the comments, both the report and the comments are submitted to the PPC (Programme and Policy Committee). The PPC submits the results of their deliberations to the Board or EC. The flow and timeliness of the process has reportedly improved since the PPC was introduced in 2009.

Board and Secretariat responses to the IRC recommendations suggest that this aspect of the IRC role is important and valued. Responses have been effectively delegated to and acted on by the appropriate GAVI structure. For example, recommendations to amend the proposal/APR development process and guidelines have been addressed adequately over time by the Secretariat, with reported improvements by both countries and IRC members. Matters of policy are often included in the scope of work of a GAVI task force (e.g. ISS awards by the Performance based Financing Task Team). Some recommendations have been considered and not approved, such as matching co-financing contributions (by the Immunization Financing & Sustainability Task Team). Others, such as the need to take special steps for countries with repeated lack of success, have been approved and prioritised in Alliance partner work plans. Yet others are still being followed up, such as improving TA provision, strengthening independent coverage data validation, and securing sub national data (large countries).

As shown in Table 16, the IRCs have made repeated recommendations on several key issues, such as improving technical support provision, strengthening activity planning and grant monitoring, and financial reporting and management. The IRCs are not alone in highlighting these issues, which are also raised in other evaluations and reviews, and by partners. It is notable that all these areas have been addressed, although mainly one to two years following their initial recommendation date. This time lag reflects the need for many issues to be addressed by the appropriate task team, receive EC/Board approval, followed by implementation.   It also has contributed to and reflects a broader shift across the Alliance, in terms of a growing and more recent consensus on the need to strengthen country reporting and accountability mechanisms.

IRC members have also repeatedly requested a stronger and more formal linkage between New Proposals and Monitoring Committees, and stronger expertise on M&E, financial analysis and health systems. While this has been addressed to some extent, this review finds that these areas are still lacking.

Table 16: IRC general recommendations to GAVI Board 2006 – 2009 (summary by type and Committee)

Category of Recommendation	New Proposals IRCs (Num of Recs Made)	Monitoring IRC (Num of Recs Made)	Most Frequent Recommendations Over Time (all IRCs)	GAVI Alliance/Secretariat Response
IRC TORs, composition and process	10	8	Linkages between Committees (8)*; strengthen expertise in M&E, financial management and analysis, health systems (4)	2 Mon IRC members have participated in IRC NP from 2007. Mon IRC reports provided to IRC NP. M&E, HSS and financial expertise improved in 2009.
GAVI policies and strategies	7	15	Waste management funding (3); ISS award criteria (4); independent immunisation coverage surveys (2)	Waste management can be included in HSS proposals (country driven approach). Awards system under consideration by Performance based financing Task Team.
Proposal and APR development process	12	4	Strengthen technical support provision, incl. for HSS, M&E, and financial management and data preparation (11);	Follow up of recommendations ongoing e.g. WHO organised additional TA for countries; TA study organised in 2009.
Revisions to guidelines; documents required	10	5 (APRs) 6 (proposals)	Vaccine management assessment (2); participation of CSOs in ICCs/HSCCs (4)	Information on CSO involvement included in guidelines.
Specific comments on M&E	4	4	Monitoring framework and indicators (2); HSS M&E (7); Joint Reporting Form (JRF) to include new vaccines	M&E section of HSS guidelines revised in 2008 and 2009. JRF amended in 2009
Financial analysis, costing and reporting	9	11	Costed implementation plans and more detailed expenditure reports (10); co-financing reporting (7)	Guidelines now require more detailed plans and income and expenditure reports for APRs (2008). Criteria for pre-review by WHO (2008) Co-financing report revised with endorsement from IFS TT (2008) UNICEF and PAHO report doses and $ amounts (2008)
Management, accountability and sustainability	7	7	Strategies for strengthening management and accountability (6); and sustainability (4)	GAVI TAP team (2009) provides strengthened financial management assessment function. Financial statements and audits required (2009) GAVI sustainability policy (2008)
Start up and implementation	2	2	Inform countries about disbursement delays (2)	Information provided from 2008.
Total	61	58		

- n = no of times a given sub-theme recommendation was made

The efficiency and effectiveness of the process is not aided by the fact that IRC recommendations are not formally logged, monitored and reported on over time, so that IRC members report some frustration with lack of feedback and their perceived need to make repeated recommendations on similar issues. A summary of recommendations and follow-up organised by theme could help the IRCs themselves to prioritise their recommendations.

In sum, the IRCs have played an important role in making timely and relevant recommendations to the Alliance, and have contributed their independent voice to the growing Alliance consensus on key issues such as the need to improve financial reporting and accountability. However, the effectiveness of this role may be strengthened by improved logging/monitoring and a more robust feedback loop on decisions and action taken.

4.5 Data Triangulation & Corroboration of Findings

This review has drawn upon data from a range of primary and secondary sources. It is important to take stock of the findings in terms of areas where there is data convergence and divergence. Where data sources converge, and support each other, this lends greater validity or weight to the findings because evidence is corroborated in different ways. Where data sources are sole sources of information or even disagree with each other, this does not mean findings should be dismissed. However, greater caution should be exercised in terms of considering validity and weight of evidence, although arguably, not all data sources have equal weight. For example, secondary data sources which describe the actual decisions of the IRCs (e.g. in terms of proportion of LICUS/non-LICUS countries approved is stronger proof of whether there are similarities or differences compared to key informants subjective impressions). Admittedly, as in any study, data completeness and 'cleanliness' can vary, and facts or evidence are also open to interpretation.

Table 17 summarises issues across features of IRC design, execution and results where data sources concurred and supported each other. Areas of divergence are also identified.

An example where there is data divergence relates to the issue of whether non-English speaking countries are more disadvantaged than English speaking countries in terms of obtaining IRC approval. A similar issue prevails for LICUS countries in relation to non-LICUS countries. An analysis of IRC decision making patterns over time demonstrated no significant systematic bias of this type, although the view of several key informants (e.g. IRC members, Countries and GAVI Secretariat) was that there was a systematic bias or handicap in operatIon.

An example of area where evidence is weaker relates to whether or not WHO are in a difficult position as advisors to and reviewers of country proposals /APRs. As reported, interviewees from WHO and the IRCs did not perceive this to be a problem. At a conceptual level, it is possible to conceive how the operationalisation of this model may be tricky, with a potential for divided loyalties. The weight of evidence to support this is not strong, yet it was clear from information provided by a key informant, that the line between proposal development and review can indeed be blurred.

In other ways, the issue may not be one of whether one data source corroborates another but whether one source explains findings yielded by other data sources. For example, in terms of the 'benefit of hindsight grant review' it is possible that missed flags by the IRC in relation to issues of governance and implementation /planning may be explained by Committee composition factors in terms of lack of relevant expertise, or adequate 'hands on' country experience etc. A point also made by the HSS Evaluation (2009). Additionally, the lack of address or initiated action to respond to identified flags could possibly be explained by a lack of clarity around ToRs and 'who is responsible for what,' as well as the need for more explicit guidance.

Table 17: Issues & Corroborating Data Sources

Issue	Corroborating Data Sources
1. DESIGN	
(1a) IRC Independence: Competitive and open member appointment	• Key informant interviews (IRC members) • Peer review comparison
(1b) IRC Independence: Secretariat (PD) support to the IRCs	• IRC Report to GAVI Board • Peer review comparison
(1c) Composition of IRCs (e.g. levels of country experience, regional expertise, relevant expertise)	• Committee records /secondary data • IRC self assessment focus group • HSS Evaluation, 2009 • IRC Report to GAVI Board
(1d) Need for stronger Committee linkages	• IRC Recommendations to GAVI Board • Benefit of Hindsight Grant Review
2. EXECUTION	
(2a) IRC Work load	• IRC Key Informant interviews + Committee self assessment • Committee records • Peer review comparison
(2b) Turn around time - APRs	• Country consultation • Benefit of hindsight grant review
3. RESULTS	
• Need for guidelines and specificity on GAVI rules /policies (e.g. disbursal of funds to country grants with poor spend)	• Benefit of hindsight grant review • IRC self assessment focus group

5. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Key Messages

- **Fit for Purpose**: The model is fit for purpose, with some parts fitter than others. A range of policy and operational responses are identified to strengthen what is a viable model
- **IRC & DAC:** In terms of DAC criteria all criteria are satisfied at a broad level but there is scope for strengthening relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the IRCs.
- **Monitoring IRC**: The evidence shows that the Monitoring IRC is experiencing more challenges in carrying out its tasks: reviewing documentation, assessing monitoring reports (based on often weak M&E frameworks), and using relevant information from the New Proposals IRC. This IRC appeared to lack significant M&E expertise and also have been comparatively less well served by the Secretariat (due in part to less continuity in dedicated staff support).
- **Validation of Review Findings**: There is some internal and external validation of findings from this review.   For example, the findings from this review of IRCs provide evidence for some of the observations made by other reviews, such as the HSS Evaluation 2009, which was critical of IRC performance. Significantly, this review concludes that the IRC model is not fatally flawed but that identified weaknesses of design and execution can be fixed to enhance Committee performance and effectiveness.   Opportunities are likely to occur with the Health Systems Funding Platform, whereby other models of country application assessment and monitoring can be assessed. The opportunity to evaluate this should be seized.
- **Broader Issues**: Even with an optimally performing IRC model, there are broader factors that mediate and determine the effectiveness of IRC function. These include the availability, quality and timeliness of country data. In the short term, there needs to be further consideration of practical measures and guidance to the IRC about standard approaches to data variance. More long term, the ultimate issue is about strengthening country health information systems.

This review was undertaken to assess the *fit for purpose* of GAVI's IRCs. Here *purpose* is defined as the ability of the IRCs to conduct robust technical appraisals of country applications and make funding recommendations to the EC/Board. The *fit* refers to the ability and suitability of the IRC model, in terms of its design and execution, to satisfy this purpose and deliver results.

This review has found that as a conceptual approach there is logic and merit to having a system of independent technical review. This is externally validated by other agencies, who also use a similar approach (although with some differences), to advise their respective Boards on programme funding decisions.

To borrow from language used in school reports – IRCs 'try hard, have great potential but could do better.'   On the basis of evidence examined, the reviewers conclude that the IRC model works but its fit for purpose would be stronger, if a number of important operational and policy matters are addressed to improve its design and execution, which should impact positively on the efficiency and effectiveness of the model, and subsequently its results.

It is also important to recognise, that even with an optimally performing IRC model, there are some mediating factors and influences that are broader issues and challenges which limit or constrain a model based solely on paper based applications or submissions.   Such factors include the availability, quality and timeliness of country data, ranging from coverage to a variety of health system matters.   More immediately, there needs to be a consideration of practical measures (e.g. such as the guidance on how to deal with differences between population and administrative coverage, and with persistent underspends) to assist the IRCs in adopting some standard management

recommendations. Importantly, wider efforts to improve country health information systems is the ultimate issue, and whilst this is beyond the IRC, measures and efforts that work towards improving data validity (including verification) and financial management are key.

5.1 Strengths & Limitations of this Review

5.1.1 Review Strengths

- **Comprehensiveness of the Review:** This review sought to achieve an in-depth understanding and analysis of the IRC model.   The scope which covered design, execution and results permitted a thorough examination of issues. A mix of methods and different data sources (e.g. primary and secondary) allowed for corroboration and triangulation of findings.

- **Spirit of Review:** There was a very open and good spirit of co-operation between the review team and those participating in the review (i.e. IRC members, technical partners, country representatives and GAVI Secretariat)

- **Sampling of Countries for Consultation:** A stratified sampling approach that ensured countries with differing levels of proposal /APR success were selected was a useful way of trying to control for a response bias in a small purposeful sample (i.e. as success levels are likely to possibly influence respondent views of the IRCs).

- **Examination of Committee Results**:   As a concept, the linkage of IRC Committee decision making to subsequent grant performance was a useful one.   Whilst there is scope to strengthen the mechanics of conducting such a 'benefit of hindsight' grant review' (see below), it is possibly worth considering repeating this exercise as periodic intervals as a quality assurance mechanism for IRCs and for wider institutional learning purposes.

- **Usefulness of Secondary Data**: The Secretariat has a wealth of data about the design and execution of the IRCs which the review has sought to 'mine' and use for information purposes. A considerable amount of the findings of this review are based on secondary data sources, of which the merit and value have hopefully been demonstrated.   A bonus from this review would be for these data sources to be more regularly used by the Secretariat for active management and learning purposes.

