

Terms of Reference – Immunization Financing Database Development Team

A – Background

The need for an immunization financing database originated in May 2000 following an informal WHO and GAVI Financing Task Force meeting to explore data needs and opportunities related to immunization expenditure, costing and financing. Among the major conclusions of this meeting were that the GAVI Vaccine Fund application process will contain information that can be used to monitor expenditures and financial flows for immunization over time and that a publicly-accessible database on immunization expenditures and financing should be developed and housed within WHO.

Following the GAVI Financing Task Force annual forum in September 2000, work began on the database and on June 7, 2001, a meeting was held in Geneva to review the progress made and determine prospects of this work. Although satisfactory progress had been reported, considerable more work was needed to ensure that the data are compiled, analysed and presented in a way that yields comparable, accurate and reliable results. Several important methodological issues had been identified and finding the path to their ultimate resolution would benefit greatly from expert knowledge.

The main outcome of this meeting was that a database development team, with representatives from GAVI partner institutions, should be established to work through these issues and challenges and to give advice on the development of the database in terms of methodologies, definitions, standardization, extrapolations, data consolidation and analysis.

To move towards this objective, two database development team meetings were held at the World Bank in Washington on November 27, 2001, and on December 4, 2001. The purpose of these meetings were to define the objectives of the immunization financing database and to define a database development team. The outcome of these two meetings led to the preparation of draft terms of reference for the immunization database and one for the team of people working on its development. These were subsequently finalized during a follow-up meeting held at the World Bank in Washington on January 22, 2002.

The following paper is the terms of reference of the immunization financing database development team (IFD-DT). This document accompanies the terms of reference of the immunization financing database.

B – Objectives of the IF Database Development Team

The objectives of the immunization financing database development team are to:

1. *Provide technical guidance for the development of prospective data on immunization financing*

Recognising that existing information on immunization expenditures and government and donor levels of involvement are imperfect and that the GAVI initiative is an unprecedented opportunity to collect a consistent and comparable series of country level information, the group will define standards for data collection building on existing methods and tools to assure that a set of comparable data is collected in the future.

Several data collection vehicles present themselves:

- ?? The GAVI Financial Sustainability Plans (proposed tables), to be prepared by all countries receiving Vaccine Fund support
- ?? The GAVI Vaccine Fund Application, covering most Vaccine Fund-eligible countries
- ?? The UNICEF-WHO Joint Reporting Form, covering up to 220 countries
- ?? The PAHO Reporting Form, used by most of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean

2. *Provide technical guidance for the development of the database limited existing (“retrospective”) information on immunization programme financing and expenditures in a technically sound manner*

Recognising that comparability of the existing data on expenditure and financing is limited, as a second order priority the team will identify ways to generalize from the existing information. The team

Need for a Database Development Team

- (1) There is a need for a database development team to address data issues and challenges
- (2) Expert knowledge is invaluable in the ultimate resolution of these issues and challenges
- (3) The database development team needs representation from a broad range of backgrounds and institutions to build a consistent set of comparable data
- (4) Active participation from regions and countries is crucial in the process of generating any expenditure and financing estimates

will provide technical guidance for the development of the database in terms of methodologies, definitions, means for standardization and extrapolation, data consolidation and analysis of the existing “retrospective” data on immunization expenditure and financing and determine whether it is possible to make the data comparable with any future data collection methods.

3. Finalize, make recommendations on, and disseminate information on immunization programme financing and expenditures

The team will review all the work of the immunization financing database, assist in validating the data quality and finalize any expenditure and financing information prepared, and make recommendations on how the information and data quality can be improved. The team will regularly disseminate data availability and database analyses to potential users of this information.

To fulfil these objectives, the database development team will:

☞☞ **Build on other relevant experiences** of those working on estimating immunization coverage rates and those estimating resource requirements for the Polio Initiative.

☞☞ **Work closely with those producing and providing data at the country, regional and global levels**

The database development team will seek to ensure that countries and regions are actively involved in the work of the immunization financing database and for the team to work closely with the people who provided the data at the country and regional level and who know the shortcomings of the data. Involvement of countries and regions will facilitate any validation process and can be done through Regional ICC and RWG meetings.

