GPEI Governance Review Final Report

JULY 2020

POLIO GLOBAL ERADICATION INITIATIVE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to donor and stakeholder feedback, as well as the programme's evolving needs and challenges, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) undertook an internal review process to evaluate how to improve the partnership's operations, structures and culture in order to more efficiently and effectively progress towards the endgame strategy's goals and objectives. The result of a series of surveys, workshops, interviews and stakeholder consultations, this report sets forth key issues and recommendations aimed at strengthening the programme's structure and operations. Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of integration activities and – while not a primary focus of this report – we acknowledge that work remains to be done to strengthen efforts toward GPEI's integration goal. Incorporating these recommendations through deliberate and concerted actions – while simultaneously strengthening efforts towards integration and fostering a culture of change – GPEI can achieve greater accountability for decisions and implementation, increase transparency around its decision-making and financial processes, enhance country engagement and ownership, and reinforce continuous improvement. These outcomes will help GPEI reach its goals: eradication, integration, containment and certification.

GPEI has achieved significant and important successes. There are, however, obstacles that GPEI must address in order to realize its goals. The programme must rise to meet significant challenges, including GPEI's work in the remaining endemic countries, contending with circulating vaccine-derived polioviruses, vaccine supply issues and the impact of COVID-19 on GPEI operations and vaccination efforts.

Donors have questioned whether GPEI's structure and governance remain fit for purpose to eradicate polio. This report outlines proposed changes that stakeholders feel will reinforce the partnership's fitness moving forward. These recommendations do not address questions of programme strategy and are not intended to be the sum total of the governance review process. They are, however, important steps in GPEI's ongoing improvement to ensure the partnership *is* fit for purpose and provide important substrate for the larger revision of the endgame strategy. The GPEI Strategy Committee should actively manage and monitor implementation of the recommendations and any required follow-ups.

While the need for this review was identified and the exercise itself began before the onset of COVID-19, the challenges confronting GPEI as a result of the pandemic have reinforced the central importance of its recommendations.

REVIEW PROCESS

From December 2019 through June 2020, the GPEI Review Working Group (WG) engaged donors, GPEI teams, country and regional focal points, advisory groups (SAGE, GCC, PPG, IMB, TAGs of endemics) and other key stakeholders to gather feedback on the programme's structure and governance. Below is a description of the various steps of the review process. The original process was set to conclude in April, but the timeline was extended due to challenges associated with COVID-19.

SURVEY ON GOVERNANCE

As the first step of the review, a survey was sent to more than 150 stakeholders to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of – and to identify critical areas of concern regarding – the Strategy Committee (SC), the Finance and Accountability Committee (FAC) and the Polio Oversight Board (POB). The survey provided a set of key issues and concerns to address. A full summary of the survey results can be found in the GPEI Review Survey Report.

FIRST WORKSHOP

A workshop with major donors was held on 12 February 2020 in Geneva, Switzerland. The workshop aimed to reach consensus on the primary areas of concern that GPEI needs to address and began to develop ideas and solutions. A summary of the first workshop is available in the GPEI Review Workshop Notes.

INTERVIEWS

A recommendation coming out of the first workshop was to conduct targeted interviews with regional and country focal points to gather additional input. Seven targeted interviews were done with some regional and country focal points, GPEI Hub members, PPG Co-Chairs, the IMB Chair and GPEI members. The feedback gathered in the interviews was taken into consideration for the final set of recommendations. Due to COVID-19, there was limited availability from stakeholders to complete more interviews.

SECOND WORKSHOP

A second, virtual workshop was held on 15 April 2020. This workshop sought to develop a shared understanding of good governance and accountability principles, explored possible governance models for GPEI and discussed recommendations to improve GPEI's governance and accountability. The complete workshop notes are available in the GPEI Review Second Workshop Notes.

UPDATES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO GPEI LEADERSHIP

The SC was updated on the status of the review throughout the process. On 19 March 2020, a list of short-term recommendations from the first survey and workshop was shared with the SC. Additional discussions on the process and reviews of the emerging recommendations were held with the SC on 29 April and 28 May 2020. The POB was also updated on the status of the governance review on 24 March 2020.

SURVEY ON PRIORITIZATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a set of final recommendations formed, stakeholders were given an opportunity to provide feedback on which recommendations they considered most essential for GPEI to achieve its goal of eradication. The prioritization survey was sent to the same group of stakeholders as the initial survey. Results from this survey were shared with the SC and are included in the stakeholder prioritization section of this report. Further, stakeholders were invited to reach out to the working group to provide additional feedback or input.

REVIEW PROCESS

TIMELINE

POB updated on
review status
(24 MAR)

SC Updated
(28 MAY)

Short-term
recommendations
shared with SC
(19 MAR)

SC Updated
(29—30 APRIL)

Final Report
(JULY)

**JANUARY
2020**

**JULY
2020**

Stakeholder
Survey

Workshop 1
(12 FEB, GENEVA)

Workshop 2
(15 APRIL, ONLINE)