Review Weaknesses

- **Country Response Rate:** A modest response from countries to consultation efforts means the number of country voices is fewer than planned. Having said that, it is reassuring to note how validating views expressed by country representatives were with those identified via channels. These included:
    - The IRCs are viewed as independent, technical experts and fulfil the accountability function they were created to do
    - Improving the transparency of IRC members selection process, with suggestions of including up to date membership and CVs on the GAVI website
    - IRC decision making was considered handicapped by the lack of country specific context knowledge
    - Feedback of decisions to countries (particularly for APRs) needs to be quicker

- **Country Interviews:** Telephone interviews with country interviews were conducted. This method has limitations in terms of the ease and depth of information elicited from interviewees who are coping with varying quality of telephone line connections**.**

- **Benefit of Hindsight Grant Review:**   A number of points can be made about this undertaking:

  - **The Reviewers:** The reviewers were public health experts, with specialism in health systems and monitoring and evaluation. They do not match the breadth of expertise in the IRCs.
  - **Fairness:** It is possible that some may argue that the 'benefit of hindsight' is always advantageous and therefore not a particularly useful means for assessing the performance forecasting or risk assessment mechanism of the respective IRCs.   Whilst hindsight is beneficial, we were very careful to base conclusions on evidence available to the IRC. The exercise was illuminating, with findings and lessons that hopefully will strengthen the IRCs going forward.
  - **Sample:** GAVI Alliance does not have a system for objectively and systematically assessing grant performance, through established criteria. The grants reviewed are those identified as having challenging performance according to particular criteria developed by the team with inputs from the Secretariat. These criteria are typical indicators of grant performance, such as low funds utilisation. It is not known how representative or not they are in the context of GAVI's overall grant portfolio. As the grants reviewed spanned both the New Proposal and Monitoring IRCs across different years, with some change in membership, it seems unlikely that the findings are an artefact of a particular Committee. However, a wider and more systematic examination of grants would be useful.
  - **Secondary Data:** Where possible, the review used already compiled secondary data sources (e.g. summary of new proposals IRC funding decisions), the working assumption was that the data was correct.   One or two data entry errors were noted in the process of the review – where spotted data were corrected. However, to undertake to check and compile all data from primary data sources would not have been tenable.   Several data sheets (e.g. related to IRC Committee composition) were compiled by the review team from primary data sources. Where completed, random checks were performed for quality assurance and data accuracy purposes.

- **Benchmarking & Other Peer Review Models:** The rationale and criteria for benchmarking with other peer review models has been explained earlier.   The comparison was limited to publicly available data. Where information was not available (e.g. Committee cost data) comparisons were not possible.   It is also recognised that whilst comparisons with the selected peer review models was very useful. Differences between the respective agencies and their peer models exist, and these need to be taken into account when considering these findings.

5.2 IRC Review & DAC Criteria

When considering the performance of the IRCs against DAC criteria as set out in the framework underpinning this review (Figure 3), it is true to say that whilst all criteria are satisfied to some extent at a broad level, there is much scope for strengthening the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of IRCs. In particular, the following should be noted:

Relevance*:* Although the mandate and composition of the IRCs is broadly appropriate, this review identified a number of gaps that need to be strengthened to increase the relevance of the design. For

example, open and competitive appointment of members for greater assurances and transparency of independence, addressing gaps and disparities in IRC ToRs, and adopting a more systematic and evidence based management approach of Committee composition which is driven by the needs of individual Committees

Effectiveness: The overall effectiveness of the IRCs can be judged to be sub-optimal, due mainly to some limitations in management and monitoring processes. This conclusion is based on evidence of some lack of adjustment of work loads to Committee size (some of this due to factors such as Committee member schedule changes that are beyond Secretariat control), best use of expertise within the group, a Committee working style that does not optimally 'mine' information about past grant history and performance, lengths of meetings that are not adjusted to work volume and insufficient linkages between IRCs. Both Committees are designed to receive similar levels of support and types of information, but the Monitoring IRC may have been comparatively less well served (due in part to the lack of a dedicated staff member during the time of the review), and consequently is labouring with more of these difficulties, than the New Proposals IRC.

Efficiency: In broad terms the IRC is efficient when IRC costs are considered in the context of the resource envelopes they are advising on. However, the analysis of meeting costs conducted for this review, demonstrated cost inefficiency in the system. e.g. when the length of IRC meetings are not determined by Committee work load.

Impact: It is not possible to measure and attribute the impact of IRCs contribution to GAVI's organisational goals (i.e. the causal pathway from IRC actions to the saving of children's lives via immunisation is too distant). Instead, IRCs impact has been measured in this review by examining its ability to detect flags for grant performance, as well as contribute to GAVI's policy making function. Factors have been identified that limit or effect the impact of the IRCs in this respect. It is argued that a more rigorous address of factors effecting the design and executive of IRC activities will in turn improve the impact of IRCs.

5.3   External Validation of IRC Review Findings

In undertaking this review, a variety of information sources have been used to produce its findings and conclusions. Within this review, a number of different themes have been corroborated or validated by different sources. It is also equally important to look external to this review to consider, to what extent its findings are validated by those reported in other relevant GAVI evaluations or reviews.

Overall, the IRCs' role and effectiveness are not mentioned in-depth by the range of GAVI evaluations that have been undertaken (Annex 9). Although, it was noted by the Phase 1 Evaluation, that the IRC process was one of the few components of GAVI operations that had never been evaluated, and was not included in the scope of that evaluation either. Although there have been some criticisms of the IRC model over time, the underlying assumption of much of the commentary, seems to be that the role of the IRC works, and that it provides independent, robust quality assessment of both proposals and performance reports.

A more critical view than this was put forward by the HSS Evaluation (2009) and HSS APR review (2008) which challenged the ability of the IRC mechanism to conduct robust HSS reviews. Reasons include its desk based model whose members lacked country knowledge, and had an inability to review complex national health systems, on the basis of data of varying levels of validity with little

means of verification, and exacerbated by weak M&E grant frameworks, baselines and indicators, resulting in weak APRs and poor validation in the pre-review process. Monitoring IRC members reported similar challenges during this review - that country reporting on HSS was very weak, and the limited usefulness of WHO's HSS pre-review of APRs. Several IRC members mentioned the gap between what is happening in country and what might be reported, with limited in country validation, the inadequacy of the APRs and the need to look wider for relevant research and data. The IRC report to GAVI in 2010 recommended that: "GAVI Alliance partners strengthen in-country partner support in the governance and reporting on HSS support" (ref. IRC report October).

The findings of this review provide supporting evidence for a number of the observations made about the HSS proposal and performance review process by the HSS Evaluation (2009):

- **Lack of direct country experience by IRC members**: At a Committee composition level, weaknesses have been identified by this review, with the extent of 'hands on' country experience possessed by a significant proportion of Committee members, with levels of direct country experience actually lower in the New Proposals IRC HSS/CSO than in other IRCs. Findings from this review also highlighted that whilst Committee members possess diverse regional expertise, with higher proportions of Africa regional experience, in line with the origins of country applications, due to work load issues it is not possible to have all applications reviewed by people with relevant country /regional expertise. Ideas for how to improve this are addressed elsewhere in this document. Interestingly, cross agency initiatives to pursue a joint programming in HSS may include country based assessment procedures of the sort favoured by the HSS Evaluation. If so, this is a good opportunity to start thinking about how the evaluation and lessons learning (possibly in a comparative manner) will be conducted.

- **M&E skills & IRC composition:** Whilst the Monitoring IRC (for whom this is most relevant) does have some members with M&E experience, their numbers are few, and this expertise is not present in all Committee sessions which means the likelihood of identifying and advising on weak M&E frameworks is handicapped. Importantly, explicit M&E expertise was also not evident in the New Proposals IRC. This is important because M&E frameworks are proposed by countries in their applications which are reviewed by this Committee.

- **Validity and completeness of data:** The challenges of country data validity, and hence APR information, have been long standing, and also corroborated by this review via the grant review exercise and stakeholder interviews.

Importantly, this review differs from the HSS Evaluation in its conclusion about how to address these issues. Unlike the HSS Evaluation, this review does not consider the model to be fatally flawed. Instead, it concludes that the design and execution of the IRCs can be improved by pursuing a raft of operational and policy responses that should in turn improve the effectiveness and performance of the Committees.

Where other evaluations and reviews identified IRC relevant issues, it is encouraging to find some convergence of issues, as this is validating. Yet on the other hand, in spite of constant effort, some problems continue to persist over time. The types of issues where convergence has been identified are listed in Box 7.

Box 7: IRC Related Issues – Converging Findings

- **Tracking IRC Recommendations /Concerns:**
  (a) An over-arching weakness is the lack of a mechanism to monitor follow-up of issues. Identified through special evaluations or through the IRC process (GAVI Phase 1 Evaluation, Abt Associates, 2008)

  (b) A need to better document identified problems identified (including those highlighted by the IRC), or reported in APRs, tracking country responses and resolution was identified,(ISS Evaluation, Abt Associates, 2007)

- **IRC Capacity:**
  The GAVI Alliance is advised to pay attention to capacity issues at the level of the IRC in terms of numbers of reviewers and their skills. Unless staffing and review procedures are strengthened, improved reporting and validation may not result in better HSS monitoring, as it might simply increase the IRC workload, and make matters worse. (Review of HSS Annual Performance Reports, HLSP, 2008)

- **Validity of Country Data & Performance**
  There was limited independent monitoring at country level to verify aspects of performance reported in APRs, and reports were weak on financial accountability. (Evaluation of GAVI's Injection Safety Support, JSI, 2009).

Annex 1:   Terms of Reference

GAVI Alliance

Evaluation of GAVI Independent Review Committees

(IRCs)

(Note: This is an abridged version of the RFP. RFP process and application format details are not included)

Dated: July 2009

Request for Proposal Number
RFP-EVIRC060709

Table of Contents

I.   Purpose of the evaluation

This Evaluation is being commissioned by the GAVI Alliance Secretariat at the request of the Programme & Policy Committee and as recommended by the GAVI Phase 1 Evaluation. The objective of this Evaluation is to assess the appropriateness and robustness of the design, execution and decisions of the Independent Review Committees (IRCs). The learning from this evaluation will lead to possible changes to the business model as well as the health systems funding platform (HSFP) being explored by GAVI, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Bank and the World Health Organization

II.   Background and context for this consultancy

The GAVI Alliance was launched in 2000 to increase immunization coverage and reverse widening global disparities in access to vaccines. Governments in donor and developing countries, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, non-governmental organizations, foundations, vaccine manufacturers, and public health and research institutions work together as partners in the Alliance to achieve common immunization goals, in recognition that only through a strong and united effort can higher levels of support for global immunization be generated.

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The GAVI Alliance mission is to save children's lives and protect people's health by increasing access to immunization in poor countries. The GAVI Alliance Strategy positions GAVI's work within the broader context of child survival and the Millennium Development Goals. The Alliance also makes a major contribution to meeting global goals outlined in the WHO/UNICEF Global Immunization Vision and Strategy (GIVS) by supporting immunization programmes and health systems in the world's poorest countries.

Since its launch in 2000, the GAVI Alliance has engaged in an innovative grant proposal process in which an IRC reviews country proposals (i.e., proposal IRC) and makes recommendations to the GAVI Board on whether they should be approved. A second type of IRC reviews country Annual Progress Reports (i.e., monitoring IRC) and makes recommendations to the board on the continuation of GAVI support and the approval or rejection of performance rewards to countries. Please consult the GAVI website (www.gavialliance.org) and the GAVI Alliance Handbook (http://www.gavialliance.org/resources/Handbook_in_English.pdf) for a description of application and monitoring procedures at GAVI, including the roles of the proposal and monitoring IRCs.

III.   Evaluation scope

This Evaluation will assess the rigor, independence, robustness, and adequacy of the IRC review process implemented since 2006, examining both the proposal and monitoring IRCs. The Evaluation will review the extent to which the design of the IRC process is fit for purpose, as well as the performance of the IRC against its terms of reference. The evaluation will cover the whole process starting from country submission of proposals (in the case of the proposal IRC) or Annual Progress Reports (in the case of the monitoring IRC) to the final IRC recommendations to the Board, including the selection of IRC members by the Secretariat. The study should include an assessment of the support that the Secretariat provides to the IRC and the pre-review process conducted by partners (WHO/UNICEF). In reviewing the process beginning with when applications are submitted to GAVI, the evaluation should build upon and make reference to earlier work that examined technical assistance to countries and preparation of applications.[20]

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[20] An analysis of technical assistance to countries in developing proposals has been conducted by McKinsey and Co for GAVI.

