

Proposal for improved GAVI Board operations

July 2003

Background

By nearly all accounts, the GAVI partnership has been a success and the GAVI Board has offered the partnership valuable and important start-up advice, strategic decision-making and operational guidance. The success is due in part to the broad make-up of the alliance and a Board that is willing to take on decision-making in an open, transparent and collective manner. The spirit and process of collective discussion, wide participation in decision-making, and active engagement of senior leadership from across the world must continue to guide this alliance as we move forward to address the critical strategic issues facing the global immunization system today.

As GAVI moves beyond its successful start-up phase, it has become clear that the alliance requires clarity and decisiveness in its planning, gathering of technical, partner and country input, and decision-making that is hard to obtain without high-level engagement and activity of board members. The Board has worked both as a committee of the whole and with *ad hoc* sub-committees to address a variety of issues and to make alliance decisions.

The GAVI Board has functioned through a number of sub-groups, including a sub-group to develop the 2003 Work Plan and the Strategic Framework for the 2004-05 Work Plan, a sub-group to review the Task Forces and Regional Working Groups and a sub-group to recruit the GAVI Executive Secretary. In addition two standing groups have been created: the ADIP Management Committee and the VPP Oversight Committee. The sub-groups have often had difficulty performing their functions, meeting regularly, and staying engaged. In some cases, there seems to be overlap in content areas.

Board meetings are supposed to occur only twice a year, but in 2002 and 2003 an extra meeting was needed. Board teleconferences have been required on an almost monthly basis. Furthermore, participation in various sub-groups has required Board members to attend additional teleconferences and meetings.

The development of the 2003 Work Plan and the Strategic Framework for 2004-05 has proven to be a particularly demanding exercise. Furthermore, continued and regular high-level guidance is required to develop the 2004-05 work plan, manage its implementation and monitor progress.

Included in the GAVI Review¹ presented at the June 2002 Board meeting in Paris was a recommendation to create a number of standing sub-groups of the Board in order to improve efficiency of Board functions. At that time, the Board decided not to accept that recommendation but instead to rely upon *ad hoc* sub-groups as needs arise. However, with the growing complexity of GAVI the Board may wish to again consider new options to improve efficiency.

¹ From "Report of the External Review of the Functions and Interactions of the GAVI Working Group, Secretariat and Board", by Karen Caines and Hatib N'jie. May 2002 [http://www.vaccinealliance.org/site_repository/resources/gavi_review_report_final.doc]

Proposal to create a GAVI Board Executive Committee

An Executive Committee of the GAVI Board (GAVI EC) could smooth the ongoing planning, management and monitoring of GAVI activities that are central to the functioning of the Alliance. The EC would facilitate a closer supervision and implementation of GAVI's activities, including Secretariat functions. It would streamline the operations of the Board by removing some of the more day-to-day management responsibilities, allowing the Board to focus solely on big issues and decisions; in fact the EC would inform and facilitate decision-making by the Board, who will retain all GAVI decision-making responsibilities.

In establishing a GAVI EC, every effort must be made to assure that the full range of GAVI partners remained fully empowered in the Alliance, that transparency is enhanced and not lessened. If an EC is adopted, it will be important to maintain the engaged commitment of *all* Board members. Success of the EC will be measured by the development of clear, effective and streamlined planning processes, facilitating the work and decision-making of the Board, and reduction in the transaction costs of GAVI processes.

The EC would fulfill the functions delegated to it by the Board (see below for suggested functions), with support from the Secretariat. The establishment of the EC would not change the current functions of the Working Group, which supports the Secretariat or Secretariat (see Annex).