Gather feedback
on final set of
recommendations
from stakeholders

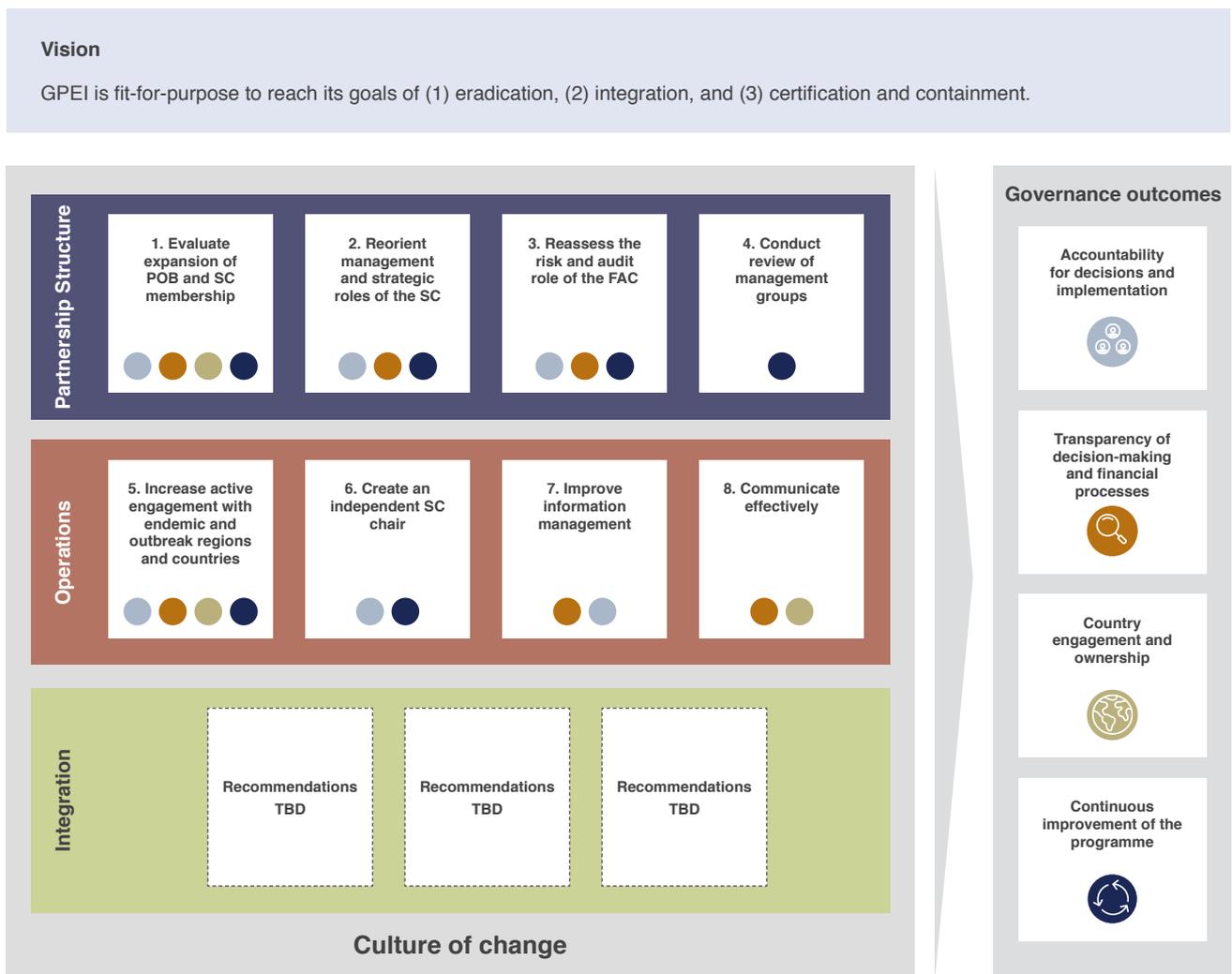*Individual consultations / interviews*

RECOMMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK

This process has sought to identify actionable recommendations that will help GPEI reach its principal goals: (1) eradication, (2) integration, and (3) certification and containment. The recommendations are organized into two categories – related to the partnership structure and operations – and accompanied by additional emphasis on strengthening integration (Goal 2 of the programme strategy). Recommendations pertaining to integration will need to be further developed by GPEI.

All of this must take place within the context of a genuine commitment to doing things differently and making changes where things can be improved. Beyond the specific recommendations outlined below, GPEI needs to commit broadly to a culture of change management.

Implementing these recommendations can help achieve four overarching governance outcomes – accountability, transparency, country engagement and continuous improvement.

Vision

GPEI is fit-for-purpose to reach its goals of (1) eradication, (2) integration, and (3) certification and containment.

Recommendations

Partnership Structure

1. Evaluate expansion of POB and SC membership
2. Reorient management and strategic roles of the SC
3. Reassess the risk and audit role of the FAC
4. Conduct review of management groups

Operations

5. Increase active engagement with endemic and outbreak regions and countries
6. Create an independent SC chair
7. Improve information management
8. Communicate effectively

Integration

Recommendations TBD

Recommendations TBD

Recommendations TBD

Culture of change

Governance outcomes

Accountability for decisions and implementation

Transparency of decision-making and financial processes

Country engagement and ownership

Continuous improvement of the programme

RECOMMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK

GOVERNANCE OUTCOMES

Accountability for decisions and implementation

Stakeholders expressed an overall dissatisfaction with the level of accountability across the GPEI programme. They'd like to see clarity on who is responsible for implementing decisions and how GPEI leadership holds individuals, partners and government to account to track key milestones. Many of the recommendations coming from this review aim to advance a culture and structure of accountability at every level of the programme.

Transparency of decision-making and financial processes

There is room to improve the transparency of processes within GPEI. In particular, donors noted a lack of clear, reliable and timely information on the decision-making processes, organizational structure, communication channels, and programme monitoring and evaluation. Some recommendations suggest creating an environment of trust in order to foster organizational stability and integrity.

Country engagement and ownership

GPEI needs to strengthen its communication and engagement with country governments and partners. GPEI should foster a "bottom-up" (i.e., originating from the countries) communication and decision-making process in addition to supporting the programme top-down. Some recommendations push to improve country ownership, with countries assuming increased financial and programmatic responsibility for eradication.