IV. Evaluation questions

The main questions to be answered by the Evaluation are as follows:

- Design:

    o To what extent are the design of the IRC and related processes (e.g., terms of reference, composition, role of Secretariat and partners, processes for reaching decisions) fit for purpose?

- Execution:

    o To what extent have the management of the IRC by the Secretariat and the conduct of the pre-assessment by WHO and UNICEF been appropriate and effective?

    o To what extent has the IRC appropriately executed its internal work processes in reaching decisions?

- Results:

    o To what extent have IRC decisions regarding country applications and Annual Progress Reports and recommendations regarding policies been robust, independent, appropriate and well justified?

V. Methodology

Firms bidding on the Evaluation are strongly encouraged to propose innovative methodological approaches in response to the evaluation questions. The study should draw extensively on existing documentation (e.g., McKinsey report on technical assistance, the ISS evaluation, the HSS tracking study and the HSS evaluation). The firm selected to conduct the evaluation should attend a sample of sessions at the IRC meetings to be convened at the GAVI Secretariat in September and October.

To ensure credibility, the Evaluation should be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

a) Independence and impartiality
b) Involvement of stakeholders
c) Transparency
d) Reference to international norms and definitions such as the OECD DAC principles

VI. Awards and evaluation criteria

The Evaluation Team may comprise an organisation or consortium of both public and private entities to cover the range of competencies required. Applications from institutions based in developing countries are strongly encouraged.

Collectively, the Evaluation team should demonstrate experience and competencies in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, including rigorous process evaluation, and familiarity with proposal review and monitoring processes in other global health partnerships and initiatives.

The proposals will be scored and ranked according to the criteria below:

Technical criteria (80%)	% of total score
Understanding and operationalisation of the evaluation questions. Appropriate and innovative methods proposed for undertaking the work. Timeline of activities along with the required deliverables, including starting and ending dates for completion of all work.	50%
Ability of the bidder to carry out scope of work (based on qualifications of the team, including CVs of key experts). Partnership with institutions in developing countries	30%
Financial criteria (20%)	
Overall cost	10%
Realistic costing	10%

VII.   Proposal requirements

Following the issuance of the RFP, all interested contractors are invited to submit a proposal which describes:
- the evaluation framework
- a detailed description of the evaluation methodology
- detailed work plan, budget and timeline
- personnel, person-months and costs for each stage of work
- team's experiences dealing with evaluation studies
- team composition with full CVs and break-down of the tasks assigned to each member
- statement of potential conflict of interest

VIII.   Deliverables

Expected deliverables

- During implementation, the Evaluation team will provide monthly progress reports
- Draft report:
  - To be delivered by 7 December 2009
- Final report:
  - To be delivered by 18 January 2010
  - Incorporating comments on the Draft Report
- PowerPoint presentation of the study
- Short summary report for public dissemination

The final report should include but not be limited to:

- A mapping of the entire process from submission of proposals to review of performance and release of monies under different windows of support at GAVI, including the role of the proposal and monitoring IRCs, audit and finance, and executive Committees of the Board
- Assessment of the extent to which the design of the proposal and monitoring IRCs and related processes are fit for purpose

- Assessment of the extent to which the management of the IRC by the Secretariat and the conduct of the pre-assessment by WHO and UNICEF have been appropriate and effective
- Assessment of the extent to which the IRC has appropriately executed its internal work processes in reaching decisions
- Assessment of the extent to which IRC decisions regarding country applications and Annual Progress Reports and recommendations regarding policies have been robust, independent, appropriate and well justified
- Lessons learned from the IRC experience and recommendations

IX.   Timeline

Note: All 'Event Dates' shall be executed by 5PM CET.

Events	Date
RFP issued	6 July 2009
Submission of clarification questions	22 July 2009
GAVI response to questions	28 July 2009
Submission of proposals	14 August 2009
Selection of the winning contractor	4 September 2009
Monthly report	Last Day of Each Month
Submission of draft report	7 December 2009
Submission of final report	18 January 2010

X.   Management

1   Project Management

The GAVI Evaluation will be outsourced in its entirety to consultants. The GAVI Secretariat will be the focal point for the consultants.

2   Oversight

The GAVI Alliance Secretariat is responsible for conducting the bidding process, the selection of the contractor and the management of the Evaluation.

Annex 2: List of Documents Consulted

1. IRC TERMS OF REFERENCE (current & historic[21])

- Monitoring IRC ToRs, GAVI Secretariat, December 2009; available online at: http://www.gavialliance.org/resources/Mandate_TOR_IRC_Monitoring_2009.pdf
- New Proposals IRC ToRs, GAVI Secretariat, 2009; accessible at: http://www.gavialliance.org/resources/Mandate_TOR_NewProposals_IRC_2009.pdf
- Terms of Reference for the IRC for HSS Proposals

- Terms of Reference for the pre-screening process in HSS Proposal Development
- Global Fund for Children's Vaccines. Basic Principles for the Country Proposal Review Process. Oslo Meeting, Doc 1.1.
- Terms of Reference of the Independent Monitoring Review Committee (IMC)
- Expanded Independent Review Committee (IRC)
- Mandate and Modus Operandi of the IRC Monitoring Team

2. IRC REPORTS TO THE GAVI ALLIANCE BOARD

- IRC report to the Alliance [NVS, ISS, INS], July 2006
- IRC report to the Alliance [NVS, ISS, INS], February 2007
- IRC report to the Alliance [NVS, ISS, INS], May 2007
- IRC report to the Alliance [NVS, ISS, INS], August 2007
- IRC report to the Alliance [NVS, ISS, INS], November 2007
- IRC report to the Alliance [NVS, ISS, INS], May 2008
- IRC report to the Alliance [NVS, ISS, INS], July 2008
- IRC report to the Alliance [NVS, ISS, INS], November 2008
- IRC report to the Alliance [NVS, ISS, INS], February 2009
- IRC report to the Alliance [HSS, CSO], February 2007
- IRC report to the Alliance [HSS, CSO], May 2007
- IRC report to the Alliance [HSS, CSO], August 2007
- IRC report to the Alliance [HSS, CSO], November 2007
- IRC report to the Alliance [HSS, CSO], June 2008
- IRC report to the Alliance [HSS, CSO], November 2008
- IRC report to the Alliance [Integrated], May-June 2009
- IRC report to the Alliance [Integrated], October 2009

- Monitoring IRC report to Alliance, July 2006
- Monitoring IRC report to Alliance, November 2006
- Monitoring IRC report to Alliance, February 2007
- Monitoring IRC report to Alliance, July 2007
- Monitoring IRC report to Alliance, November 2007
- Monitoring IRC report to Alliance, July 2008
- Monitoring IRC report to Alliance, November 2008
- Monitoring IRC report to Alliance, June 2009
- Monitoring IRC report to Alliance, October 2009

3. OTHER GAVI EVALUATIONS
- GAVI Lessons Learned Phase 1, HLSP 2006
- ISS Evaluation, Abt Associates, 2007

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[21] A number of the documents related to the historic development of the ToRs for the IRCs were not dated.

- Enhancing GAVI's Public-Private Partnership Model, McKinsey paper, 2008
- GAVI Governance Review, CEPA 2007
- GAVI Phase 1 Evaluation, Abt Associates, 2008
- Review of HSS Annual Performance Reports, HLSP, 2008
- Technical Support Review, McKinsey, 2008
- HSS Evaluation, HLSP, 2009
- Evaluation of GAVI's Injection Safety Support, JSI, 2009

4. OTHER PEER REVIEW MODELS

- The Five-Year Evaluation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria – Synthesis of study areas 1, 2 and 3, Macro International Inc, March 2009
- The Global TB Drug Facility: innovative global procurement, Kumaresan J et al, International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease 8(1):130-138, 2004
- The Report of the TRP and the Secretariat on Round 6 proposals, GFATM 2006
- The Report of the TRP and the Secretariat on Round 7 proposals, GFATM 2007
- The Report of the TRP and the Secretariat on Round 8 proposals, GFATM 2008
- The Report of the TRP and the Secretariat on Round 9 proposals, GFATM 2009
- Assessment of the Proposal Development and Review Process of the GFATM, Wilkinson D et al, Eurohealth, February 2006
- GDF TRC Terms of Reference, 2009; available online at: http://www.stoptb.org/gdf/assets/documents/Terms%20of%20Reference.doc
- Global Fund TRP Terms of Reference, 2009; available online at: http://www.theglobalfund.org/documents/trp/TRP_TOR_en.pdf

5. TYPES OF DOCUMENTS CONSULTED FOR 'BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT'' GRANT REVIEW[22]:

- Relevant country applications
- IRC country specific reports
- Pre-review reports
- Decision letters
- Summary spread sheet of country grant decisions
- Current new proposal application and APR form

6. WEBSITES:

- The GAVI Alliance website: http://www.gavialliance.org/ accessed December 2009
- The GDF website: http://www.stoptb.org/gdf/ ; accessed December 2009
- The GFATM website: http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/ ; accessed December 2009

7. OTHER MISCELLANEOUS

- Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest. Basic Principles
- The GAVI Alliance Policy Towards Gender Equality in Immunisation Related Health Services, 2008
- GAVI Alliance Handbook – Country proposal and monitoring processes - , GAVI Secretariat, 2008; available online at: http://www.gavialliance.org/resources/Handbook_in_English.pdf
- GAVI Board Minutes, December 2003

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[22] Specific documents have deliberately not been referenced for country anonymity purposes.

Annex 3: Criteria for Grant Review: Number of Countries Identified by GAVI Country Programs Team with Grants that Satisfy Criteria of Sub-Optimal Grant Performance

(a) Criteria related to new grants

Grant Type	Criteria indicating challenging grant performance	Number of countries identified by Country Programs fulfilling criteria	Data sources used by CROs to identify countries
NVS	Excessive delay in starting grant activities compared to plan. • *'Excessive delay'* is defined as 6mths or more • Delay to grant start should exclude manufacturing delay	7 countries	• Country visit by CRO • APRs and other communication • Email communication, including from country governments and technical partners
HSS	Delay in using first received funding disbursement • Delay defined from when funds received vs waiting for funds (i.e. we are excluding time delays around setting up bank accounts etc)	7 countries	• Country visit • APRs • Financial Management Assessment • Email correspondence
ISS	Low use of ISS funds (round 1) * • Low use is defined as a third or more of funds unused	10 countries	• Country visit • APRs • Email correspondence

* Examined because of its bearing on ISS Phase 2 renewal decisions

(b) Criteria Related to the Performance of Grants over Time

Grant Type	Criteria indicating challenging grant performance	Number of countries identified by Country Programs fulfilling criteria	Data sources used by CROs to identify countries
NVS	Use of vaccines (stock outs and over stock), i.e. one or more occasions of vaccine stock out in a twelve month period or 50% or more of vaccine in stock than planned for at the point of the APR	**Stock Outs:** 11 countries **Over Stock:** 9 countries	• Vaccine utilization study • Country visits • Country communication • Correspondence with technical partners • APRs
HSS	No funds used - or 60% or more of funds unspent as per plan at point of APR	7 countries	• APRs • Regional communication, TAP assessments • Country visits Country communication
ISS	Population coverage significantly differs to reports of administrative coverage 'Significantly different' is defined according to GAVI current funding guidance – i.e. 10% variance on WHO figures	12 countries	• WHO website • APR • Country visit

Annex 4: Key Informant Topic Guide

General
- What issues do you think are important areas of focus for this evaluation?
- What are 3 strengths of the IRC Evaluation (Monitoring /New Proposals) Committee?
- What are 3 challenges of the IRC Evaluation (Monitoring /New Proposals) Committee?

IRC Design
- How fit for purpose is the IRC in terms of – size, composition, organization and length of committee meetings?
- How is the 'independence' of the IRCs ensured and preserved?
- What is the process of appointment, vetting and monitoring of IRCs members?
- How are new members inducted and orientated to IRC roles and responsibilities
- How are Chairs appointed, what are the rules around length of tenure, serving on other GAVI Committees?
- How is Committee institutional memory preserved?

IRC Execution
- How does the Committee reach decision – how are disputes handled?
- How are members orientated and updated on relevant GAVI policy important for IRC decision making?
- How does the IRCs relate to relevant GAVI entities and Committees?
- What are costs involved with IRCs (direct and indirect)
- What is the role /relationship of the Committee to support and advisory agents such as: WHO /UNICEF? How useful is the pre-assessment process – explain the reasons for your answer?
- How well is the IRC Committee supported by the GAVI Secretariat to enable it to carry out its ToRs?
- How well are IRC Committee decisions captured, monitored and followed up?
- How well are IRC deliberations and decisions communicated to the GAVI Board
- What are the linkages between IRC New Proposals and Monitoring Committees

IRC Results
- Do respective IRCs review and monitor their own performance and results?
- What would you identify as appropriate metrics for performance monitoring IRCs?
- How risk taking /risk adverse are IRCs?

