

Report from the Chair of the Evaluation Advisory Committee to the Board

Evaluation Advisory Committee report to the Board on the Second GAVI Evaluation

1. Overall conclusion

1.1 The evaluation reports are well written, comprehensive and balanced, with more extensive description of the methodology, its limitations and the robustness of findings than is normally found in evaluation reports of a similar type. The structuring of the reports according to the evaluation questions and strategic goals increases its clarity and utility. The methods used are generally appropriate, though more could have been done to tailor the evaluation methods and data sources more specifically to each evaluation sub-question. The Committee's overall assessment is that this is a credible and useful evaluation. The evaluation has yielded a number of important insights that will prove useful to the Board and Alliance as it prepares for and then implements its new strategy for the 2011-15 period.

2. Strengths

- 2.1 The report layout by evaluation question is very useful and in line with good evaluation practice.
- 2.2 The rationale for the evaluation design, the use of appropriate mixed methods (within given constraints), the emphasis on triangulation and the rating (even though subjective, as the evaluators point out) of the robustness of evidence all point to sound evaluation methods that were fit for purpose.
- 2.3 The evaluation report is balanced.
- 2.4 The evaluation questions, as described in the terms of reference and inception report, are generally well covered by the evaluation.
- 2.5 The findings, conclusions and their supporting evidence are clearly laid out and convincingly linked.
- 2.6 The rating of the robustness of the evidence is a useful and innovative approach that increases the transparency and rigor of the analyses.

3. Limitations

- 3.1 The summary report is longer than desired and thus somewhat inaccessible to readers looking for a concise summary of the main evaluation findings. The separate document summarising recommendations from the evaluation reports is helpful, but it would have been ideal if the evaluators submitted a twenty page executive summary of the main findings of the evaluation.
- 3.2 The questions under each strategic goal are answered using the same techniques and sources of information, without tailoring the methodology specifically to the special features of each evaluation question. In some

- cases, the evaluators should have explored alternative approaches to addressing specific evaluation questions with particular features that warrant use of different techniques and data sources.
- 3.3 Some of the results are presented in terms of concepts that are not clearly defined and for which there is no establishment of a theoretical framework to determine the best way to measure them. Examples include *affordability, predictability, sustainability, efficiency* and *effectiveness* and *added value*.
 - 3.4 Impact on mortality reduction was not assessed, except in reference to the WHO calculated indicator of the number of future deaths averted. Greater engagement on this issue would have been helpful, but the limitations related to assessing impact were stated explicitly and clearly from the beginning.
 - 3.5 The analysis of public private partnerships could have been strengthened by the utilisation of current frameworks and methodologies for partnership evaluations available in the evaluation literature.
 - 3.6 Although the reports produced a number of findings that are useful as the GAVI Alliance looks forward to its coming five year strategy, the evaluation had a backward looking design. That is to say, the evaluation was designed at the end of the time period covered by the evaluation and the evaluators by necessity had to rely on documentation compiled for other purposes, respondent recall of past experiences and events and limited engagement of countries in the design and implementation of evaluation. The evaluators executed this evaluation well per its design, but its backward looking design has inherent limitations. The methods and findings would be more robust if forward looking monitoring and evaluation systems were built into the strategy from the beginning, as is currently being done for the coming five year period.

4. *Lessons learned for future evaluations*

- 4.1 Given the inherent limitations of backward looking evaluations, future evaluations conducted by GAVI should be more forward looking. The Committee is working with the Secretariat to finalise the design of a forward looking monitoring and evaluation system that is built into the strategy for the coming five year period, designed in advance and conducted from the beginning of the strategy period.
- 4.2 The role of in-country actors in the design and execution of future GAVI evaluations should be re-examined, and GAVI should establish principles on evaluation partnership to guide future work. In-country partners should participate as evaluators in all phases of the evaluation, rather than as researchers to set up interviews, facilitate logistics and contribute to writing the country reports. They should participate in the design of the evaluation, lead the work in-country and participate in the synthesis of results across countries and integration of findings into synthesis reports.
- 4.3 Better insight into the role of context and other factors influencing performance and results in different countries, and what this means for GAVI operations and results, would add value to future evaluations. An in-depth focus on comparative case studies can be a useful evaluation approach to synthesise results across countries.
- 4.4 Future evaluation studies should build impact measurement into the design from the beginning of the strategy period. It is not possible to

adequately measure impact in a backward looking evaluation conducted at the end of a strategy period.

- 4.5 For development, it is crucial that identifying and assessing the unintended consequences – negative and positive – should be key evaluation questions. Although the report makes reference to two unintended consequences – the concern of displacement of funds to GAVI partners and the lack of waste disposal in countries – this issue has not been a focus of the evaluation. This should be explicit in future GAVI evaluations.
- 4.6 Future evaluation studies of the Alliance’s strategy should not aim for comprehensive breadth, but should focus on a smaller number of specific strategic issues.
- 4.7 The Committee notes that the Second GAVI Evaluation contains numerous insights and issues that would be beneficial to explore in more detail. The Committee seeks to engage with the Board to identify priority issues to be explored further through targeted evaluation studies in the future, to ensure that evaluation activities address the priority issues identified by the Board.

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