

GLOBAL FINANCING FACILITY ALIGNMENT WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

In the past two decades several new Global Health Initiatives (GHIs) have tremendously increased financing and political attention to combating infectious diseases and strengthening health systems in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Most importantly, they have helped to vaccinate millions of children, reduced transmission, and saved millions of lives across the globe.

However, country level support and donors' behaviors can lead to fragmentation of financing and service delivery creating further challenges for countries to plan and build integrated health policies and systems towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC). In the worst examples, a lack of alignment and coordination around national government priorities have challenged national leadership and disrupted policy and implementation processes in partner countries.

The idea that better alignment among external financiers would improve use of financing, create better health outcomes, and strengthen health systems, is not new. In 2007, 26 signatories signed the IHP+ Global Compact to advance international principles of Aid Effectiveness in the health sector and accelerate progress on the MDGs. More recently, in 2019, at the UN High-Level Meeting on UHC, the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All (GAP), signed by twelve institutions, was launched with the intention to move from complimentary in efforts to synergies to achieve the SDGs, and particularly SDG3.

The Global Financing Facility (GFF) was launched in 2015. From its inception it pioneered a country-driven, collaborative model for global health linked to sustainable financing and results. The new way of working shifted away from a focus solely on official development assistance to an approach that combines domestic financing, external support, and innovative sources for resource mobilization and delivery (including the private sector) in a synergistic way to advance national priorities to improve health outcomes for mothers, children and adolescents as a first step on the path to UHC.

At the core of GFF's model is the development and implementation of a government-led, prioritized and costed national investment case, that brings out key priorities in national strategies and lays out the pathway to scaling up universal access to a basic package of reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition services along with critical health financing and system reforms to accelerate progress toward UHC. By facilitating multi-stakeholder country platforms, chaired by the Government, that use data to inform decision making and institutionalizing regular resource mapping and expenditure tracking (RMET) exercises, the GFF supports its 36 partner governments to mobilize and align both domestic and external funding behind national investment case priorities.

In GFF's 36 partner countries the GFF partnership can help respond to developing countries' long-lasting call for global partners to align once and for all behind their national health plans and priorities—fostering a permanent shift in the global health and development assistance paradigm. In doing so, the partnership can support the GAP, and other global efforts focusing on alignment to translate goals and aspiration in the national and local contexts.

THE CHALLENGE

The 2021-2025 GFF Strategy Refresh emphasizes the importance of continuing to provide partner countries with a range of tools to foster partner alignment and hold partners accountable. There was a clear recognition in the diagnostics work preceding the formulation of the GFF Strategy Refresh that more efforts are needed in this area. Key challenges identified include:

- How the country-led process can incentivize partner alignment, including through tools/procedures to allow more external and domestic financing aligned to government priorities;
- How to use existing data, including from RMET, more strategically to improve alignment of financing behind government priorities and to drive improved equity and efficiency in financing; and
- How to create objective measurements of country-level alignment to track progress over time.

THE WAY FORWARD

To advance this work the GFF Secretariat would like to work closely with partners, and therefore proposes to form an Alignment Working Group.

Deliverables

The working group will be tasked to produce an initial diagnostic on alignment and donors' behavior with policy recommendations for:

- Optimizing existing country-led processes to enhance alignment of external financing behind government priorities;
- Measuring country-level alignment, including in the area of health financing¹; and
- Increasing the number of countries where the 4Gs (Global Fund, Gavi, Global Financing Facility and World Bank Group) and bilateral donors are co-financing operations and technical assistance.

Timeframe

The working group will exist for 12 months. It will present the deliverables to Investors Group (IG) and Trust Fund Committee (TFC) in November 2021. After 3 months, an IG alternates call will be organized to brief the IG members on progress and discuss emerging proposals.

Members

The members of the working group will be nominated by the Investors Group. The working group will include a maximum of 12 members including representatives from GFF partner countries, bilateral donors, other GHIs, and civil society.

¹ In Investor Group meeting 11, the Sustainable Financing Accelerator proposed a framework for aligning around the Health Financing Agenda at the country level. This is a follow-up action based on that discussion.