

Management response to the Second GAVI Evaluation

In March 2009 the Board asked the Secretariat to commission a second evaluation of GAVI covering the period 2006-2010, and subsequently approved the evaluation's terms of reference. Cambridge Economic Policy Associates (CEPA) were selected to conduct the evaluation through a competitive process and completed the evaluation in September. The Secretariat provided the evaluation report to the Board the same month. The Evaluation Advisory Committee has also reviewed the evaluation and the report of the Chair of the Committee is provided to the Board (document 4a).

The evaluation is a substantial, detailed and robust piece of work which has already been of great assistance to the Secretariat. Overall, the evaluation affirms GAVI's value added and business model. It finds that the Alliance has accelerated the introduction of vaccines, attracted additional funding to immunisation, successfully engaged in organisational and programmatic innovation, and has generated country ownership; and in so doing has prevented millions of future deaths.

The evaluation also identified a number of areas for improvement in the next strategic planning period 2011-2015. The Secretariat substantially agrees with the findings of the evaluation, and indeed has been taking account of the emerging evaluation findings in developing GAVI's five year strategy, the business plan which will implement it, and in new policies. The Board will consider some of these new policies in Kigali.

This paper provides a response to the evaluation's main findings. Given the scope and depth of the findings, additional work to address issues raised will take place in the coming year, and under the supervision of the new performance management unit, a detailed plan will be developed.

For ease of reference, this paper follows the order of the evaluation's executive summary (see annex 1 for extracts from the executive summary).

Cross-cutting issues and methodological limitations

The Secretariat agrees that with the evaluation's finding that there has been a lack of comprehensive analysis of data collected to inform monitoring and evaluation of programmes. The Secretariat has developed a monitoring and evaluation plan which is resourced under the Business Plan and which aims to develop further the new data warehouse, targeted studies, and a prospective evaluation system to inform decision-making and measure impact. The Secretariat is developing an online platform for countries to complete the Annual Progress Report and transmit it to the GAVI Secretariat. This platform will be linked to an operational database, which will facilitate the proactive use of the data to support learning and decision making.

The Secretariat agrees with the evaluation finding that more needs to be done to improve the accountability of the Secretariat and implementing partners, and the transparency and timeliness of performance reporting. Resolving these issues is central to the new Business Plan, which requires regular reporting to the Board at

the programme objective level and the standardisation of reporting across the partners. The process of establishing a new performance management unit is underway.

The evaluation finds that “across the evaluation, we have come across instances where it seems that GAVI has launched programs or committed to activities and has not identified (or has been slow to identify) wider implications in terms of funding, delivery model, or availability of resources, suggesting a need for better prioritisation of Secretariat and Partner resources.” The Secretariat agrees that this has sometimes been the case, although the Secretariat’s view is that as the Alliance’s governance system has evolved, policies and programmes receive wider and more systematic consideration before they are implemented than in the past.

Nonetheless, as the Secretariat’s internal auditor identifies (see Board paper #10), there is a significant risk of overstretch in the Secretariat, and part of the reason for this is the adoption of new policies and programmes which have high transaction costs for the Secretariat and which have not always been accompanied by requests for appropriate staff resources in the Secretariat. Therefore, this evaluation finding needs to be taken seriously by the Board, its committees and the Secretariat.

Overview of GAVI outputs, outcomes and impacts

The Secretariat’s view is that it reflects well on GAVI’s programmes that spending per child has been higher in the poorer countries than in wealthier countries, and that a high proportion of health system spending has been provided to countries with lower DTP3 coverage rates. We agree with the evaluator’s assessment that GAVI’s support has been cost-effective compared to other health interventions.

Financial value add

The Secretariat supports and would like to draw attention to the following findings:

“there is good evidence to suggest that GAVI has been able to attract additional funding for immunisation, and its major donors would not have contributed to immunisation on the scale that they did without it.”

“a big area of financial added-value has been through International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm), where GAVI’s role has been unique... GAVI played a critical role in adapting and implementing [IFF] for immunisation...IFFIm has provided certainty of funding that has underpinned the ability of GAVI to commit to fund existing NVS programs through to 2015.”

“GAVI’s role in the ongoing implementation of the Advance Market Commitment (AMC) pneumococcal pilot is also identified as a significant achievement.”

In relation to the following finding: “GAVI’s basic programmatic approaches and the development of tools to support countries’ financial planning was a key source of innovation in Phase 1” the Secretariat agrees, and believes that the development of these plans in Phase 2 (i.e. from 2005 until now) has also been important in promoting better planning and budgeting in countries.

The Secretariat accepts that changes to co-financing policy have been a cause of confusion at country level. However, the Secretariat does believe that the proposed new co-financing policy which will be considered by the Board in Kigali will establish a sound and clear basis for co-financing, and is necessary both so that countries are more able to meet their co-financing requirements, and to take account of the Board's decisions on graduation.