Functions of the GAVI EC:

1. The GAVI EC will be responsible for overseeing the strategic planning processes of GAVI including making recommendations to the full Board about the scope and specific processes of planning and update the Board regularly on planning issues in such a way that the Board can make informed decisions about planning processes and clarifications, modifications and/or changes in the GAVI strategic plan. This work will require a significant commitment of time and effort to engage on issues, analyze options and present them for Board review.
2. The GAVI EC will oversee the annual coordinated partner work plan development process and for codifying that process for approval by the Board. The GAVI EC will work with the Secretariat to present work plan and budget options in a way that enables all of the GAVI partners to be fully informed about the options, the decisions, the implementation, the financing and the output of GAVI work plan activities.
3. The GAVI EC will monitor, evaluate and report to the Board on the progress and outcomes of all GAVI-related activities to assure accountability, alignment with strategic objectives, effectiveness and value. The EC, working with the Secretariat and other GAVI structures, will report to the Board on key strategic or operational issues facing the alliance as it executes a work plan designed to achieve clearly delineated alliance objectives.
4. The GAVI EC, with guidance from the Executive Secretary who sits on the Executive Committee of the Vaccine Fund board, will be responsible for reviewing the Alliance strategy, objectives, and workplan in the context of the strategic plan of the Vaccine Fund and reporting to the full board on any key issues or conflicts which require resolution.
5. The GAVI EC would assume responsibility for reviewing and endorsing the recommendations of the Independent Review Committee (IRC) and have the authority to request payments from The Vaccine Fund between Board meetings.
6. No other functions of the GAVI EC will be assumed without formal adoption by the GAVI Board.

Membership of the EC:

The EC will consist of seven Board members with no alternates – EC effectiveness requires high-level involvement. These will include the five renewable members of the Board (WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank, the Vaccine Fund and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) and two members who will represent developing countries, and OECD countries who would serve two-year terms. The Chair of the Board will propose the two rotating members to the Board for approval. The Chair of the Board should also be the chair of the EC. If any member of the EC is unable to participate in a meeting or teleconference an alternate will not be able to participate.

Extension of Board member terms

Currently each rotating Board member serves for a period of two years. This has allowed substantial involvement of the various constituencies. On the other hand, as GAVI operations grow in

complexity, a two-year period may be too short to fully maximize on contributions from Board members. It takes some time for new Board members to become conversant with all of the issues and to develop a strong communication network with their constituencies. For this reason an extension of Board membership from two to three years should be considered.

This would apply to new members only; the terms of current members will end as scheduled.

Functions of the Secretariat and the Working Group²

Functions of the **Secretariat**:

- Managing the review of country proposals: working with the partners to identify Independent Review Committee members; correspondence with members; hosting the 10-day proposal review sessions two to three times per year; preparing documentation for the reviews; preparing documentation for presentation to the Board; drafting and managing correspondence with countries regarding the outcome of reviews.
- Servicing the Board: working with the Board Chair to finalize meeting dates, locations and agendas; preparing all correspondence with Board members; drafting and publishing the reports of the meetings and teleconferences; working with constituencies to nominate new members; providing human resource and financial support to developing country health ministry members.
- Servicing the Working Group: Managing all teleconferences and meetings; drafting meeting and teleconference agendas and reports.
- Preparing and disseminating consistent documentation on GAVI policies and procedures.
- Managing the website and quarterly publication.
- Arranging the Partners' Meeting every two years.

Functions of the **Working Group**:

- Communicating major Board decisions – such as new Fund policies and country proposal decisions – to partner constituencies at the regional and national levels.
- Acting as a bridge between the Alliance and operations of individual organizations ensuring operations are consistent with GAVI and Partner objectives
- Monitor progress to identify issues arising from Partners (including task forces, regional working groups, countries) that require Board decisions
- Prepare background documentation for Board to make decisions – preferred practice is to provide more than one recommendation
- Oversee operations of GAVI structures, including involvement in the appropriate task forces, and identify important structural issues for Board decision

² From “GAVI and The Vaccine Fund – Roles and Responsibilities”, prepared the GAVI Working Group and adopted by the GAVI Board, November 2001. [http://www.vaccinealliance.org/site_repository/resources/gavir&r_revised.doc]