Continuous improvement of the programme

The GPEI programme needs to be responsive to the evolving context and challenges of polio eradication. The programme must be adaptable and sufficiently nimble to regularly incorporate new information and evidence into its financial and programmatic decisions. Many of the recommendations aim to improve the programme's ability to continually respond to changes and challenges, to keep GPEI fit for purpose.
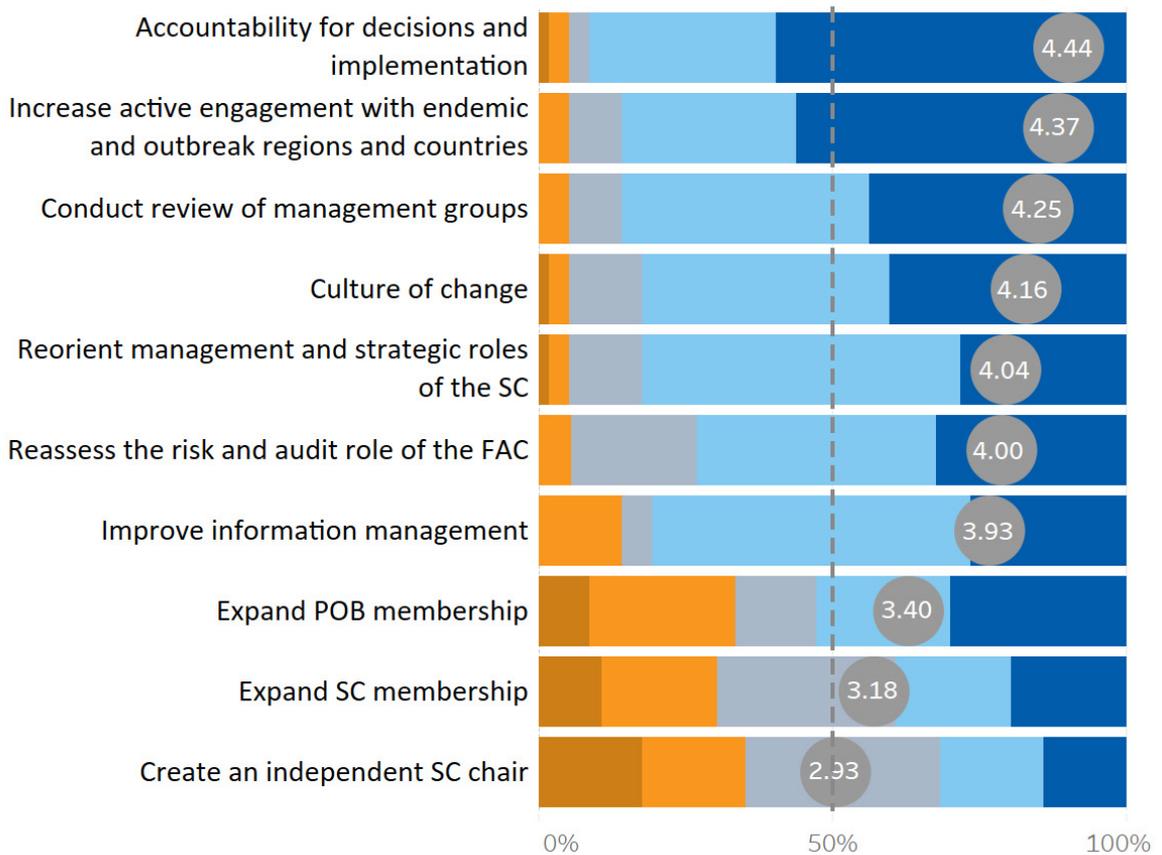
CULTURE OF CHANGE

Whilst this report focuses on many of the structural and process changes needed, GPEI also needs to focus on increased effectiveness across a wide range of intervention areas – broader than the traditional epidemiological focus. This should include a cultural commitment to implementing the recommendations with a shift in mindset of identifying problems when they arise, seeking out broader transformational solutions drawing on a wide range of inputs, and making adjustments as needed. To emphasize this commitment, GPEI should incorporate a broader range of independent voices in governing bodies to challenge ideas and assumptions and be open to both big and small changes. The programme must also be willing to address root causes of problems when they are identified. Superficial changes that leave underlying issues unresolved will lead to organizational stagnation and stakeholder frustration. Every level of the partnership must demonstrate sincere commitment to change to sustain stakeholder confidence.

▎PRIORITIZATION

STAKEHOLDER PRIORITIZATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The WG received 57 survey responses from stakeholders asked to prioritize the recommendations. Note that a culture of change and the governance outcome of accountability were also included in the list. The figure below shows the *overall* ranking of the priorities for the SC to take into consideration in moving these recommendations forward. Each recommendation that follows also shows how different stakeholder groups prioritized the respective recommendation. A 'Response Scale' legend (see below) shows the rankings from *1 – Not at all important to 5 – Very important*. The average score appears in a gray circle.

Chart showing stakeholder prioritization rankings:

Recommendation	Average score
Accountability for decisions and implementation	4.44
Increase active engagement with endemic and outbreak regions and countries	4.37
Conduct review of management groups	4.25
Culture of change	4.16
Reorient management and strategic roles of the SC	4.04
Reassess the risk and audit role of the FAC	4.00
Improve information management	3.93
Expand POB membership	3.40
Expand SC membership	3.18
Create an independent SC chair	2.93

Response Scale

- 1 = Not at all important
- 2 = Low importance
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Important
- 5 = Very important
- ⬤ Average score

