



**Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance
Response to the “Final evaluation of Gavi support to Bosnia and Herzegovina”**

December 2014

Background to the evaluation

This is the second “final evaluation” to have been commissioned by Gavi in accordance with the Gavi Evaluation Policy. Gavi welcomes these final evaluations and values the important lessons they can highlight, particularly with regards to the sustainability of programmes previously supported by Gavi and the results achieved. We view these evaluations as particularly important to help inform how we can better help countries transition away from Gavi support in the future and to provide lessons learned and recommendations that could inform Gavi’s Graduation Policy going forward.

High-level response to this evaluation

Gavi welcomes this independent assessment of its support and the positive findings pertaining to the implementation of Gavi supported vaccines in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the evaluation clearly speaks to the need for Gavi to improve both the monitoring and evaluation of its programmes and to more carefully consider the sustainability of its support. While it is important to acknowledge that the vaccines supported by Gavi continue to be provided as part of the routine immunisation programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Gavi noted some findings with concern. For example, the fact that the key injection safety practices promoted and instituted for Gavi supported vaccines (the use of auto-disable syringes and safety boxes) have been discontinued and that there are significant concerns about Bosnia and Herzegovina’s vulnerability to vaccine prices going forward.

It is important when reading this response to remain cognisant of the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina did not experience a graduation phase similar to current Gavi graduating countries. Their support concluded when the time-limited multi-year period for which support had been approved came to an end and thus did not experience implementation of neither the Co-financing nor Graduation Policies. This is unfortunate as both these policies have resulted in more concerted efforts to work with countries to discuss and promote sustainability.

Below is a detailed response to recommendations made specifically to Gavi. Given that Bosnia and Herzegovina is no longer eligible for Gavi support, the response entails policy and programme changes that took place since 2011 relevant to the key recommendations provided in the evaluation report.

Recommendation	Response
<p>1. Enhance country coordination mechanisms</p>	<p>During the Gavi support BiH utilised a functional ICC for decision making, coordination and oversight of the immunisation program. Since the end of the support this mechanism is not fully functional. As indicated in the report, the country and partners might want to benefit from re-instating the ICC or a similar coordination body focusing on immunisation systems.</p> <p>Gavi continues to heavily rely on both ICC and HSCC (or equivalent) for efficient implementation of immunisation programs, and coordination of activities as well as oversight for Gavi investments. Gavi continues to harness and build capacity of these country mechanisms through its business plan. In the new Gavi strategy 2016-2020 there is special emphasis given to strengthening country coordination and decision making mechanisms, such as ICCs and NITAGs, in an effort to better ensure robust immunisation programme decisions, country ownership and sustainability.</p> <p>Under the current graduation policy, Gavi reviews and includes strengthening of country coordination mechanisms and makes provision for tailored support under the Gavi business plan as well as country specific graduation plans.</p>
<p>2. Improve monitoring and evaluation of Gavi supported national programmes during and after Gavi support</p>	<p>With its 2011-2015 Strategy, Gavi introduced a broader set of programmatic and strategic level indicators to be routinely monitored. In addition, with the introduction of performance-based financing for country grants in 2012, countries are now required to report on six immunisation outcome indicators on an annual basis using a standard M&E framework, which includes indicators on equity.</p> <p>To support improvements to data availability and quality, Gavi has instituted two new requirements for countries applying for all types of Gavi support from 2014. They include: <i>1) Countries have in place routine mechanisms to independently assess the quality of administrative data and track changes in data quality over time; and 2) High quality and nationally representative household surveys conducted at appropriate frequencies, to independently assess immunisation coverage and equity. For evidence-based improvement strategy, Gavi promotes routine monitoring and evaluation of administrative immunisation data quality and data system via annual desk review using standard monitoring indicators and periodic in-depth assessment (every 5 years) of data reporting system, with improvement plan developed, implemented and monitored every year.</i></p>
<p>3. Increase the predictability and sustainability of long-term financing for</p>	<p>Since 2011, Gavi's approach to immunisation financing and sustainability evolved and increasingly addressing both financial and programmatic sustainability. In 2012, Gavi introduced graduation assessments which look at regulatory</p>

