

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE GFF	
Evaluation Title	Independent Evaluation of the GFF
Evaluation Year	2024-2025
Evaluation Objectives	<p>1. To generate evidence, strengthen accountability, and enable learning on the GFF model (e.g. the country engagement model, operational structure, and related support modalities) and the 2021-2025 strategy.</p> <p>2. To inform course corrections and strengthening actions for the remainder of the current strategy period as well as inform the development of the next GFF strategy (2026 onwards).</p>
GFF Secretariat Overall Response to the Evaluation	<p>The GFF Secretariat appreciates the independent evaluation of the GFF conducted by Euro Health Group and Waci Health and welcomes the recommendations articulated in the report. The GFF Secretariat also appreciates the key role played by the Steering Committee that oversaw the evaluation, and notes the Steering Committee's conclusion that the evaluation meets the standards of quality, utility and independence as laid out in the GFF Evaluation Steering Committee Terms of Reference. As the first independent evaluation of the overall GFF model, this evaluation is critical for generating evidence, strengthening accountability and enabling learning. This evaluation will serve as an essential input to inform development of the next GFF strategy. The GFF Secretariat principally agrees with the recommendations from the evaluation, while noting that several important trade-off decisions will need to be made as part of the GFF strategy development process, which will take place between March and November of 2025. By design, this management response therefore focuses at high level, in recognition that key prioritization decisions will be made through that strategy development process. Key risks, dependencies and definition of detailed roles and responsibilities will be determined as part of operational planning the Secretariat will take forward as part of its regular work to prepare for delivery of the new strategy once it is finalized.</p>

RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS			
Recommendation 1	<p>1. Maintain the GFF and resource it appropriately (human and financial) to enable it to continue and strengthen delivering on its mandate to improve gender equality, equity and access in RMNCAH-N health services for women, children and adolescents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the next strategy and funding period to consolidate GFF efforts across its existing portfolio and only consider expansion in existing countries if resourcing is adequate. This will allow the GFF to further test, document and scale up its comparative advantages and value added within these countries.• Put into operation and monitor the progress of the new partnership agreement between the World Bank regional offices and the GFF, to clarify roles and responsibilities of the GFF and World Bank teams in countries.• Define areas where the GFF personnel in countries can clarify and set out their comparative advantage to the World Bank in relationships with government officials to facilitate more consistent progress in implementing RMNCAH-N interventions, especially in gender, equity, and adolescent health and programing.• Consider the development of a limited set of internal management indicators that would monitor progress on clarifying and strengthening the GFF/World Bank responsibilities. Conduct regular reviews and update internal agreement on ways of working as needed.• Consider a ‘maturity model’ that builds on the differentiated approach outlined in the GFF’s expansion plan, tailored to country income levels and specific contextual challenges. This model should provide a structured framework to identify and implement RMNCAH-N focused health financing approaches, including PBF, that are most appropriate in politically challenging environment.		
Secretariat Response	Principally Agree. The new GFF strategy in development for the 2026-2030 period will define how the GFF model will be strengthened to deliver on its mandate to improve gender equality, equity and access in RMNCAH-N health services for women, children and adolescents. Costing, workforce planning and resource mobilization will be conducted in order to ensure that the GFF is fit-for-purpose and appropriately resourced to deliver on this mandate.		
Actions planned		Lead Team	Expected Completion
Overarching: Define the GFF strategy for the 2026-30 period in close coordination with GFF governance bodies, country partners, World Bank and a broader set of development partners in support of RMNCAH-N, with actions identified to strengthen the model in line with the recommendations from this evaluation.		Head of Secretariat	By end of 2025
Cost the new strategy based on 1) level of ambition agreed with GFF Board, 2) analysis of current funding landscape, and 3) dialogue with the TFC and World Bank leadership, to mobilize the resources necessary to deliver on the new strategy.		External Relations	Costing, analysis and dialogue by end of 2025. Timing of future resource mobilization activities TBD in consultation with Trust Fund Committee