The Secretariat agrees with the finding that co-financing has been important in generating country ownership. The Secretariat also agrees that many GAVI countries will not be able to afford the vaccines which they have introduced without some combination of substantial economic growth, improvements in the countries' fiscal position, and falls in vaccine prices. For other countries, particularly those approaching graduation, the Secretariat's view is that the new co-financing policy will promote national financial sustainability. The Secretariat also recognises that this is a key area of risk, and for this reason has noted the need to strengthen investment through the business plan to work with graduating countries in the coming years.

While recognising the challenges to financial sustainability presented by GAVI's choice of vaccines, the Secretariat's view is nonetheless that the Board's decision, for example to support the roll-out of pentavalent vaccine has been a highly cost-effective way of preventing future deaths. Amongst other things, it has led to the elimination or near elimination of pneumonia, meningitis and other diseases associated with Hib in many GAVI-eligible countries, in the same way as the Hib vaccine has protected children in rich countries.

GAVI does need to do more to bring down vaccine price; as noted below, market shaping has been elevated to the level of a strategic goal in the new strategy. However, it also needs to be recognised that some of the vaccines now in GAVI's portfolio are complicated to manufacture, and will not fall to the price of older vaccines in the near future. The majority of vaccine preventable deaths are in lower income countries, which will require significant external financial support for some time. GAVI will also need to work closely with the graduating countries on access to affordable pricing and continued provision of vaccines when GAVI support has ended.

Programmatic value add

The Secretariat agrees with the finding that: "There is strong evidence that GAVI's flagship program, NVS, has accelerated countries' introduction of life saving vaccines and immunisation outcomes – which might not have happened in its absence."

The Secretariat agrees that vaccine prices have not fallen far or fast enough, and that, as noted above, this has had serious implications for sustainability. The Board and the Secretariat have recognised this by elevating market-shaping to the level of a strategic goal, with specific programme objectives and activities which will drive reducing vaccine costs to GAVI and countries.

The Secretariat agrees with the finding that "GAVI is unique in financing associated vaccine technologies through its injection safety program, which has clearly been successful and sustainable – although waste management remains an issue." The

Secretariat's view is that waste management should be tackled as a health systems issue rather than a vaccine issue; where countries identify waste management as a priority, it is open for them to use GAVI support through the health systems funding platform to address it.

The evaluation recognises the spectrum of opinion which exists on the Board and elsewhere about the extent to which GAVI's health system strengthening activities have advanced or distracted from GAVI's immunisation goals. The Secretariat's view is that the primary virtue of GAVI's health systems support from countries' perspectives – its flexibility – is central to the difficulty identified by the evaluators in assessing the impact of health systems spending. It is also harder to measure the impact of cash-based programmes than vaccine programmes, and their impact is often longer term. The Secretariat recognises the need to continue to work on developing better key performance indicators on HSS. In addition, as the evaluation identifies, some of the operational issues with the HSS programme will be addressed by the health systems funding platform.

The Secretariat agrees that while the Immunisation Services Support programme has been innovative, there have been issues with its implementation. The Secretariat's view is that the proposed new window, Incentives for Routine Immunisation Strengthening (IRIS) has the potential to address some of the issues identified by the evaluation; the Board in Kigali will consider the IRIS programme.

The Secretariat accepts that the Civil Society Organisation support programme has been slow to take off on account of some fundamental design and implementation issues, particularly in relation to Type A support. The Secretariat has been working with CSOs to develop a new programme.

Organisational value add

The Secretariat agrees that GAVI's approach of working through its Partners, particularly at country level, goes to the heart of its Alliance model and "lean" structure.

The Secretariat agrees with the finding that "evidence suggests that GAVI's program application and monitoring processes and communication at country level need to improve further, although a significant positive characteristic of GAVI's approach is 'country ownership.'" Improving country communications has been included in the Business Plan through the creation of a dedicated post for country communications at the Secretariat and support for regional and country level UNICEF and WHO staff.

The Secretariat agrees that "GAVI's partnership of public and private immunisation stakeholders is on one hand a key driver of its innovation, but on the other, a contributing factor to the challenges of work planning, budgeting, and performance monitoring." The Secretariat's view is that while coordinating independent institutions through the Alliance can be challenging, the Alliance adds significant value; and that the new strategy and business plan take significant steps towards addressing the challenges of work planning, budgeting and performance monitoring identified by the evaluation by requiring reporting at the programme objective level and the standardisation of reporting across the partners.

The Secretariat agrees with the following findings:

“As GAVI has evolved, there have been changes to the structure of the Partnership (and Secretariat) and nature of its innovations – but our view is that these have not detracted significantly from its added value.”

“GAVI has increased the interest in and commitment to immunisation at global and country level – borne out, as a minimum, by increased levels of funding.”

Next steps

The Management response focuses on the key for board attention. However, the evaluation has provided valuable and in-depth insight into a number of areas. Through the performance management unit, which is being put in place to manage implementation of the business plan, the Secretariat will systematically follow up on other issues raised both in the main report and in the detailed chapter reports on each strategic goal, and will prepare a detailed implementation plan.