<p>national immunisation programmes</p>	<p>issues, price, procurement practices as well budgeting issues in the countries that are entering graduation. Further to this, <i>graduation grants</i> were approved by the Gavi Board in November 2013 to provide catalytic investments intended to address sustainability risks.</p> <p>Graduation grants target the needs highlighted in the graduation assessment and are relatively modest awards (smaller allocations than the current HSS country allocation). These grants will fund interventions that are linked to graduation and aim to deliver “quick wins” to strengthen the capacity of immunisation programmes.</p> <p>Gavi believes it is critical that graduated countries be able to sustain the immunisation programmes begun with Gavi support and continue to introduce new life-saving vaccines. Access to appropriate vaccine prices is recognised as one potential factor that may impact countries’ ability to sustain immunisation programmes. The Gavi Board requested the Secretariat to conduct analyses and consultations to develop and propose instruments to support access to affordable prices for all Lower Middle Income Countries (LMICs), including graduated countries and non-Gavi LMICs. This could mean, for example, a pooled procurement mechanism that would bring better pricing. Findings and recommendations will be presented to the Gavi Board in June 2015.</p> <p>In addition, the Gavi Secretariat is working on revising the Gavi Eligibility, Graduation and Co-financing policies. As these policies are closely inter-linked to each other, the Gavi Board has requested that these three policies be reviewed in light of emerging challenges, lessons learnt and new directions set out in the Gavi Alliance Strategy 2016-2020. The Gavi Secretariat has started a process to conduct a comprehensive review of the Eligibility, Graduation and Co-financing policies, informed by a number of inputs including consultations with relevant stakeholders in the Alliance and relevant experts. The consultations are a key component of the policy review which will result in recommendations to the Gavi Board in June 2015.</p>
<p>4. Assist countries to make efficient procurement choices</p>	<p>Gavi made improvements over the years on vaccine procurement processes and brought transparency to pricing for vaccines procured by Gavi. The vaccine products and presentation options along with projected prices are provided to countries in various tools and partner agencies throughout the support period.</p> <p>Under the Gavi business plan the countries do receive training to better understand vaccine manufacturing to have better understanding on how vaccine market operates and its dynamics. The Gavi business plan includes further support to country coordinating mechanisms such as NITAGs to make</p>

evidence based program decisions, NRAs to implement improved and efficient licencing and registration processes which are important elements for vaccine procurement.

For graduating countries, graduation assessments and subsequent plans provide further support to enhance the country procurement processes including assistance for legislative changes to vaccine procurement and tendering.

The 2016-2020 Strategy will continue and strengthen Gavi's focus on sustainability. The three objectives of Gavi's Strategic Goal 3 moving forward will be the following:

- *Enhance national and sub-national political commitment to immunisation:* Political commitment is critical to ensure sustainability of immunisation programmes, not only government budget allocations but also with regards to sustainable performance of immunisation programmes in terms of coverage and equity. This will require engagement with country decision-makers, including Ministers of Health, Ministers of Finance, parliamentarians and heads of states, such that immunisation is firmly represented in the national political agenda. This will be done through advocacy at all levels, including close engagement of local communities and civil society organisations.
- *Ensure appropriate allocation and management of national human and financial resources to immunisation through legislative and budgetary means:* The Gavi co-financing policy will continue to require countries to contribute financially to the cost of the vaccines that the Gavi Alliance supports, with a holistic view to all national investments in immunisation, including co-financing as well as funding for vaccines not supported by the Alliance. The Alliance will also support countries during the graduation phase, to ensure that they allocate enough resources to meet and sustain the full Gavi price of the vaccines and the other costs related to immunisation programmes when Gavi support ends. This could include advocacy towards increasing the share of the national budget dedicated to health, consistent for example with the Abuja declaration by African countries.
- *Prepare countries to sustain performance in immunisation beyond graduation:* Based on the Board's guidance to revisit "exit criteria" and to consider tailored engagement with graduating countries, the new graduation approach will be designed to maximise the potential for countries to

	<p>sustain results beyond graduation. Although Gavi vaccine support will end once a country has graduated, the Alliance will continue to engage with ‘alumni’ countries to assist them in maintaining the results gained through Gavi support and may continue to play a supportive role, e.g., in terms of facilitating favourable pricing arrangements or providing technical assistance. Sustaining these results should also be an integral part of the commitment that countries make when deciding to introduce vaccines with Gavi support.</p>
<p>5. Join forces with partners and other donors for health systems strengthening (HSS)</p>	<p>Gavi acknowledges that in order to sustain its achievements and maximise the potential impact of vaccine introductions there is a need to strengthen national immunisation systems and improving coverage. Gavi also agrees that BiH’s experience clearly demonstrates Gavi’s support has value add in organising partner’s support. It also demonstrates in the absence of well thought graduation support and HSS, planning for routine immunisation, new vaccine introduction and governments’ focus on more concentrated efforts for program implementation and sustainability are jeopardised.</p> <p>Gavi’s approach to HSS support has evolved since its beginning in 2005. The objective of Gavi’s HSS support is to address system bottlenecks to achieve better immunisation outcomes, including increased vaccination coverage and more equitable access to immunisation. The projected three-year rolling average share of expenditure on cash-based programmes, within Gavi’s overall programmatic expenditure is 15-25%.</p> <p>Gavi requests that HSS investments demonstrate the complementarity and added value of Gavi support to reducing bottlenecks and strengthening the routine immunisation program. The efforts increased for alignment and harmonisation at the country levels with governments and partners for increased impact. In addition, Gavi now functions with more flexibilities and tailored approaches that would fit to specific country contexts, administrative cycles and processes to ensure countries develop needed capacity and governance structures for improved decision making for the immunisation programmes.</p>