1. EVALUATE EXPANSION OF POB AND SC MEMBERSHIP

Recommendation	Expand POB and SC membership to include country governments, major donors and others.
Problem GPEI needs to address	Independent voices (country, donor and CSO) are missing from GPEI's highest levels of governance. Additional voices can serve to challenge, broaden perspectives and increase accountability. Additionally, there is not a strong platform to hold endemic countries and other high-risk areas accountable for their eradication activities. The POB is not maximizing the potential of its platform to encourage broader stakeholder buy-in, increase advocacy efforts and promote greater accountability across implementing partners. The SC lacks important perspectives in its decision-making processes.
Recommendation details	• Bring in outside governance expertise to explore whether the POB and SC should expand to include representatives from a greater cross-section of GPEI stakeholders. • At a minimum, the POB should expand to include two major donor seats and a seat for each endemic country government, granting them equal decision-making authority and voting rights. » Additionally, the POB should consider expanding one to two seats to either other endemic and outbreak country representatives (political and/or health-related), additional donors, CSOs or others. » An expanded POB would serve more as a traditional board, holding GPEI to account. • POB members should prioritize polio efforts within their organizations and be held accountable by one another for doing so. Members should also determine which specific actions they will be held accountable for. • The mission of the POB should be clearly articulated and understood by its members. Also, the POB should serve as the overarching oversight body for GPEI; must ensure accountability across implementing partners; and must serve as a strong voice for advocacy and mobilizing efforts to reach programme goals and objectives. • SC meetings focused on strategy discussions (as opposed to management discussions) should include and be open to an expanded set of stakeholders with clearly articulated roles and responsibilities within that extended meeting. Examples may include representatives from endemic and outbreak country governments, donors, the broader immunization community (including civil society) and potentially others. » The role of the additional stakeholders should be clearly defined, including whether they have equal decision-making authority and voting rights. » Bring in outside governance expertise to explore different options for an expanded SC more in-depth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. EVALUATE EXPANSION OF POB AND SC MEMBERSHIP

Timing	• This recommendation should be implemented as soon as feasible; however, it is important to receive further governance expertise in order to ensure that an expanded POB and SC will include the right voices and move the programme towards eradication. • The role of the expanded POB should be considered in conjunction with an expanded SC, to ensure they serve different but complementary purposes and that the POB is adequately holding the SC to account.

Governance outcome

Country focus:

• Country voices will be included at the highest level of governance.

• There will be more opportunities to hold endemic and other high-risk areas accountable.

Accountability:

• The POB will have greater engagement with key stakeholders, with members holding one another accountable for prioritizing and advocating for polio eradication.

Continuous improvement:

• Overall, there will be greater commitment, involvement and advocacy from POB members.

• An expanded SC will strengthen the SC's advisory and decision-making role to continually ensure the programme is fit for purpose to reach eradication.

Transparency:

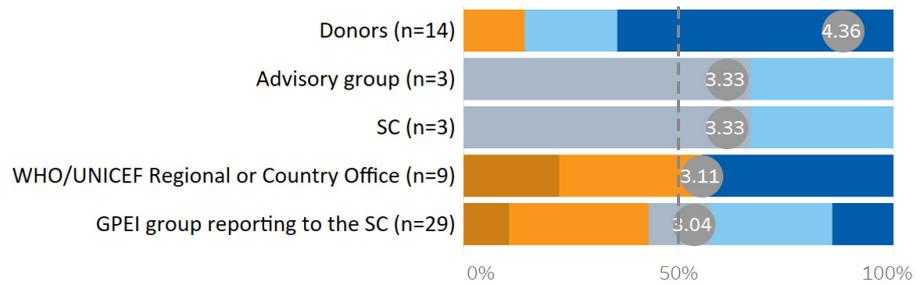• More stakeholders will be engaged at the highest level of governance and in the programme's decision-making process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

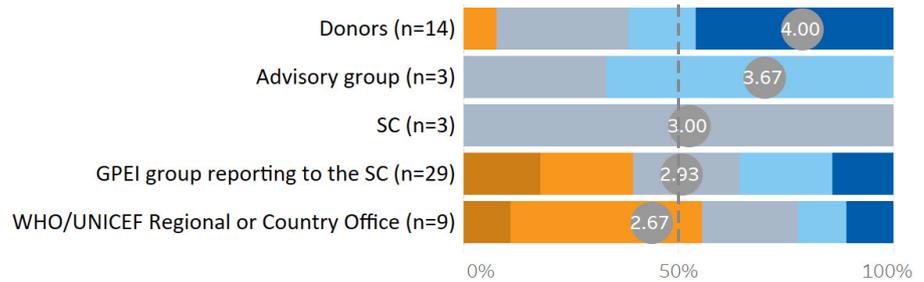## 1. EVALUATE EXPANSION OF POB AND SC MEMBERSHIP

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Stakeholder prioritization

Expanded POB membership:

Donors (n=14)	4.36
Advisory group (n=3)	3.33
SC (n=3)	3.33
WHO/UNICEF Regional or Country Office (n=9)	3.11
GPEI group reporting to the SC (n=29)	3.04

0%   50%   100%

Expanded SC membership:

Donors (n=14)	4.00
Advisory group (n=3)	3.67
SC (n=3)	3.00
GPEI group reporting to the SC (n=29)	2.93
WHO/UNICEF Regional or Country Office (n=9)	2.67

0%   50%   100%

2. REORIENT MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGIC ROLES OF THE SC

Recommendation	Restructure and rebalance the SC's strategy and management roles to ensure the day-to-day management of the programme does not impede the SC's strategy and decision-making responsibilities.
Problem GPEI needs to address	Stakeholders strongly agree that the SC needs much greater focus on setting the programme's strategic guidance and direction. This must be balanced with the implementation and management required to ensure progress is made or course corrections are timely and completed. Currently, there is a lack of coordination among the management groups and the SC does not have the capacity to act as a liaison across all of them.

Recommendation details	• The SC should consider creating a strong Secretariat or Programme Management Office (PMO) function that would gather, analyse and synthesize information across the management groups, regional offices, FAC, country-level stakeholders and technical experts on behalf of the SC.
	
	  » The Secretariat/PMO could act as the ongoing administrative/operational arm of the SC, thus freeing up SC capacity to focus on pressing strategic questions and decisions. This would enable SC members to make better-informed decisions without having to take on the coordination role themselves.
	