Other topics included:
- What are the implications of the proposed joint platform in health systems strengthening for GAVI IRCs?
- Is the IRC model / approach the optimal way to make these country funding recommendations to the GAVI Board /Executive Committee – explain the reasons for your answer?

Annex 5: Country Consultations: Topic Guide Questions

1. What did you think about the standard or quality of the technical review made by the IRC in relation to your country's application /APR? By this I mean did you judge it to be technically and scientifically rigorous and comprehensive?

2. What did you think about the objectivity or neutrality of the IRC decision based on the country application /APR information submitted to the IRC for review?

3. What did you think about the clarity and quality of the communication conveyed by the GAVI Secretariat, on behalf of the IRC, to your country about their decision on your application /APR? For example:
   - How clear was the Committee decision communicated to you in the report?
   - How well were the reasons for their decision explained?
   - Where the Committee made recommendations, or had requirements of your country, how clearly were they expressed? Did your country understand what was expected of it to meet the requirements of the Committee

4. What lessons (if any) has your country learnt from this application experience. For example, are there things your country will or will not repeat in future applications/APRs? If so, what are they and why?

5. Have you any recommendations for the IRC? If so, what are they and why?

6. Have you any recommendations for the Secretariat or GAVI Board about the IRC? If so, what are they and why?

Annex 6: List of Key Informants Interviewed

Stakeholder Type	Name	Position
IRC COMMITTEE MEMBERS* (CURRENT & FORMER)		
Current IRC Monitoring	Clifford Kamara	Chair: IRC Monitoring
	Assia Brandup-Lukanow	Vice Chair: IRC Monitoring + GFATM TRP member
	John Grundy	IRC Monitoring Member
	Rehan Hafiz	IRC Monitoring Member
	Dileep Mavalankar	IRC Monitoring Member
Subtotal (n) = 5		
Former IRC Monitoring	Fred Binka	Former Chair
Subtotal (n) = 1		
Current IRC New Proposals (NP)	Francis Omaswa	IRC NP Chair
	Peter Ndumbe	IRC NP Co-Chair
	Alison Heywood	IRC NP Member + GFATM TRP member
	Amarjeet Sinha	IRC NP Member
	Yasuhiko Kamiya	IRC NP Member
	Sarah Herbert Jones	IRC NP Member + GFATM TRP member
	Beatriz Ayala-Ostrom	IRC NP Member + GFATM TRP member
	David Gzirishvili	IRC NP Member
	Elsie le Franc	IRC NP Member + GFATM TRP member
	Ibukun Ogunbekun	IRC NP Member
	Rene Owuna Essomba	IRC NP Member
	Bolanle Oyeledun	IRC NP Member + Chair, GFATM TRP
	Alfred da Silva	IRC NP Member
	George Pariyo	IRC NP Member
Subtotal (n) = 14		
Former IRC New Proposals	Ciro de Quadros	Former NP Chair + Chair of Mon IRC
Former HSS/CSO New Proposals	Maureen Law	Former HSS/CSO Chair
Subtotal (n) = 2		
COUNTRY CONSULTATIONS		
Niger	Tiekoura Coulibaly	WHO country adviser (new vaccines)
Niger	Abdoulaye Lado	EPI Manager
Ivory Coast	Valérie Kouassi-Gohou	HSS Grant Focal Point
Ivory Coast	Théodore Yao Kouadio	WHO country adviser – HSS
Benin	Patrick Kora	HSS Grant Focal Point
Benin	Barthelemy Semegan	WHO country adviser – HSS
Tanzania	Christopher Kamugisha	WHO country adviser (new vaccines)
Tanzania	Dr Kitambi	EPI Manager
DR Congo	André Kasogo	EPI Manager

Kyrygz Republic	Oskon Moldokulov	WHO country adviser
Cameroon	Françoise Nissack	WHO country adviser (new vaccines)
Sierra Leone	Wondimagegnehu Alemu	WHO country adviser (new vaccines)
Sao Tome	Lazaro Sousa	WHO country adviser (new vaccines)
Myanmar	Than Tun Aung	EPI Manager
Subtotal (n) = 14		
TECHNICAL PARTNERS		
IRC Pre-Review Phase	Laure Dumolard	WHO /Geneva
	Ruddi Eggers	WHO /Geneva
	Lidija Kamara	WHO /Geneva
	Patrick Kadama	WHO /Geneva
	Ann Ottosen	UNICEF /Copenhagen
Subtotal (n) = 5		
WHO Regional Working Groups	Niyazi Cakmak	WHO EURO
	Irtaza Chaudhri	WHO EMRO
	Dr Rani	WHO
Subtotal (n): 3		
GAVI SECRETARIAT		
GAVI Secretariat	Julian Lob-Leyvt	Executive Director
	Helen Evans	Deputy Executive Director
	Mercy Ahun	Director Country Programs
	Lisa Jacobs	Director Governance
	Nina Schwalbe	Director Policy & Performance
	Carole Presern	Director Special Projects
	Peter Hansen	Monitoring & Evaluation
	Craig Burgess	Health Systems Strengthening
	Ranjana Kumar	Country Programs
	Raj Kumar	Country Programs
	Jorn Heldrup	Country Programs
	Joe Martin	Director TAP Team
	Ivonne Rizzo	Senior Programme Officer (?)
	Santiago Cornejo	Country Programs
Subtotal (n) = 14		
OTHER PEER REVIEW MODELS		
Global Fund	Rifat Atun	Director of Policy & Strategy Cluster
	Sarah Churchill	Country Proposal Team, Strategy, Policy and Evaluation Cluster
	Ilze Kalnina	Country Proposal Team, Strategy, Policy and Evaluation Cluster
Global Drug Facility (GDF)	Raegan Boler	Technical Officer, Business Services, Stop TB Partnership Sec, GDF
	Anne Zeindl-Cronin	Country Programmes Team, GDF
Subtotal (n) = 4		
GRAND TOTAL (N) = 62		

* A self assessment exercise was conducted with both current IRCs (New Proposals and Monitoring) in plenary, so all members were given an opportunity to provide their views on the strengths /weaknesses of the IRC process.

Annex 7: Committee Composition Graphs /Charts

Figure 1: Average number of Committee Members by IRC
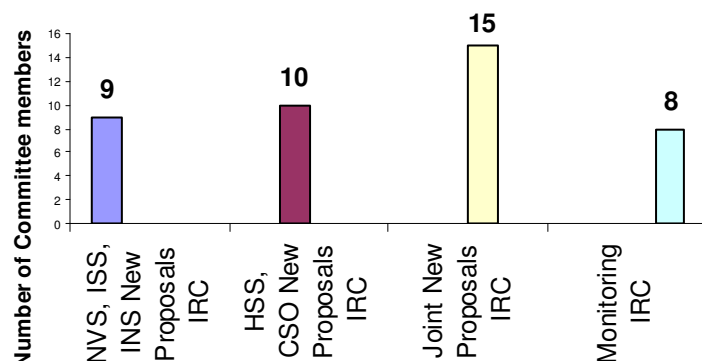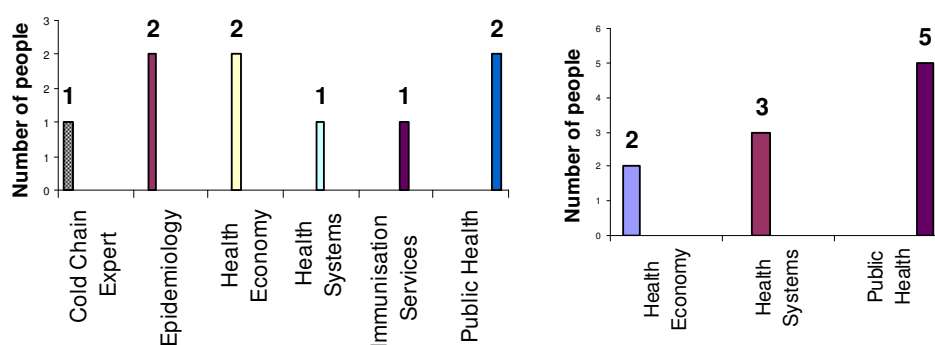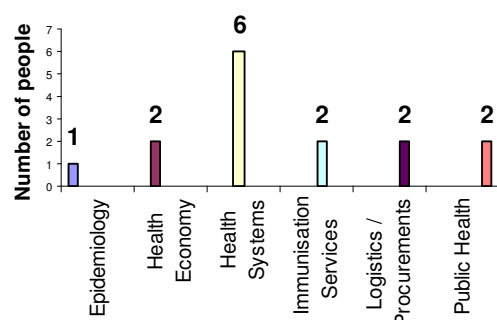
Figure 2: Expertise areas by IRC (average skill mix)
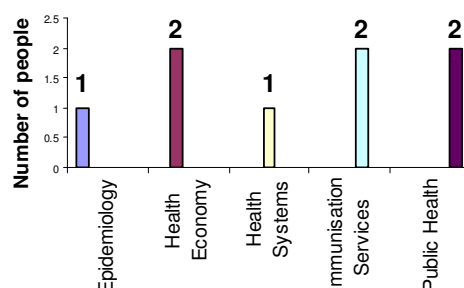
New Proposals IRC (NVS, ISS, INS)
Logistics/Procurement expertise
have been occasionally present too
specialist

New Proposals IRC (HSS/CSO)
Human Resources and Logistics/Procurement
specialism have been occasionally present too
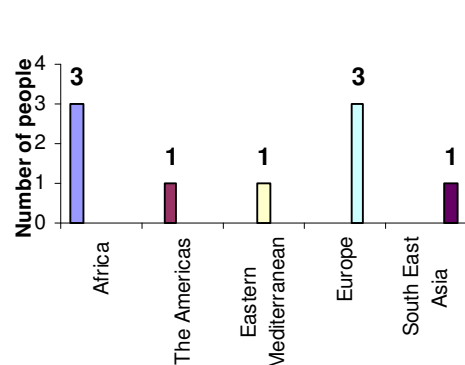
Integrated New Proposals IRC
Cold chain and CSO expertise have been
occasionally present too
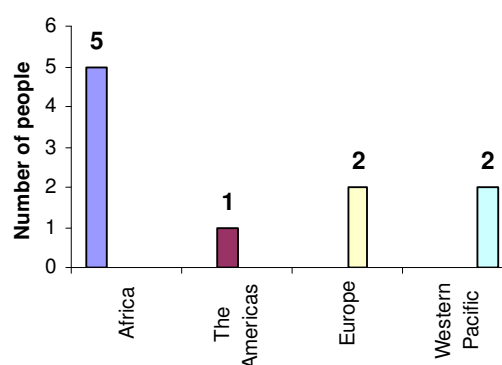
Monitoring IRC
Cold chain + M&E expertise have been occasionally
present too
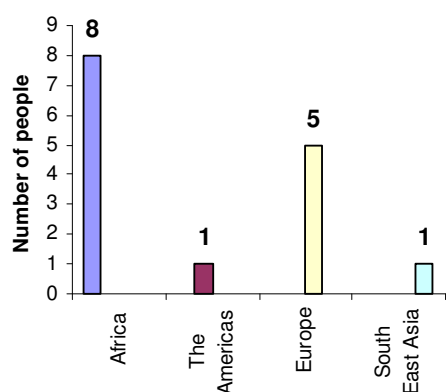
Figure 3: Geographical areas of expertise held by IRC members by Committee (calculation based on the average number of people per Committee with over two years experience in health sector in region)
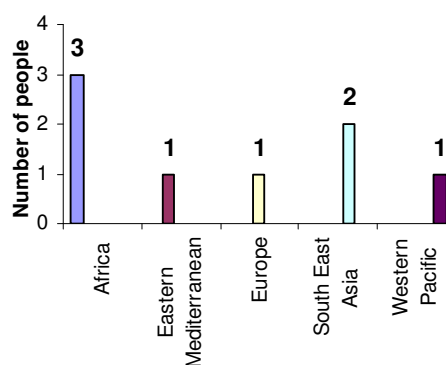
New Proposals IRC (NVS, ISS, INS)
Occasional contribution of Western. Pacific expertise

New Proposals IRC (HSS/CSO)
Occasional contribution of South East Asia expertise

Integrated New Proposals IRC
Contribution at one meeting of expertise Americas
In Western Pacific