<p>Re-examine criteria and need for GFF support based on current burden analysis. As part of this process, identify different types of GFF support for the next strategy period, taking into account the need to optimize resources and maximize impact in line with GFF comparative advantage and added value. As part of this effort, the GFF will consider an approach to segmentation and differentiation that will draw on elements of a maturity model.</p>	<p>Head of Secretariat</p>	<p>June 2025</p>
<p>Finalize and operationalize partnership agreement between the World Bank and GFF, to clarify roles and responsibilities and maximize synergies in line with the GFF's and World Bank's respective missions and comparative advantages. As part of the new partnership agreement, the GFF and World Bank will define: a) areas where the GFF can clarify and set out its comparative advantages, b) a limited set of internal management indicators, and c) a process for reviewing the management indicators together, with dialogue and joint actions to address opportunities and challenges that emerge.</p>	<p>Country Operations</p>	<p>June 2025</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p>	<p>2. Strategic communication and partnerships: Enhance and strengthen strategic engagement with partners in a country, including engagement of CSOs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a public-facing country framework that details the strategy and intervention approach of the GFF in each country. • Better communicate the country framework with partners, including how the GFF intends to work with development partners, and increase transparency with respect to results. • Strengthen post-IC development engagement with relevant in-country development partners, including UN partners, to support the implementation of action to address gender and equity and mainstreaming in national health plans, budgets and programs. • Differentiate the GFF approach by target partners (including government (MOF in addition to MOH), UN partners, relevant development partners including donors, and CSOs). • Enhance CSO engagement in GFF country platforms by providing more consistent funding, capacity-building, and structured participation mechanisms to support their role in accountability, IC monitoring, and advocacy. Improve timely invitations, transparent selection processes, and collaboration frameworks to ensure meaningful and sustained involvement. 	
<p>Secretariat Response</p>	<p>Principally Agree. Key questions to be explored as part of the strategy development process will include what shifts to bring in GFF's approach to a) strengthening support for implementation and b) enhancing CSO engagement.</p>	
<p>Actions planned</p>	<p>Lead Team</p>	<p>Expected Completion</p>

Develop public-facing country engagement frameworks for all countries in the GFF portfolio, detailing the GFF strategy and approach in each country. These will be disseminated at the global and country level.		Country Operations	June 2026
As part of new strategy, clarify and refine approach to working with partners to address gender & equity and mainstream them in national health plans, budgets and programs		RMNCAH-N + G, in close coordination with Country Operations	June 2026
Building on the decision at the IG19 meeting to launch a working group to identify how best to maximize the impact of the IG (the broader GFF partnership), the working group will work in close coordination with the strategy steering committee to further define partnership approach and expectations for GFF partnership at the global and country level.		External Relations, in close coordination with Country Engagement and Alignment	By end of 2025
As part of ongoing efforts and building on the work of a CSO and Youth taskforce, the GFF Secretariat is putting in place new CSO engagement mechanisms that account for lessons learned. The CSO portfolio will also be in scope as part of new strategy development process.		External Relations, in close coordination with Country Engagement and Alignment	June 2026
Recommendation 3	3. GFF resourcing and TA support: Review GFF human resources, allocation and TA provision to ensure that available resources are deployed as effectively as possible. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the current allocation of human resources and longer-term consultants, including where staff and consultants are located and what they are doing, to ensure adequate capacity in partner countries to support the delivery of the GFF mandate. • Transition from the catalytic phase of strengthening RMNCAH-N prioritization to providing enhanced support for countries to implement their RMNCAH-N projects and achieve agreed upon results. • Conduct a detailed review of all TA provided across the portfolio to assess its outcomes and identify priority areas for future TA investment. • Strengthen monitoring and reporting of the effectiveness and outcomes of TA support. 		
Secretariat Response -	Principally Agree. Key questions to be explored as part of the strategy development process will include how to improve the GFF model in line with this recommendation, while further integrating GFF support into existing government structures, in order to reinforce country leadership and strengthen institutionalization and sustainability.		
Actions planned		Lead Team	Expected Completion
Conduct strategic workforce planning to ensure available resources are deployed as effectively as possible to deliver what is needed for the next GFF strategy		Head of Secretariat	June 2026

Through the internal partnership agreement with the World Bank and GFF workforce planning, strengthen focus on implementation and achievement of measurable results. Ensure that Secretariat bandwidth, resources channeled to World Bank regions and task teams, and how those resources are actively managed enable this strengthened focus on implementation support.	Head of Secretariat (strategic workforce planning) and Country Operations (partnership agreement with the World Bank)	June 2026
Conduct a portfolio review of TA investments to assess what difference they have made, and to inform optimization of future TA investments	Results & Learning (portfolio review of TA), Country Operations (optimization of TA investments for next strategy)	March 2026
Establish a process for systematically monitoring the outcomes of TA investments as part of implementation of the new strategy	Results & Learning (TA monitoring process) with Senior Operations Officer (country envelopes)	By end of 2025