	• At a minimum, the SC should alternate the focus of its meetings between management and strategy:
	
	  » Management-focused meetings (facilitated by a Secretariat/PMO function) could focus on programme risks, accountability, implementation and other management aspects of the programme.
	
	  » In alternating meetings, the SC should focus on strategic decisions (as opposed to management decisions), and consider including an expanded set of stakeholders (see recommendation 1), to be more strategy focused.

Timing	• This recommendation should be implemented as soon as possible; however, this will require careful consideration and implementation and should be done in concert with an independent review of management groups (see recommendation 4).

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. REORIENT MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGIC ROLES OF THE SC

Governance outcome

Continuous improvement:

- A PMO will be able to focus more energy on information management, which will provide the SC with reliable information to inform decisions.
- The PMO's focus on the day-to-day management of the programme will improve coordination across the management groups and other key stakeholders so the programme can be more efficient and effective.
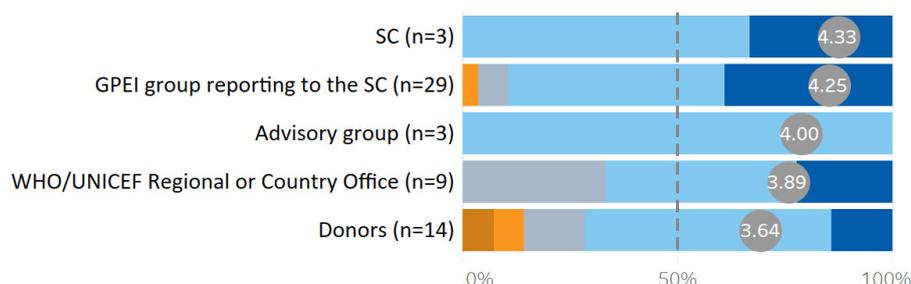- The SC will be able to focus more of its efforts on GPEI strategy.

Transparency:

- A stronger management function will increase transparency because the planning and implementation steps will be very clear.

Accountability:

- Better management of the programme will also bolster the programme's ability to track progress and hold stakeholders to account.

Stakeholder prioritization

SC (n=3)	4.33
GPEI group reporting to the SC (n=29)	4.25
Advisory group (n=3)	4.00
WHO/UNICEF Regional or Country Office (n=9)	3.89
Donors (n=14)	3.64

0%   50%   100%

3. REASSESS THE RISK AND AUDIT ROLE OF THE FAC

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Recommendation	Strengthen the FAC's risk and audit role to have better alignment between programme and financial goals.
Problem GPEI needs to address	There needs to be more integration between the finances and the programmatic work as well as a stronger audit and risk function. The name of this group includes accountability, but the FAC does not monitor overall programme risk and progress. The accountability role of the FAC needs to be defined, as does how accountability will be reported and monitored. The FAC should improve its budget flexibility and tracking during outbreaks and focus on forward-thinking and contingency planning.
Recommendation details	• The FAC should ensure that there is alignment between finances and programmatic goals. 　» The FAC should share more financial analyses and reports, particularly pertaining to linkages between finances and programmatic decisions. 　» The FAC should provide information on finances to donors in advance of discussions with the SC and POB. • The FAC needs to report on the programmatic and financial risks associated with budgetary decisions and propose mitigation strategies. 　» Programmatic risks should not only be presented to the POB, but also to donors and other key stakeholders. • As part of its risk assessment function, the FAC should be expansive in its risk assessments, and advise on operational, reputational and other partnership-wide risks it perceives. • The FAC should provide more resource mobilization reports to donors, with additional details on existing funding bottlenecks and specific requests to donors aimed at closing gaps.
Timing	• FAC recommendations should be implemented in the near term.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. REASSESS THE RISK AND AUDIT ROLE OF THE FAC

Governance outcome

Transparency:
- The FAC will increase reporting on financial decisions, associated risks, and resource mobilization to enhance transparency of the programme's finances.
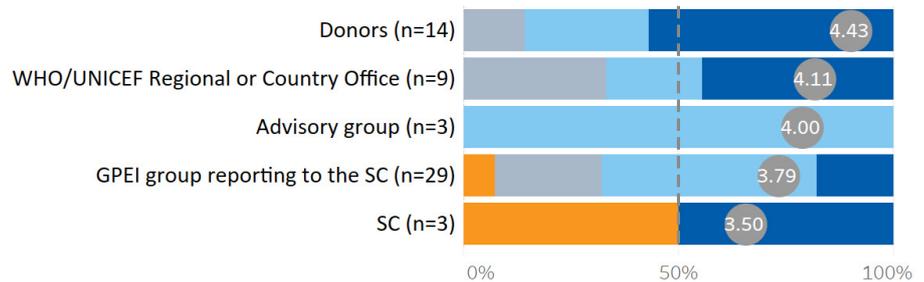
Accountability:
- The FAC will have an improved audit role to ensure the finances align with the programme's strategy and decisions.

Continuous improvement:
- The FAC will be more flexible: adjusting its budget in the event of outbreaks, changing strategies, and changing global context (e.g., COVID-19).

Stakeholder prioritization

Donors (n=14)		4.43
WHO/UNICEF Regional or Country Office (n=9)		4.11
Advisory group (n=3)		4.00
GPEI group reporting to the SC (n=29)		3.79
SC (n=3)		3.50

0%   50%   100%

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. CONDUCT REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT GROUPS

Recommendation	Conduct an internal and external review of management groups reporting to the SC to ensure strategic alignment, streamlined operations and implementation of recommendations.
Problem GPEI needs to address	GPEI has created new groups and dissolved others since the last management review in 2014. The organization and structure of the management groups may be outdated given strategy and programmatic changes. In particular, stakeholders want to assess the roles of the GPEI Hub, EOMG (Eradication and Outbreak Management Group) and PPG (Polio Partners Group).