Monitoring IRC
Contribution at one meeting of expertise of the

Figure 4: Proportional breakdown by Committee of members' nationalities
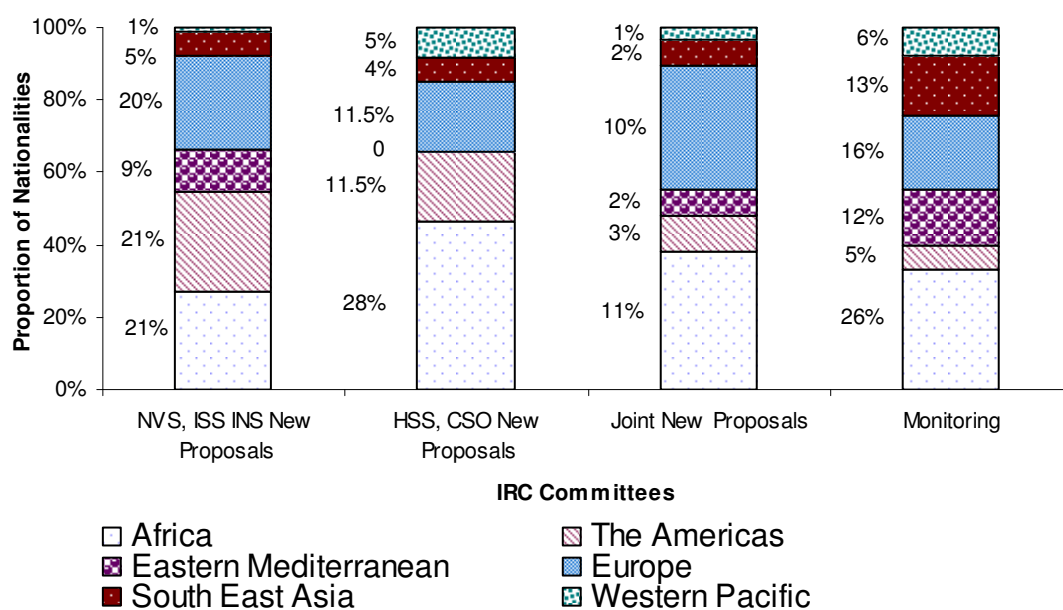
Figure 5: Gender balance across IRCs (2006-2009)

New Proposals IRC (NVS, ISS, INS)

New Proposals IRC (HSS/CSO)

Integrated New Proposals IRC
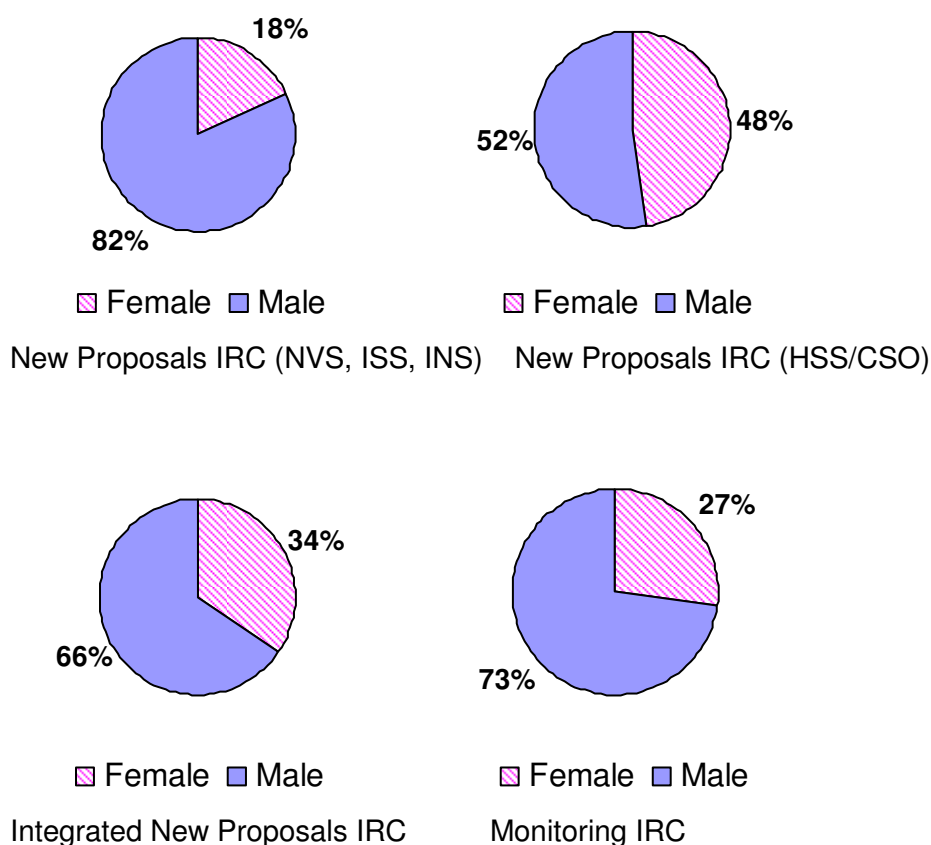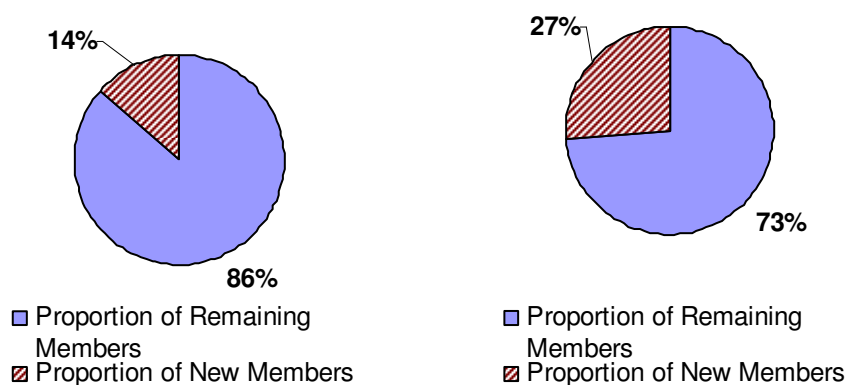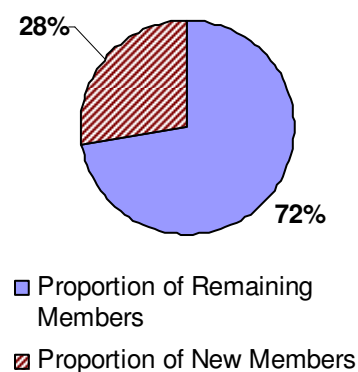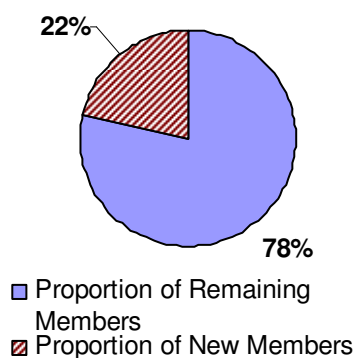
Monitoring IRC

Figure 6: Average proportional membership turnover by IRC Committee

New Proposals IRC (NVS, ISS, INS)
Range of new members [0-33.5%]

New Proposals IRC (HSS/CSO)
Range of new members [0-40%]

Integrated New Proposals IRC
Range of new members [27%-29%] 0

Monitoring IRC
Range of new members [0-50%]