Recommendation 4	<p>4. Health system strengthening and RMNCAH-N: Finalize the HSS strategy to clarify how HSS should contribute to improvements in RMNCAH-N, and areas of GFF focus based on its comparative advantage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus and build on HSS support in areas where GFF has a comparative advantage in specific contexts, relative to other development partners. These include relevant aspects of health financing for RMNCAH-N, health information, quality of care and equity in service delivery. There is less evidence that the GFF has a comparative advantage in financing human resources for health, relative to other development partners.• Strengthen coordination for HSS in line with GFF commitments under the Lusaka Agenda, by collaborating with the World Bank and other Future of Global Health Initiatives partners to enhance the coordination and alignment of development partner support for HSS, under the leadership of the MOH. This effort should focus on fostering alignment around health financing strategies to ensure coherent and effective support.• Further advocate for and support alignment among global health stakeholders—including Global Health Initiatives (e.g., The Global Fund, Gavi), UN agencies, and development partners—as they increasingly invest in HSS. This includes prioritizing effective coordination to prevent duplication, reducing country transaction costs, and enhance the efficiency and impact of TA. The GFF should contribute to these efforts as part of a collective approach, rather than serving as the lead agency.• Strengthen collaboration on health financing strategies by working with all partners to streamline efforts, align investments with country-led priorities, and minimize fragmentation. The GFF should focus on leveraging shared objectives and resources to strengthen national health systems while ensuring that its role remains complementary to broader global health financing initiatives.• Maintain the core focus on RMNCAH-N and avoid expanding into broader agendas that could risk spreading efforts too thin and thereby undermining its effectiveness. For example, the GFF should refrain from directly engaging in or allocating GFF resources to areas such as climate change and pandemic preparedness. Instead of direct engagement, the GFF should focus on influencing the World Bank's approach to these areas to ensure that RMNCAH-N priorities are effectively addressed in climate change and pandemic preparedness planning.• Continue identifying areas where the GFF model can advance RMNCAH-N differently than others and more effectively. For example, leverage its expertise to influence the World Bank in addressing government financing for RMNCAH-N commodities.• Strengthen efforts to address gaps in reaching marginalized and vulnerable populations by leveraging the GFF's comparative advantage, particularly in multi-sectoral programming. For instance, strengthen the focus and effectiveness of work with adolescents in sexual and reproductive health.	
Secretariat Response	Principally Agree. Prioritization of when, where and how the GFF operates through different health systems levers (e.g., health financing, data, human resources for health) to improve specific RMNCAH-N outcomes will be carefully considered as part of the development process for the new strategy.	
Actions planned	Lead Team	Expected Completion