Recommendation details	• The partnership or external participants (as appropriate) should review the purpose and mandate of each group and identify ways to make decision-making more transparent, more nimble, and more open to new ideas and increased participation.
	
	• The EOMG and GPEI Hub for the endemics should be reviewed, due to the more recent establishment of the Hub. Additional clarity is needed on how the Hub fits into the overall governance structure.
	
	  » The Hub should develop explicit roles and responsibilities and clearly define when it will make decisions alone versus consulting with or informing other groups.
	
	  » A review process of the EOMG should be started internally and the EOMG's mandate going forward should be considered once the Hub role is clarified.
	
	  » With the introduction of the GPEI Hub, stakeholders have suggested that the EOMG should shift its focus to outbreaks, allowing the Hub to coordinate eradication efforts in the endemics.

4. CONDUCT REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT GROUPS

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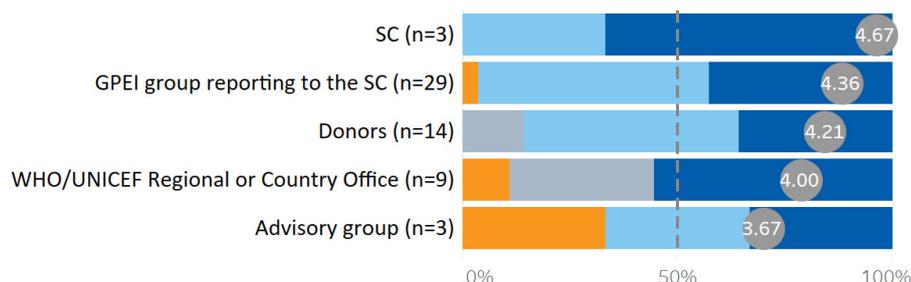|	

Recommendation details (cont.)	• The review should reevaluate the role of the PPG, particularly if the POB is expanded to include donors.
	
	  » This should include an assessment of how GPEI can most effectively relay information to all donors and receive input from the donor community.
	
	  » Most stakeholders agree that the PPG should not be removed entirely, but should be separated from the governance structure and that GPEI should review and affirm the purpose of the group.
	
	• External governance experts should support the management review, with a mission of providing greater clarity on the various groups' roles and interactions and streamlining the overall GPEI structure.
	
	  » These external stakeholders should support GPEI in the implementation of the recommendations in this report.
	
	• Conduct an internal review of the SC, FAC, POB and management groups' terms of reference to ensure that all bodies are adhering to agreed-upon roles and responsibilities.
	
	  » Adjust the terms of reference, where needed, and remind groups of their agreed-upon responsibilities.

Timing	• An external review of the groups should begin immediately and be done in parallel with the GPEI strategy revision. • An internal review of the terms of reference should also begin immediately.
Governance outcome	**Continuous improvement:** • The management groups will have clear mandates and adhere to their roles and responsibilities. • The structure of the groups will be modified as needed to align with the evolving strategy and needs of the programme.
Stakeholder prioritization	SC (n=3) — 4.67 GPEI group reporting to the SC (n=29) — 4.36 Donors (n=14) — 4.21 WHO/UNICEF Regional or Country Office (n=9) — 4.00 Advisory group (n=3) — 3.67 0% 50% 100%

5. INCREASE ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH ENDEMIC AND OUTBREAK REGIONS AND COUNTRIES

Recommendation	Develop a plan to increase two-way communication between POB/ SC members and regional and country teams.
Problem GPEI needs to address	The SC and POB should be more engaged with regional and country offices and develop clearer and more consistent channels of communication. This would improve accountability and programme implementation and address new challenges as they emerge. Donors are frustrated that local governments are not involved in the decision-making process to develop better country-specific solutions and address challenges such as vaccine-derived poliovirus (VDPV) outbreaks. Workshop attendees stated that some country stakeholders feel impeded from participating in decisions. Additionally, programmatic decisions are not always clearly communicated to regional, country and local stakeholders, leading to a lack of accountability and follow-through. There needs to be more substantive engagement by the countries and clear expectations of the government at all levels. The role of countries in the decision-making process must be clarified.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. INCREASE ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH ENDEMIC AND OUTBREAK REGIONS AND COUNTRIES

Recommendation details	• Review the current level of engagement with regional and country teams and identify communication and relationship gaps. • Develop an engagement plan for both POB and SC members to have a clear understanding of the timing, type and level of engagement with government and country-level partnership staff, particularly in endemic and outbreak countries, that would benefit the programme. 　» Create a running 12-month strategic plan with specific touchpoints to increase engagement and planning between the POB and SC and various stakeholders, especially regional and country focal points. • Develop or leverage clear communication channels that allow information to flow in both directions. • Use each country's National Emergency Action Plan (NEAP) as a mechanism to evaluate country and partners' performance and hold them accountable. • Provide more regular, concise and insightful feedback on programmatic challenges to regional and country teams and proactively use other agency-specific country visits to consider polio issues as needed. 　» In the context of COVID-19, consider how to integrate GPEI efforts with other stakeholders and programmes to continue to support polio eradication efforts. • Better understand what countries deem necessary to eradicate polio in their respective countries. • Establish regular touchpoints or other mechanisms to gather consistent input. • Evaluate which functions would be better planned and implemented at a regional and country level (e.g., campaigns, surveillance) and which functions need to be performed at a global level (e.g., vaccine management, resource mobilization, programme risk management). • Empower on-the-ground staff and leaders to drive decision-making at the local level wherever possible.
Timing	• Most elements of this recommendation should be implemented immediately; however, evaluating which functions to assign to regional and country levels should be done concurrently with the strategy review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. INCREASE ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH ENDEMIC AND OUTBREAK REGIONS AND COUNTRIES

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Governance outcome

Country focus:
- Country and regional voices will be considered in decision-making processes.
- GPEI will be actively engaged with countries to stay up to date on eradication efforts and challenges.
- GPEI will communicate decisions and updates down to the country level and work with local stakeholders on implementation.