Annex 8: IRC Execution – Graphs & Charts

Figure 1: Average number of meeting days by IRC Committee (2006-2009)
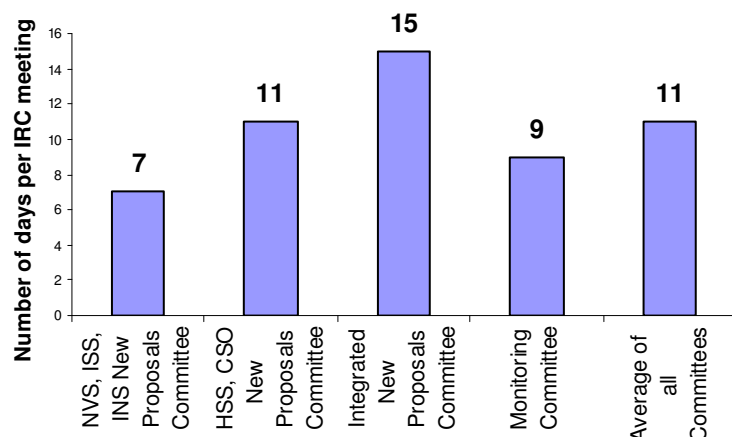
Figure 2: Committee Workload (2006-2009) - New Proposals (NVS, ISS, INS)
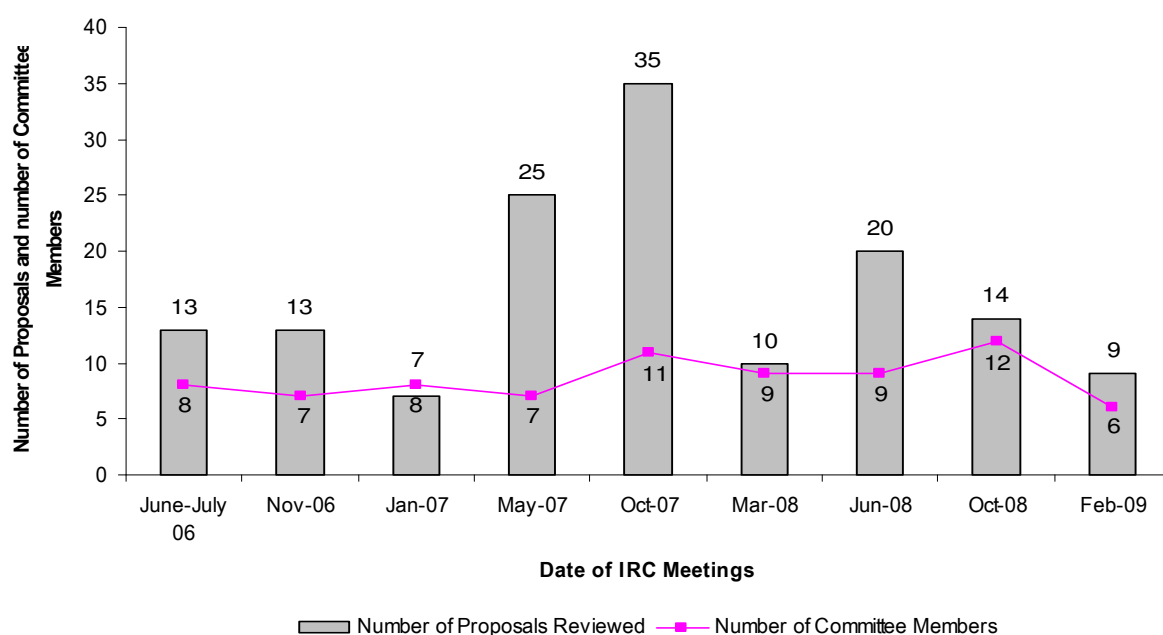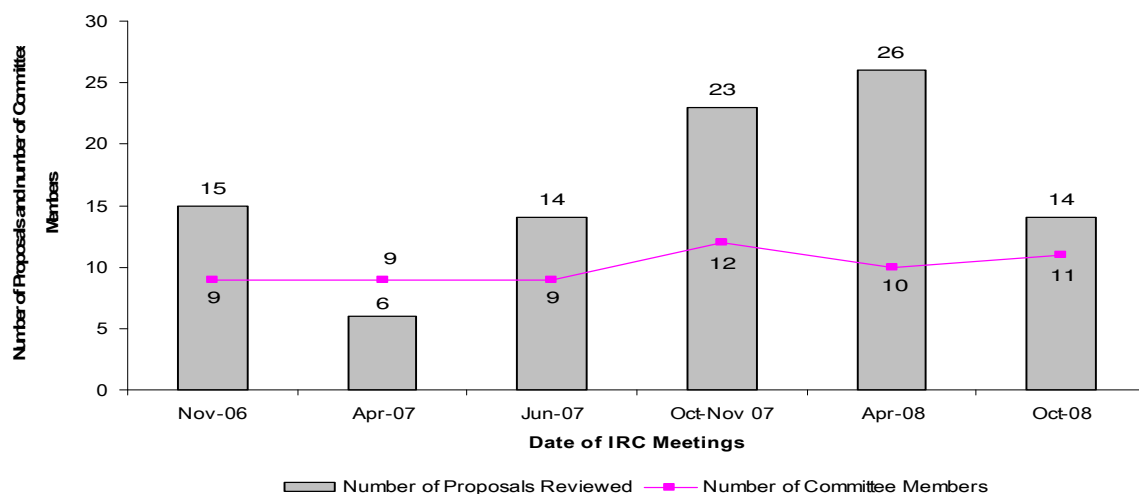
Figure 3: Committee Workload (2006-2009) –New Proposals (HSS/CSO)
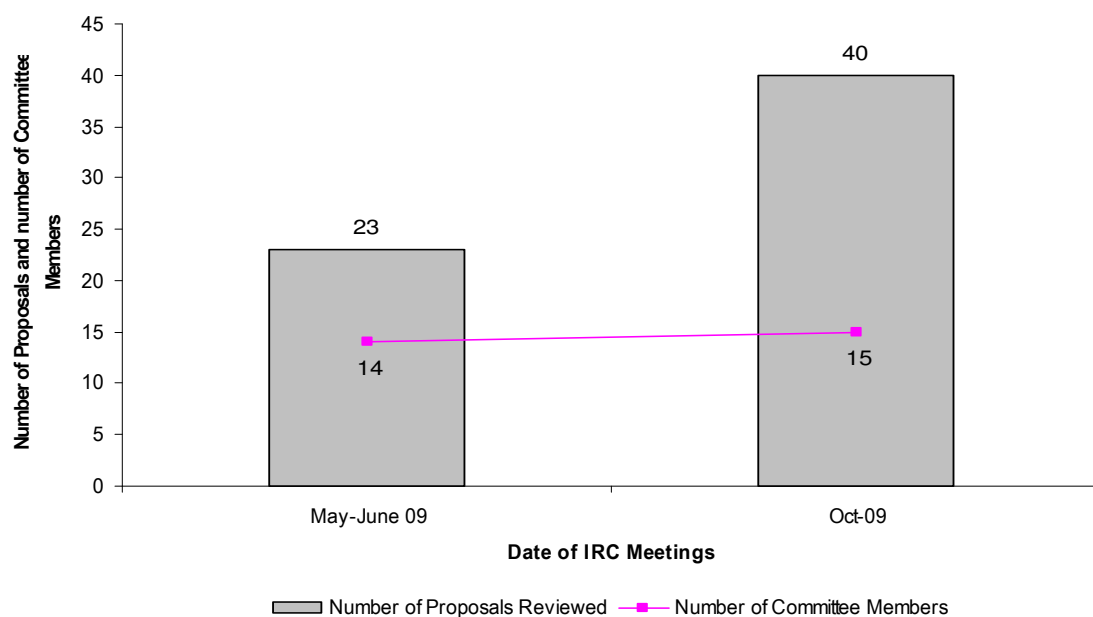
Figure 5: Committee Workload (2006-2009) –Monitoring IRC
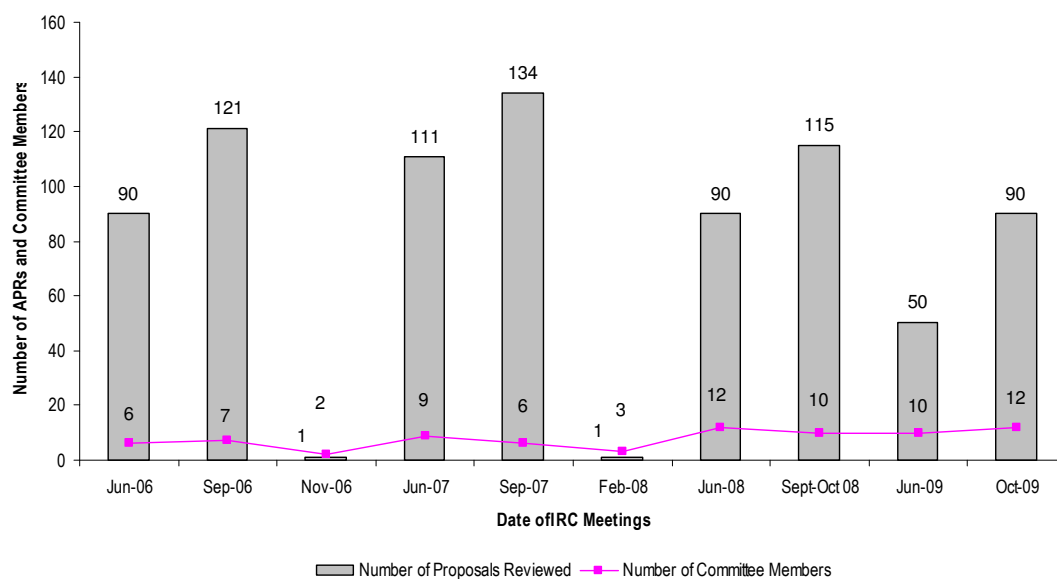
Figure 6: Number of proposals approved /rejected by New Proposals IRC (NVS, ISS, INS)
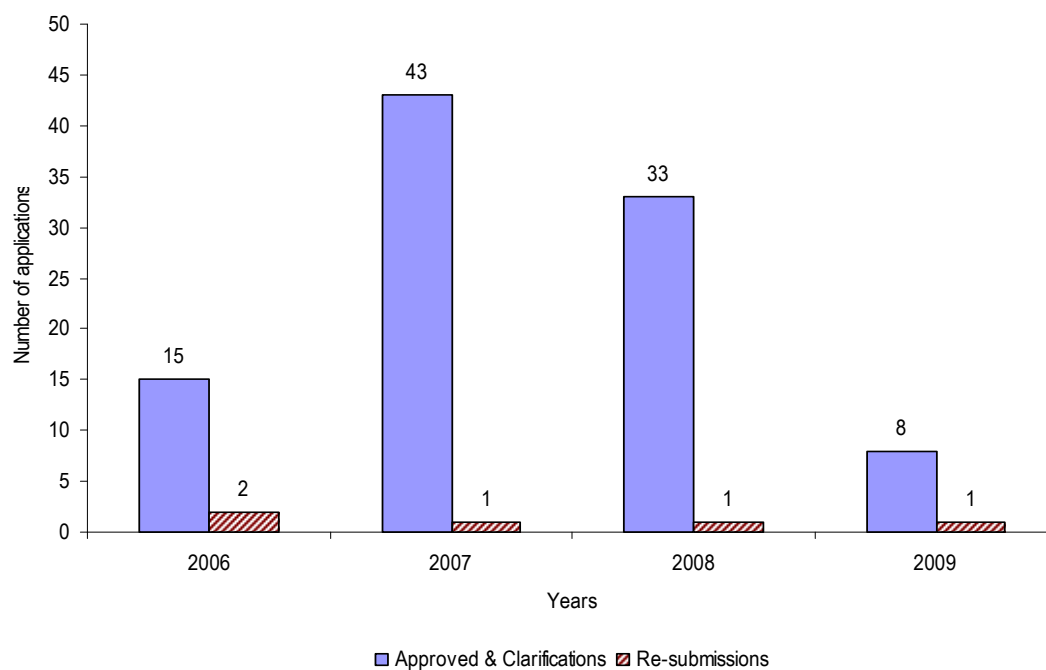
Figure 7: Number of proposals approved /rejected by New Proposals IRC (HSS/CSO)
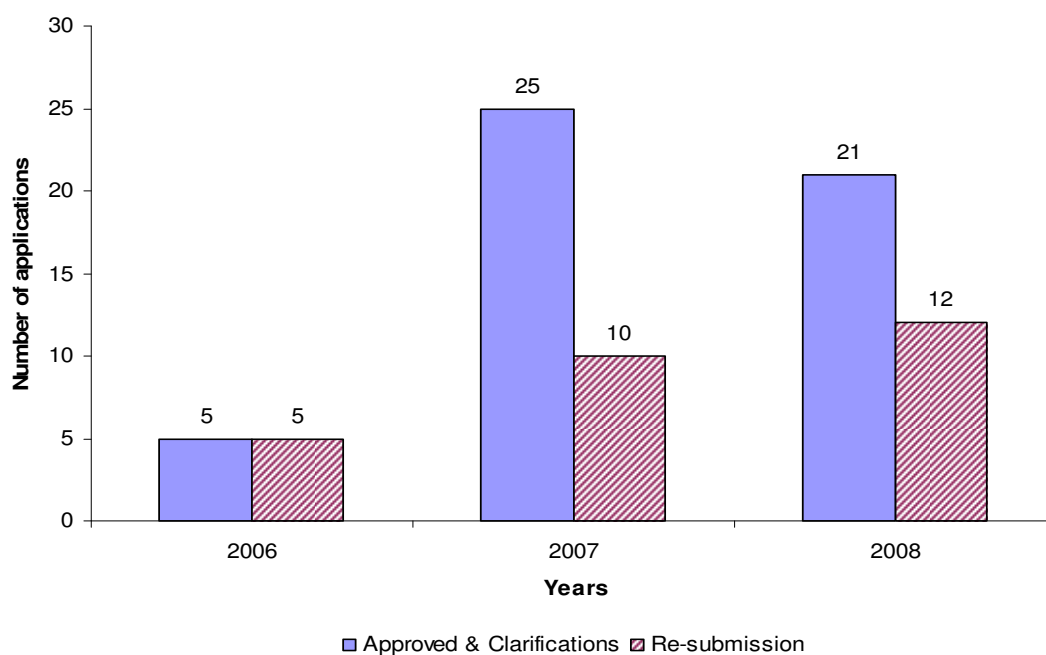
Figure 8: Number of proposals approved /rejected by the Integrated New Proposals IRC
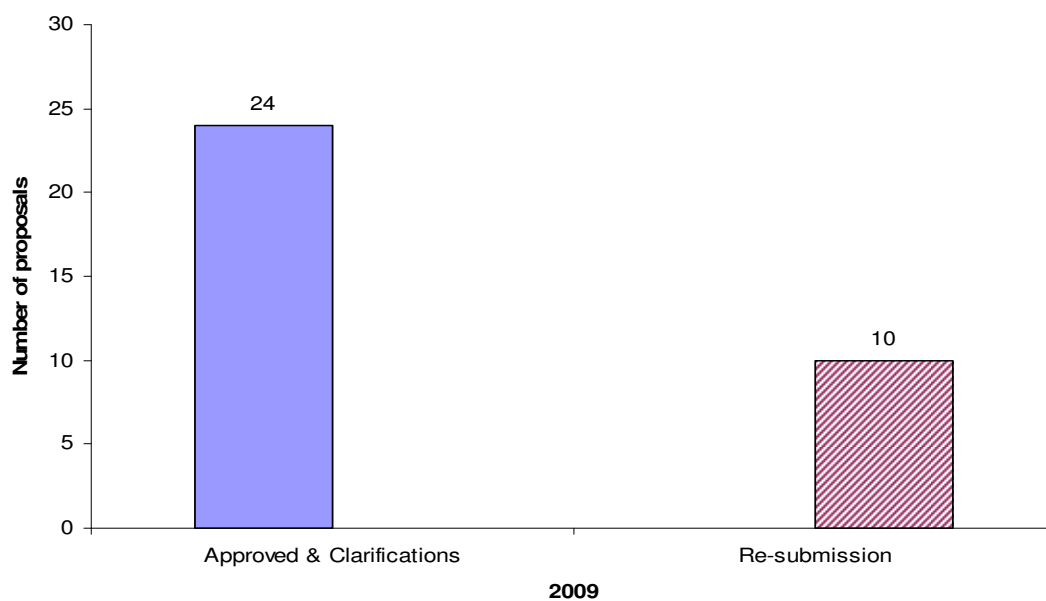
Figure 9: Number of proposals approved /rejected by the Monitoring IRC
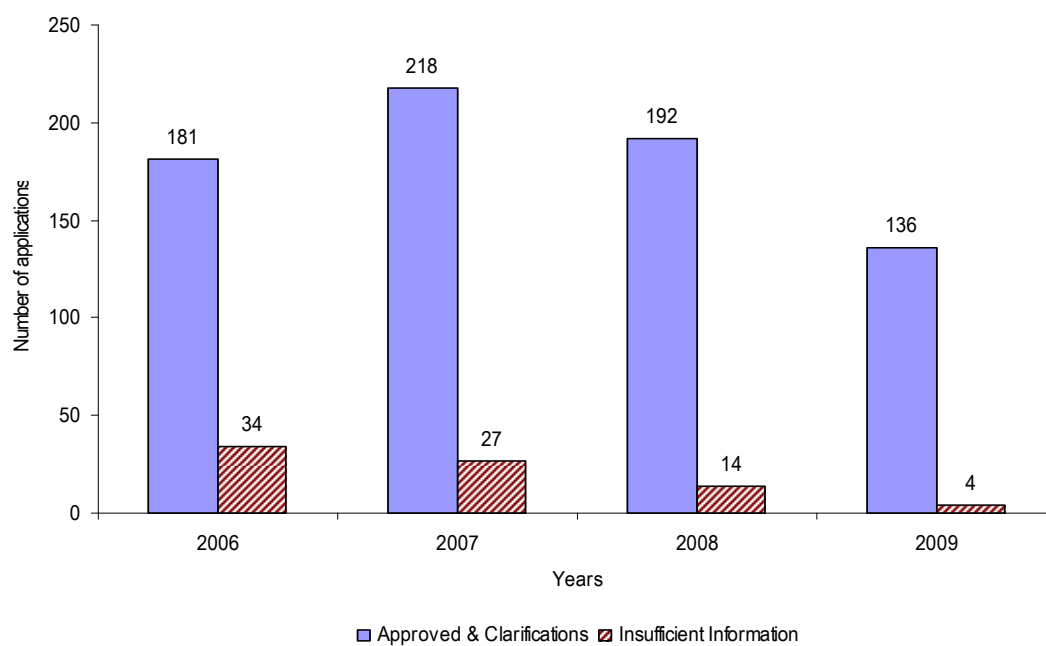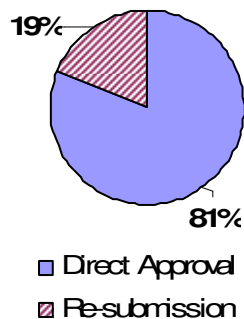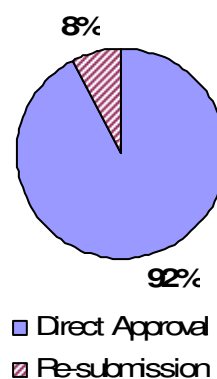
Figure 10: Proportion of approvals /re-submission by LICUS status