<p>Further develop the initial draft of the HSS for RMNCAH-N framework and use it as a basis to bring more focus and clarity on GFF's HSS approach: namely, how the GFF relies on a country's health financing reform(s) to ensure that the other relevant levers (HMIS, HRH, commodities, etc.) and specific RMNCAH-N interventions can be strengthened for improved health of women, children and adolescents. Trade-offs will be addressed as part of the strategy development process (e.g., balancing a sharpening of focus on specific areas at strategy-wide level with the preservation of flexibility for countries to invest in the parts of the health system most critical for improving RMNCAH-N outcomes in their specific context). The HSS for RMNCAH-N framework will reaffirm the GFF's core focus on RMNCAH-N outcomes and define the parameters for ensuring there is no dilution of focus on the core mission.</p>	<p>RMNCAH-N + Gender workstream</p>	<p>By end of 2025</p>
<p>Continue to engage actively with multiple partners, inclusive of Gavi, the Global Fund and UN partners, to strengthen coordination and alignment on HSS and health financing. The HSS working group that feeds into the Joint Committee Working Group is one key process for strengthening coordination and alignment specifically with Gavi and the Global Fund, in line with the Lusaka Agenda. For the World Bank specifically, the partnership agreement will form the primary basis for strengthening how the Bank and the GFF internally collaborate and co-invest to strengthen health systems in order to improve RMNCAH-N outcomes. The Bank brings broader systems and financing expertise linked to Universal Health Coverage, while the GFF brings specific focus on women, children and adolescents.</p>	<p>Results & Learning (HSS working group), Country operations (partnership agreement with World Bank) and the RMNCAH-N and Gender workstream (ensuring maintenance of strong focus on RMNCAH-N). The Sr Program Coordinator is the Lusaka Agenda lead for GFF, working in close collaboration with counterparts at Gavi, Global Fund and other agencies.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Clarify and strengthen strategic approach to cross-sectoral programming, for adolescents' sexual and reproductive health and other key issues, as part of the next GFF strategy	RMNCAH-N and Gender workstream	Strategic approach to be defined as part of new strategy by end of 2025, and implemented over the course of the 2026-2030 strategy period.
Recommendation 5	<p>5. Health financing: In coordination with the World Bank, maintain and strengthen focus on advocating for additional and more efficient spending on health (specifically RMNCAH-N) in partner countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align with the World Bank and other partners (e.g., WHO and civil society) to support MOH in advocacy to the MOF and other sectors to make the case for increased investment in health ensuring that budget expenditure focuses on the highest impact interventions for women, children and adolescents. • In partnership with the World Bank, continue and amplify use of analytics (e.g., strategies for health financing for RMNCAH-N and producing data on cost effectiveness of prioritized interventions) for advocacy. • Continue and scale up support to resource pooling for health, as part of support to alignment of donor financing to prioritized areas, building on lessons learned from previous SWApS and latest fund pooling in Nigeria. • Build on the GFF's valuable support for RMET and budget tracking initiatives. Where feasible, focus on strengthening national capacity for RMET to improve data-driven decision-making and accountability. Where possible, extend resource mapping to the sub-national level to provide a more detailed view of resource allocation and utilization. • Continue providing TA to enhance domestic resource mobilization, strategic purchasing for RMNCAH-N services, risk pooling and PFM strengthening in contexts where the GFF can deliver clear value. This includes supporting health insurance reforms aimed at reducing out-of-pocket expenditure, improving public financial management, and mobilizing additional resources for RMNCAH-N and health through tax reform. • Clarify a private sector engagement strategy for the GFF, in alignment with other Global Health Initiatives. • In collaboration with the World Bank (e.g., Macro-economics, Trade and Investment Global Practice, and Governance Global Practice), further trial domestic resource mobilization initiatives in select countries, through using mechanisms such as Development Policy Operations. 	
Secretariat Response	Principally Agree. Key questions to be explored as part of the strategy development process will include the GFF's approach to a) evidence-informed advocacy for improving availability and use of domestic resources, together with other partners, and b) private sector engagement strategies.	
Actions planned	Lead Team	Expected Completion

Clarify and refine the GFF strategic approach to health financing as part of the next GFF strategy, taking into account the need to: maintain strong focus on women, children and adolescents, coordinate with other units in the World Bank, , strengthen alignment with partners in support of country led plans, with pooling of financing where relevant through the Joint Financing Facility and other mechanisms, strengthen support for country-led reforms where critical for improved health for women, children and adolescents, strengthen support for country-led prioritization and integration, in light of a shifting financing landscape.		Health Financing	Strategic approach to be defined as part of new strategy by end of 2025, and implemented over the course of the 2026-2030 strategy period.
Scale up and institutionalize support for strengthening Public Financial Management Systems and Resource Mapping & Expenditure Tracking (RMET).		Health Financing	Strategic approach to be defined as part of new strategy by end of 2025, and implemented over the course of the 2026-2030 strategy period.
Clarify strategic approach to GFF private sector engagement strategy in alignment with other GHIs, as part of the next GFF strategy. This will build upon the revised GFF private sector approach approved by the IG in November 2024.		Health Financing	Strategic approach to be defined as part of new strategy by end of 2025, and implemented over the course of the 2026-2030 strategy period.
Recommendation 6	6. Results and reporting: Strengthen data availability, quality, and utilization at country level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen support for the systematic use of data for country decision making, and document how it is being used to improve health investment, efficiency, and quality of care. • Prioritize country data mapping, outlining country data availability, quality, and use and identifying GFF's input and support in the country framework. Collaborate with government systems and other Global Health Initiatives to align metrics and reporting frame under country leadership. • Continue to use and embed Frequent Assessments and System Tools for Resilience (FASTR) into country data systems to rapidly collect data, e.g., on quality, health system bottlenecks, gender, and equity. 		
Secretariat Response	Principally Agree. The specific scope and approach for strengthening GFF support to data mapping processes will be developed in consultation with countries and other partners as part of the strategy development process, in a manner that takes into account and builds on existing initiatives.		
Actions planned		Lead Team	Expected Completion