Accountability:
- Increased engagement will improve accountability for implementation and reaching key milestones.
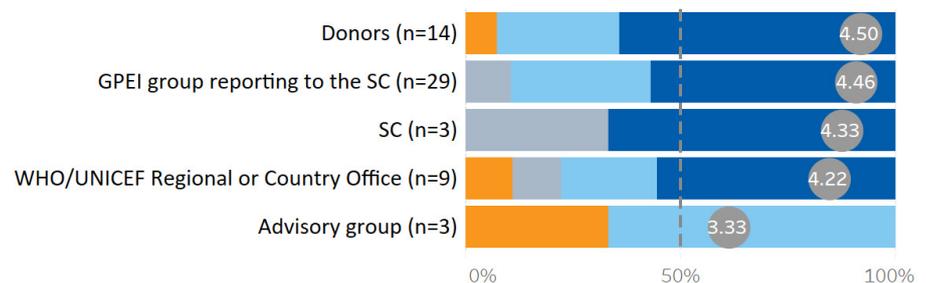
Continuous improvement:
- A better understanding of what is happening at the country and regional level will allow GPEI to adapt its programme and strategy to the evolving challenges of polio eradication.

Transparency:
- Country and regional stakeholders will have better insight into the programme's decision-making process.

Stakeholder prioritization

Donors (n=14)	4.50
GPEI group reporting to the SC (n=29)	4.46
SC (n=3)	4.33
WHO/UNICEF Regional or Country Office (n=9)	4.22
Advisory group (n=3)	3.33

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6. CREATE AN INDEPENDENT SC CHAIR

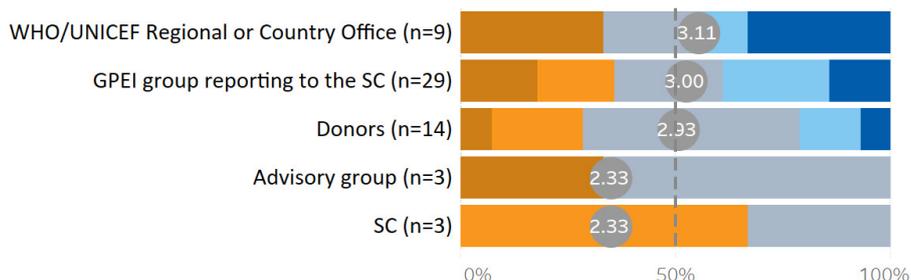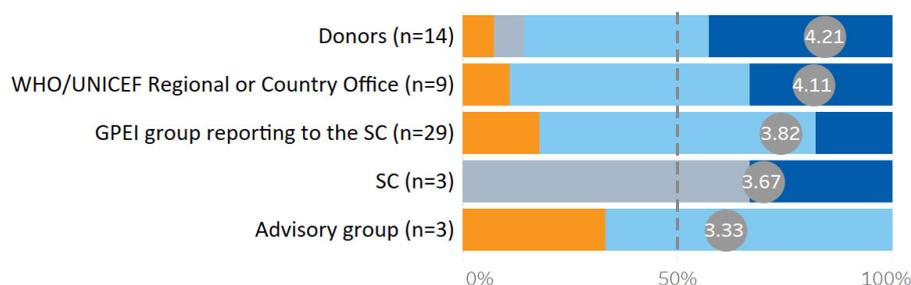|	
Recommendation	Establish an independent SC chair to objectively facilitate discussion on strategy and management.
Problem GPEI needs to address	There is not enough deliberation on strategic decisions or risk assessments, raising the danger of groupthink and lack of orthogonal or oppositional voices.
Recommendation details	• Institute an independent chairperson to bring an outside perspective, push for new thinking, and change some of the historical practices of the SC. • Consider instituting a formal 'devil's advocate' role in SC meetings to ensure that opposing viewpoints are raised and issues are explored and vetted more fully.
Timing	• An independent SC chair could be appointed immediately.
Governance outcome	**Continuous improvement:** • An independent chairperson will strengthen the SC's advisory and decision-making role to continually ensure the programme is fit for purpose to reach eradication. **Accountability:** • An independent chair will hold SC members accountable to ensure thorough deliberation of decisions.
Stakeholder prioritization	

Stakeholder prioritization

- WHO/UNICEF Regional or Country Office (n=9): 3.11
- GPEI group reporting to the SC (n=29): 3.00
- Donors (n=14): 2.33
- Advisory group (n=3): 2.33
- SC (n=3): 2.33

0%   50%   100%

7. IMPROVE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Recommendation	Strengthen information management to improve transparency and understanding of the programme's structures, decision-making processes and flow of information.
Problem GPEI needs to address	Better information management is needed to clarify roles and responsibilities of the various GPEI groups and to have greater insight into information flows between groups.
Recommendation details	• Make improvements to GPEI's website, as well as documenting practices, timing and other managerial aspects of key decision-making bodies, so others understand how and when decisions are made. » Provide a "GPEI 101" tutorial with an overview of the GPEI partnership, processes, and website (i.e., where materials are located) to point stakeholders to the most important information about processes and materials. • Map out the SC's operational and decision-making practices as well as information flow between groups, with emphasis on information sharing with stakeholders and country and regional teams. • Update the management structure diagram to include all relevant GPEI groups (including Technical Advisory Groups and the Independent Monitoring Board) and specify which groups are advisory and which are decision-making bodies.
Timing	• These recommendations should be implemented in the near term and updated after a management review is conducted.
Governance outcome	**Transparency:** • Stakeholders will have a clear understanding of GPEI structure and processes, leading to better transparency and more trust. **Accountability:** • With clearer decision-making processes, it will be easier to hold specific people to account for implementation and tracking key milestones.
Stakeholder prioritization	