New Proposals IRC (NVS, ISS, INS)

LICUS Countries

19%
81%

■ Direct Approval
▨ Re-submission

Non-LICUS Countries

8%
92%

■ Direct Approval
▨ Re-submission
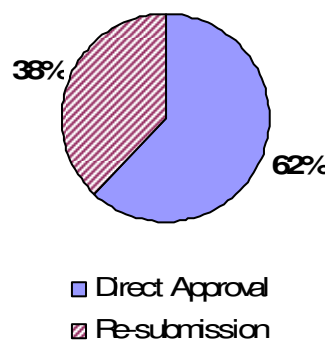
New Proposals IRC (HSS/CSO)

LICUS Countries

38%
62%

■ Direct Approval
▨ Re-submission

Non-LICUS Countries

33%
67%

■ Direct Approval
▨ Re-submission
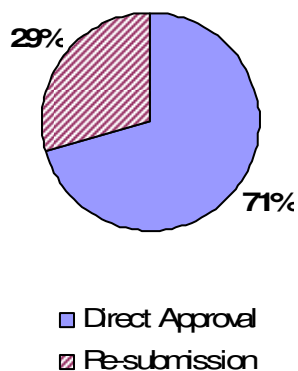
Integrated New Proposals IRC

LICUS Countries

29%
71%

■ Direct Approval
▨ Re-submission

Non-LICUS Countries

20%
80%

■ Direct Approval
▨ Re-submission
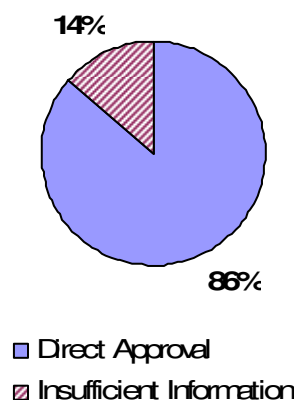
Monitoring IRC

LICUS Countries   Non-LICUS Countries

14%

86%

- Direct Approval
- Insufficient Information

11%

89%

- Direct Approval
- Insufficient Information
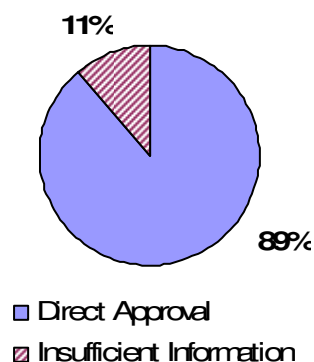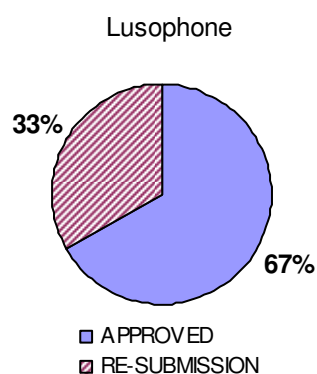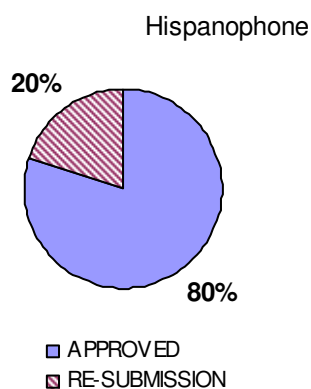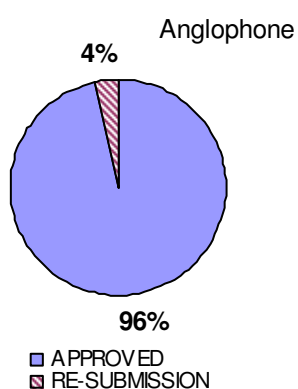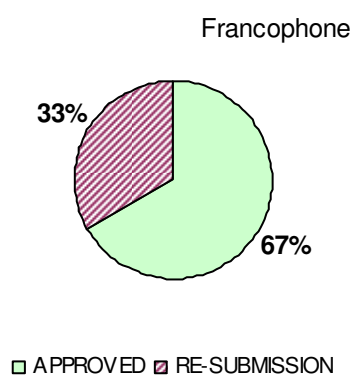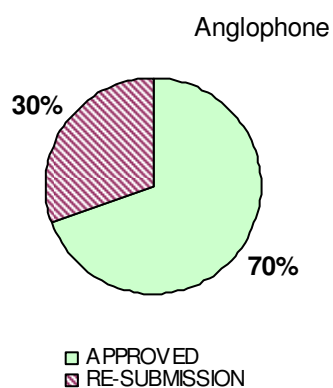
Figure 11: Proportion of approvals /re-submission by language group

New Proposals IRC (NVS)

Anglophone

4%

96%

- APPROVED
- RE-SUBMISSION

Hispanophone

20%

80%

- APPROVED
- RE-SUBMISSION

Lusophone

33%

67%
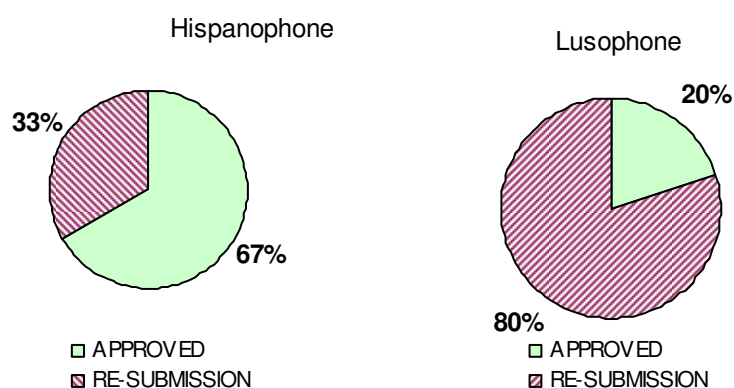
- APPROVED
- RE-SUBMISSION
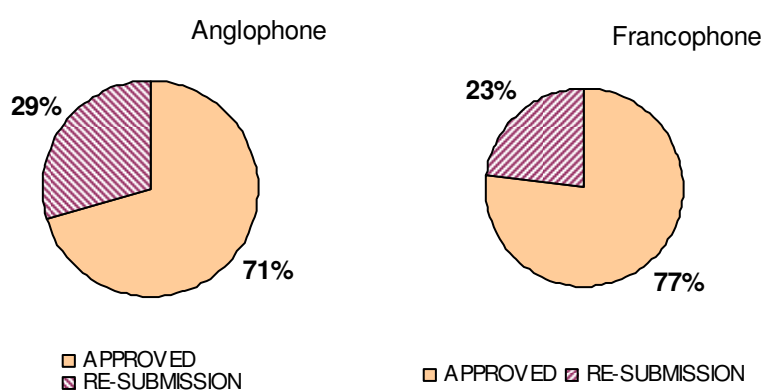
- FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES = 100% APPROVAL FOR NVS

New Proposals IRC (HSS)

Anglophone

30%

70%

- APPROVED
- RE-SUBMISSION

Francophone

33%

67%

- APPROVED RE-SUBMISSION

Hispanophone

33%

67%

☐ APPROVED
☒ RE-SUBMISSION

Lusophone

20%

80%

☐ APPROVED
☒ RE-SUBMISSION

INTEGRATED NEW PROPOSALS IRC

Anglophone

29%

71%

☐ APPROVED
☒ RE-SUBMISSION

Francophone

23%

77%

☐ APPROVED ☒ RE-SUBMISSION
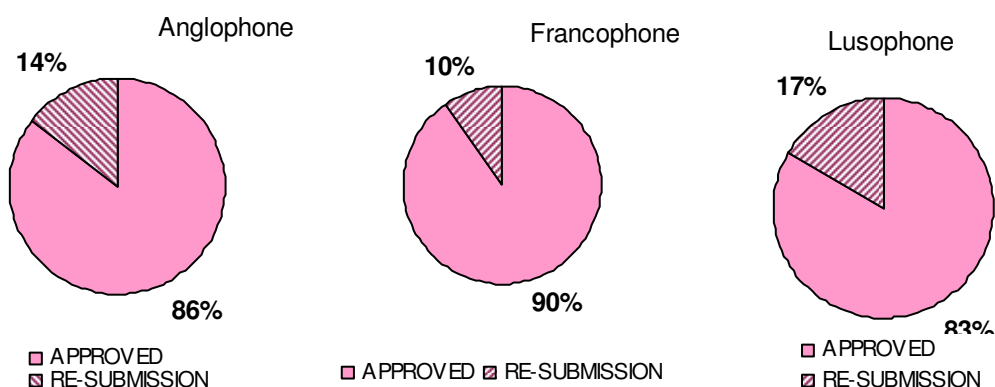
- HISPANOPHONE COUNTRIES = NO NEW PROPOSALS FOR INTEGRATED NEW PROPOSALS IRC
- LUSOPHONE COUNTRIES= 100% APPROVAL