Accelerate existing efforts to support country capacity for systematic analysis, dissemination, communication and use of data for decision making, with documentation of how it influences decision-making and helps lead to improvements	Results & Learning	Ongoing using existing resources. Further acceleration will be institutionalized in workplan and budget for FY2026 and next strategy.
Actively support country counterparts to lead data mapping process linked to Investment Cases, in close coordination with Gavi, Global Fund, Unicef and WHO to jointly advance an alignment process anchored in country leadership.	Results & Learning with GFF Country Coordinators	Ongoing and to be scaled progressively across the portfolio. Mapping in the first two countries to begin in the second quarter of calendar year 2025
Accelerate existing efforts to scale FASTR, through an embedded approach within country data systems.	Results & Learning	Ongoing using existing resources. Further acceleration will be institutionalized in workplan and budget for FY2026 and next strategy.
Recommendation 7	7. Results and reporting: Improve the articulation and measurement of contribution to country results. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a contribution analysis framework that describes causal pathways and GFF's contribution to RMNCAH-N in partner countries. • When developing the upcoming strategy, revise the logic model to ensure alignment with the strategic directions and corresponding KPIs. This should prioritize indicators that measure the outcomes of GFF-specific support and those where progress can be feasibly attributed to the GFF's contribution. • Develop a measurement approach which better reflects the GFF's adaptability in responding to diverse country contexts while ensuring accountability for results (e.g., flexible KPIs or baskets of indicators). 	
Secretariat Response	Principally Agree. Key questions to be explored as part of the strategy development process will include how to most effectively balance promotion of integration in country systems with strengthening the GFF's ability to track and communicate its specific contributions to results delivered through country systems within which it has integrated.	
Actions planned	Lead Team	Timeframe

Update Results Measurement Framework for next strategy period with advice and guidance from Results Advisory Group, incorporating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New contribution framework analysis approach b) Updated Logic Model that corresponds with KPIs and includes measures of outputs (and where feasible, outcomes) of GFF-specific support c) A measurement approach that better reflects the GFF's adaptability in responding to diverse country contexts 	Results & Learning	To be defined as part of new strategy by end of 2025, and implemented over the course of the 2026-2030 strategy period.
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Recommendation 8	8. Learning and capacity building: Focus knowledge and learning work on capturing, documenting and sharing learning from country experience, providing more in-country mentoring and reduce focus on holding external stakeholder workshops. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a more focused and strategic approach to the GFF's learning agenda, prioritize the generation of evidence on pathways to change and translate evidence into policy change and action. This should involve systematically evaluating and learning from its experience, to identify what works and what does not work and why, while strengthening cross-country learning. • Reduce GFF's focus on developing learning materials and delivering country leadership training, given the limited measurable outcomes from these activities, the GFF's limited resources, and the potential for duplication with other development partner capacity building and leadership training initiatives. • The GFF learning team should instead work with LOs and longer-term national consultants to consolidate and embed the knowledge and skills gained by government and CSO teams through the Country Leadership Program. • Conduct an assessment of the contribution and impact of investments in CSO capacity building before committing to additional resources, ensuring that future investments are evidence-based and aligned with strategic priorities • Provide more detailed reporting on GFF activities in each partner country. This could take the form of a report aligned with an annual workplan or similar framework including detailed information on GFF investments, influencing activities and their outcomes, and the corresponding results to enhance transparency and accountability. 	
Secretariat Response	Principally Agree. Specific areas of focus for the GFF learning agenda will be determined through the strategy development process.	
Actions planned	Lead Team	Expected Completion

As part of next strategy, strengthen focus of GFF knowledge & learning function and implementation research activities on generating evidence and enabling learning by GFF partnership countries on pathways to change for improved RMNCAH-N outcomes.	Results & Learning	Strategic approach to be defined as part of new strategy by end of 2025, and implemented over the course of the 2026-2030 strategy period.
Conduct assessment of GFF support for learning activities on prioritized thematic topics during the current strategy period, to inform the approach to learning to be adopted for the next strategy	Results & Learning, in close coordination with technical focal points for prioritized thematic topics	June 2026
Current CSO taskforce will continue to provide guidance throughout design of next CSO engagement model and there will also be quarterly reporting available to ensure results and lessons are identified and addressed in a timely manner with shifts made as needed. An assessment of that approved phase of CSO funding will be conducted to inform subsequent engagement.	External Relations + Results & Learning	Strategic approach to be defined as part of new strategy by end of 2025, and implemented over the course of the 2026-2030 strategy period.
Finalize plan for reporting on GFF activities in each partner country as part of the next strategy period in consultation with TFC	Country Operations + External Relations + Results & Learning	By end of 2025