☞☞ **Continue collaborating with institutions that have data and expanding the network of data sources**

While ensuring a consistent and comparable series of data coming in from the data collection vehicles listed above, the team will continue collaborating with institutions that have data and expanding the network of data sources as well as finding any overlooked sources of information. In addition, team members will be actively involved in submitting new and available data to the database from their respective organizations and making the link with other expertise available in their institution.

☞☞ **Identify important data gaps and address how can these be filled in**

Recognising that the collection of data for research purposes differs from data required for programme monitoring, the database development team will commission special studies to address important data gaps needed to meet the objectives of the database. A limited amount of funds will be made available for this activity and the use of these funds will be decided by the team in consultation with the Financing Task Force.

☞☞ **Review proposals for special studies and make recommendations on their funding**

Proposals for studies that will provide useful information and data for the database will be submitted to the team by institutions, regions and/or countries. The team will review all proposal and endorse those that best match the objectives of the database. The team will make its recommendations to the GAVI Financing Task Force on the use of limited database funds earmarked for special studies.

☞☞ **Endorse and disseminate data collection and analysis tools**

The team will further review and endorse existing and new methods available for the work of the database and relevant costing and financing tools and guidelines that assure comparable data collection for the immunization financing database.

☞☞ **Propose a frameworks for data dissemination**

The team will be responsible for defining a framework for data dissemination, determine how the information will be analysed and presented, decide on an appropriate medium for diffusing information and develop a procedure for responding to routine data requests.

C – Team Members

The immunization financing database development team will be composed of experts from a broad range of backgrounds and institutions. Experts are selected because of their training and experience and their facility to interpret and generalize critically beyond the data, and their ability to translate their knowledge into immunization expenditure and financing estimates.

The team will not actively solicit further membership but welcomes expertise from those initiating interest in the work of the immunization financing database. Membership can expand to include additional expertise within a reasonable size limit that will ensure an effective working group.

D – Process

- ?? The database development team will act as a steering committee for the work of a WHO-based economist who is working on the database. The database development team members will provide guidance to the work through periodic meetings, as well as on-going electronic and telephone contact.
- ?? The database development team will develop an initial short-term work plan to present to GAVI Financing Task Force at its Forum in January 2002. It will periodically review the issues that need to be addressed and, through a prioritization exercise, will develop a work plan for the next one to two years. The work plan also will lay out a process for identifying and commissioning special studies in priority areas.
- ?? The Financing Task Force will ensure that the priority activities outlined in the agenda are addressed and will monitor progress against the agenda. The Financing Task Force will periodically review and suggest revisions to the agenda and workplan.
- ?? The database development team, through the work of the WHO-based health economist, will be responsible for producing estimates on immunization programme expenditures and financing and regularly preparing publicly available reports on key findings, based on technically sound methodologies.
- ?? The database development members will be responsible for thoroughly documenting the sources, data, assumptions made and methods used to reach these estimates.
- ?? Members of the team will be responsible for identifying new data sources, analysing and providing estimates to the Financing Task Force and make recommendations for identifying potential information needs in the immunization financing domain.
- ?? The database development team is expected to meet roughly four times a year. Core members will be requested to attend all meetings and specialists will be invited to participate in meetings addressing specific issues.

D – Validation Process

It is important that the work of the immunization financing database be validated before the information becomes publicly available.

-A first level of validation will be ensured by the database development team itself as it works closely with those producing and providing data at the country, regional and global levels, and regularly reviews the information generated and the methodologies used.

-A second level of validation can be ensured by posting information endorsed by the database development team on the GAVI FTF password protected website to solicit input from a wider audience.

-A final level of validation can be ensured by presenting the material during the annual forum of the GAVI Financing Task Force before the information becomes publicly available and disseminated.

E – Final Products

The final product will be a publicly available database of immunization expenditure and financing estimates with detailed documentation of the data, assumptions made and methods used to reach these estimates and detailed documentation of key findings. The estimates prepared by the database development team should become the standard.