Donors (n=14) — 4.21
WHO/UNICEF Regional or Country Office (n=9) — 4.11
GPEI group reporting to the SC (n=29) — 3.82
SC (n=3) — 3.67
Advisory group (n=3) — 3.33

0% 50% 100%

▌RECOMMENDATIONS

8. COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

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Recommendation	Improve communications so that all relevant stakeholders are up to date on the activities, progress and challenges of the programme.
Problem GPEI needs to address	Stakeholders are concerned that decisions do not make it down to the country and regional levels. Stakeholders also agree that it is unclear who is accountable for implementing decisions after they are made. Donors want to receive more timely information before meetings and before decisions happen.
Recommendation details	• Ensure that pre-reads are sent at least a week in advance of SC, FAC and POB meetings; explain in terms of reference when and how pre-reads and meeting minutes will be distributed to stakeholders. • Clearly articulate which decisions are to be discussed in advance of meetings and – following each meeting – which decisions were taken. • Provide meeting minutes with a summary of decisions made, action items and a responsible person for each; review the previous meeting's minutes at the following meeting. • Increase communication on behalf of the POB to stakeholders in endemic and outbreak countries on a regular basis. • Draft a document that clarifies the SC's decision-making timeline and process to monitor progress and outline the steps following a decision; include explicit responsibilities and milestones to be achieved. • Implement more regular partnership-wide communications from the SC to its management groups and partners (to facilitate greater information sharing and visibility across teams and partners).
Timing	• These recommendations should be implemented in the near term and updated after a management review is conducted.
Governance outcome	**Transparency:** • Donors will be more informed of the key decision points in advance of meetings and updated on implementation plans and other GPEI activities. **Country focus:** • Once decisions are made, they will be clearly communicated to necessary regional and country counterparts. There will also be follow-up to improve collaboration and implementation.
Stakeholder prioritization	This recommendation was not included in the survey to prioritize recommendations, so there is no data available.

INTEGRATION

Goal Two of the Polio Endgame Strategy 2019–2023 is integration. Multiple stakeholders requested that integration be more fully explored in this review process.

Goal Two is based on two core assumptions:

1. Collaboration with other public health actors beyond GPEI can help the partnership achieve and sustain eradication.

2. GPEI assets, knowledge and expertise can be leveraged to support immunization, health systems and emergency response.

Integration efforts may be targeted toward country-level partners, civil society organizations (CSOs) and nongovernmental organizations. There is not yet any systematic plan in place to engage these partners, and there are many examples of integration proposals from country-level partners that are not being addressed due to funding constraints, complexities and a lack of coordination, thus limiting (and potentially discouraging) country buy-in. There must be incentives for two programmes to work together, and such incentives are difficult to discern today.

COVID-19 has presented logistical challenges that will hamper eradication efforts. As a result, however, GPEI has been forced to consider innovative ways to incorporate integration into its strategy and create better-integrated delivery systems. Stakeholders suggest that COVID-19 has jump-started integration efforts in many other agencies and partners, signalling an opportune time for GPEI to put integration at the forefront of its strategic efforts.

Suggestions that surfaced from the second workshop and prioritization survey pertaining to integration:

1. The SC should have a stance on how to use opportunities presented by COVID-19 to move forward on integration.

2. GPEI should define the POB's and SC's roles on integration.

3. GPEI should develop a unified, consistent message for governments and country-level actors on integration.

4. GPEI should explore ways that the more recent partnership with Gavi can help improve integration.

5. GPEI should assess opportunities to improve integration with the GPEI Planning and Facilitation Group (PFG) in terms of improving coordination and communication with Essential Immunization and Health Services.

6. GPEI should identify key external partners for initial integration efforts.

The importance of integration surfaced on numerous occasions throughout the review process. It is apparent that GPEI will need to further develop recommendations pertaining to integration as part of the ongoing strategy review.

▍CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The donor community is supportive of GPEI and its work. Though this review explored the possibility, no one suggested that GPEI should be dismantled and rebuilt from the ground up. The history, momentum, institutional knowledge and capabilities of the partnership are unparalleled, and stakeholders are eager to see the partnership succeed. However, stakeholders want substantive changes within the partnership related to role clarity, accountability, and considering new perspectives. This review emphasizes stakeholders' concerns with some of GPEI's operations and structures across all levels of the programme and presents some ways forward to address them. GPEI must commit to a strong culture of change to implement these recommendations and improve the programme's accountability, transparency, country engagement and ownership, as well as the ability to continuously improve. GPEI must also refocus its integration efforts, which will allow GPEI to support immunization, health systems and emergency response in the near term, particularly in the wake of COVID-19, as well as in the long-term, cementing its legacy in a post-polio world.

GPEI's donors, stakeholders and partners are rooting for its success, and seeing demonstrable progress on these recommendations will strengthen their commitment and resolve to achieve a polio-free world.

As immediate next steps, the Strategy Committee needs to:

- reflect on recommendations and determine how to move forward;

- consult with the POB on its conclusions and course of action;

- develop an implementation workplan;

- follow up (as soon as possible) with donors and other stakeholders, outlining which steps are to be taken and what the implementation workplan (and timeline) looks like; and

- provide regular updates to the programme and stakeholders on the progress of the implementation workplan.

It is critical that GPEI leadership follow through on the steps listed above to ensure that this is a substantial, serious effort – and demonstrate that change is welcome within the partnership because eradication goals may be at risk with the partnership's current structure and practices.