MONITORING IRC

Anglophone

14%

86%

☐ APPROVED
☒ RE-SUBMISSION

Francophone

10%

90%

☐ APPROVED ☒ RE-SUBMISSION

Lusophone

17%

83%
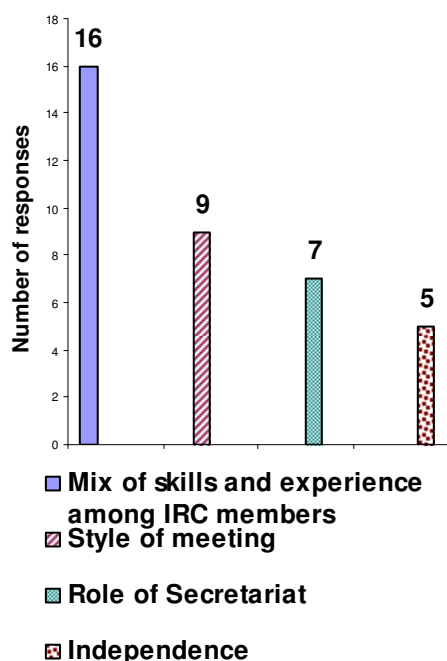
☐ APPROVED
☒ RE-SUBMISSION

- HISPANOPHONE COUNTRIES= 100% APPROVAL

Figure 12: Integrated New Proposals IRC – Self Assessment

Top 4 strengths of IRC by number of time times comment made

Top 4 weaknesses of IRC by number of by number of times comment

Mix of skills and experience among IRC members

Style of meeting

Role of Secretariat

Independence

Issues with policies, guidelines and documents provided

Group dynamics

Process issues

Support to countries
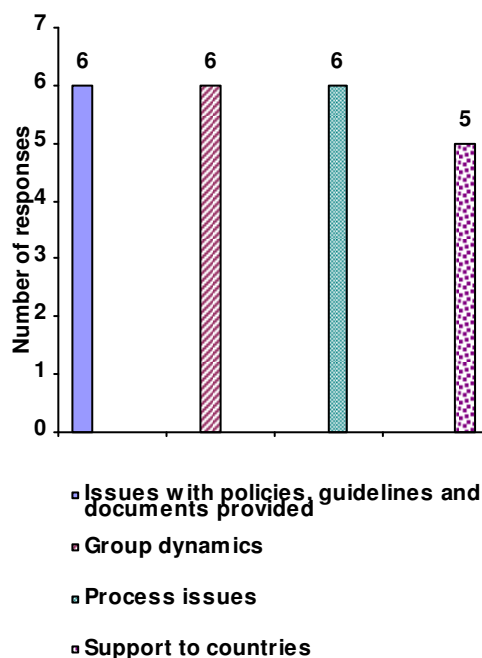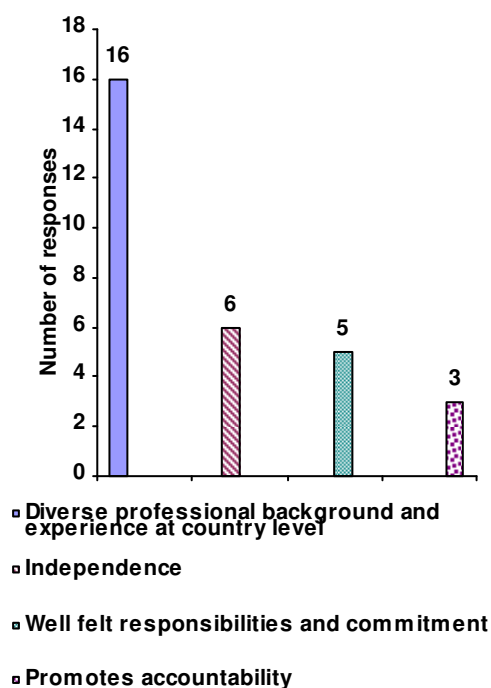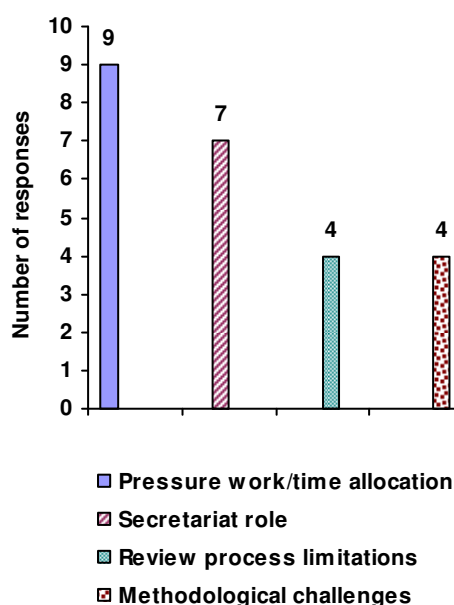
Figure 13: Monitoring IRC – Self Assessment

Monitoring IRC: Top 4 strengths of IRC IRC by number of times comment made

Monitoring IRC: Top 4 weaknesses of by number of times comment

Diverse professional background and experience at country level

Independence

Well felt responsibilities and commitment

Promotes accountability

Pressure work/time allocation

Secretariat role

Review process limitations

Methodological challenges

Annex 9:   Findings from Other Relevant GAVI

Evaluations & Reviews

GAVI Governance Review, CEPA 2007

- 'The roles of the recommended Board Committees and advisory entities in the vertically integrated structure are intended to ensure more effective decision-making – fully taking into account the advice/ recommendations of the expert group that is best placed, in terms of skills and time commitment, to deliberate on the matter. The structure also aims to clarify the functions, composition, reporting relationships, and decision processes of the various governance entities. In addition, the structure seeks to ensure that all partners have at least as much control of the organisation as is currently the case.'
- This review and its recommendations inform the current reporting arrangements (introduced in 2009) between the IRCs, the Programme and Policy Committee, the Finance and Audit Committee, and the Board/Executive Committee.

ISS Evaluation, Abt Associates, 2007

- This evaluation highlighted weak follow-up by GAVI Secretariat of performance and accountability issues raised, including those identified or reported in APRs, and by IRCs in country monitoring reports. There was a need for documenting all problems identified (including those highlighted by the IRC), tracking country responses and resolution, which could be shared and updated regularly with country partners. While DQA was considered adequate for validation in some countries, some felt more verification was needed.
- Processes were weak on financial accountability. Follow-up on reported expenditure and coverage information that do not total correctly or are inconsistent with previous years is encouraged to promote vigilance in data quality. Further review of the expenditure categories (as was recommended in 2004) to ensure more accurate reporting would also be useful for monitoring and future evaluation.
- GAVI should expand its current monitoring efforts, including regular compilation and review of additional data related to internal operations. Regular analysis of internal performance based on measures such as time elapsed between funding approval and disbursement is important to assess for internal administrative procedures.

GAVI Phase 1 Evaluation, Abt Associates, 2008

- During Phase I, informants considered the IRC to be conscientious and objective, although the IRC process is one of the few components of GAVI's operations that has never been evaluated, nor was its effectiveness part of the scope of this evaluation.
- The widely-perceived quality and unbiased nature of IRC assessments is considered an important means of assuring accountability.
- Management of support by GAVI Secretariat to recipient countries improved significantly over Phase 1, and is generally considered strong. One over-arching weakness in management of country support is the lack of a mechanism to monitor follow-up of issues identified through special evaluations or through the IRC process – many issues identified in this evaluation have been raised before. While some are administrative issues that might only affect a few countries, and may have limited negative consequences, a better system for appropriate follow up is required.

- In-country mechanisms for monitoring use of funds were not effective in some countries.
- There was concern at country level that while they receive the results of IRC deliberations about project proposals, they do not receive a detailed explanation of the rationale for these decisions.
- Communications only went one-way, e.g. countries sometimes make requests to GAVI within their proposals to consider changes to program criteria. While the IRC's country-specific findings and recommendations go to the Board, discussion of these larger issues sometimes do not.

GAVI Lessons Learned Phase 1, HLSP 2006

- The independent nature of the Independent Review Committee (IRC), convened to review applications and progress reports was considered appropriate; however it was also perceived as being remote and / or unfair when dealing with country applications. These perceptions were highlighted by one-third of

GAVI Lessons Learned Phase 1, HLSP 2006 (cont.)

respondents on the online survey, representatives in the country consultation meeting and individuals interviewed during country visits.

- The experiences relayed suggested that a lack of dialogue and absence of country-specific knowledge in the IRC disadvantaged both the country and the IRC.

Enhancing GAVI's Public-Private Partnership Model, McKinsey paper, 2008

- While there was no specific reference to the IRCs other than inclusion in a structure diagram, the paper highlighted weak performance management as an overall issue.
- The authors recommended strengthening performance management at the institutional and individual level; Annual performance planning, reviews and development planning should be a routine practice, as it is in many private entities.

Technical Support Review, McKinsey, 2008
- While there was no reference to the role of IRCs, country findings echoed IRC concerns (reported in their general Committee reports) about areas of improvement in technical support.

Review of HSS Annual Performance Reports, HLSP, 2008
- The main problem identified in relation to the HSS information was its poor validation at pre-review stage, i.e. before the information reaches the GAVI Alliance Secretariat. Weak validation severely compromised the ability of the IRC to assess and interpret the HSS component of the APR reports.
- IRC Review Capacity: While the GAVI review model can work well for HSS –at least as well as it has worked for the other GAVI components to date- the GAVI Alliance is advised to pay attention to capacity issues at the level of the IRC in terms of numbers of reviewers and their skills. In fact, unless staffing and review procedures are strengthened, improved reporting and validation may not result in better HSS monitoring as it might simply increase the IRC workload and make matters worse.
- Proposal design issues**:** Some of the problems linked to HSS monitoring originate in a weak HSS proposal. It was found that not all HSS proposals have received the same degree of scrutiny at design stage in terms of addressing "health systems gaps" or, in terms of doing so in an efficacious or sustainable manner. There are clearly weaknesses at the design stage that limit the possibility of proper outcome or impact monitoring.

Evaluation of GAVI's Injection Safety Support, JSI, 2009

- There was limited independent monitoring at country level to verify aspects of performance reported in APRs, and reports were weak on financial accountability

HSS Evaluation, HLSP, 2009

- The IRC review has been one of the perceived strengths of the GAVI funding model, particularly when applied to the more traditional GAVI windows (ISS, NVS, INS). The IRC model is seen as providing an independent, transparent and authoritative assessment of proposals.
- The assessment is that the IRC model in its current form fails to respond to the complexities of the HSS proposals that countries put together. There are positive elements in the IRC review that ought to be maintained for HSS, like its independence and transparency, but in order for the IRC to command the authority that it does for other GAVI windows it would need to be substantially adapted.
- While acknowledging the expertise and commitment of individual IRC members, the HSS evaluation is critical of both the ability of the IRCs as an institutional mechanism, and of the overall process, to make optimal judgements about quality of proposals and APRs for HSS. This is mainly because of the difficulties in carrying out desk based review of complex national health systems and because of weak M&E frameworks, baselines and indicators. Whilst they have been able to pick up some major problems, inconsistencies and weaknesses in the bottlenecks-objectives-activities-indicators chain, the IRC has limited knowledge of country realities and limited ability to verify data submitted.
- Whilst these Committees may bring a perceived degree of objectivity into assessment, the support they are able to provide to countries to improve the quality of designs or reporting is limited. The once or twice-a-year functioning of the Committees is not conducive to continuity in constructive feedback to countries, and IRCs have little or no follow up capacity to ensure that corrections are made or that their recommendations are taken account of. This may not have mattered so much for the immunisation work of GAVI, but HSS is more complex and very different from country to country.
- A more effective approach, whenever the IRC raised matters of substance that were unlikely to be solvable swiftly, would have been for the IRC to request that the said issues be incorporated into a revised proposal, recognising that the said matters are often nothing but other "barriers" to health systems performance that it will take time and effort to overcome. But that would not solve the problem that the IRC needs to be closer to the country at the time of 'negotiating' clarifications, so a complementary approach should also be to bring the IRC review process to the country to enable a more direct dialogue between reviewers and bidders.
- In sum, these evaluators found that the IRC model failed to take account of the complexities involved in assessing complex HSS proposals and that a modified IRC model where its members make part of the assessment in country with the main sector stakeholders would work better. In our opinion, the GAVI should not be concerned about the additional costs that such an approach would bring to the GAVI (these would be modest) or about the additional transaction costs to the country, which would also be modest, as this would be a once in 4 or 5 years process that need not take more than a week or two of in-country assessment. Without better assessment the GAVI incurs unacceptably high programme and financial risks.
- In our opinion the APR process in its current form fails [on all three counts[when applied to the HSS window. Firstly, the focus on performance is lost because of poor quality or unverified HSS information that is assessed through a distant IRC mechanism unable to interpret the information provided mainly because of limited understanding of the country context. Therefore, the release of future tranches of funds is triggered more by the compliance with the APR process than by performance considerations (The issue here is

- less to do with the complexities of measuring HSS performance than with defining at proposal design stage what will be considered acceptable performance in the case of each HSS grant.)
- But it is at the level of mitigating programme risk that the HSS APR process is clearly failing. The reasons are similar to those mentioned earlier (reliability of programme information, distant IRC, etcetera) but one should add financial accountability matters linked to poor financial reporting, financial verification or auditing of HSS funds in the APR reports. The GAVI Alliance has already taken steps for improved financial accountability of present and future grants through the Transparency and Accountability Policy (TAP), so our advice would be to separate the financial accountability issues from the APR process to the extent possible. Expenditure on HSS activities (or HSS funds disbursed to spending units as a proxy) should still be reported on in the APR, but the matching of that information with accounts available in country should be done more thoroughly and separately by the GAVI Alliance Secretariat (not by the IRC). Where GAVI HSS funds are part of an existing financial arrangement (such as a pool fund or sector budget support) where accounting and audit procedures are shared by a group of donors, the risk incurred by GAVI is likely to be less.
- The implication of all the issues above is that GAVI cannot clearly demonstrate that the funding of HSS grants is based on performance, because the results that would be needed to assess performance are either not the ones being reported or the reporting is weak. Our findings are consistent with what has been reported to date by several studies, articles and internal GAVI reports, including the reports submitted by members of the IRC (both IRC Design and IRC Monitoring) in relation to HSS monitoring

Group Disclaimer