

GFF Approach to Strengthening Country Data Systems and Monitoring Performance of GFF Strategy

OVERVIEW

Earlier this year, the GFF Secretariat drafted a Results Measurement Framework with advice and guidance from the Results Advisory Group. The Results Measurement Framework articulates the GFF's approach to strengthening country systems for data generation, quality and use and monitoring the performance of GFF's 2021-2025 Strategy. This paper provides a concise summary of the GFF's approach to strengthening country data systems and monitoring performance of its strategy, with the full Results Measurement Framework document available for review as part of the supporting material. While the Results Measurement Framework represents a new written summary, the main content reflects what the GFF has been implementing over the course of the current strategy period as a core part of its strategy and operating model.

ACTION REQUESTED

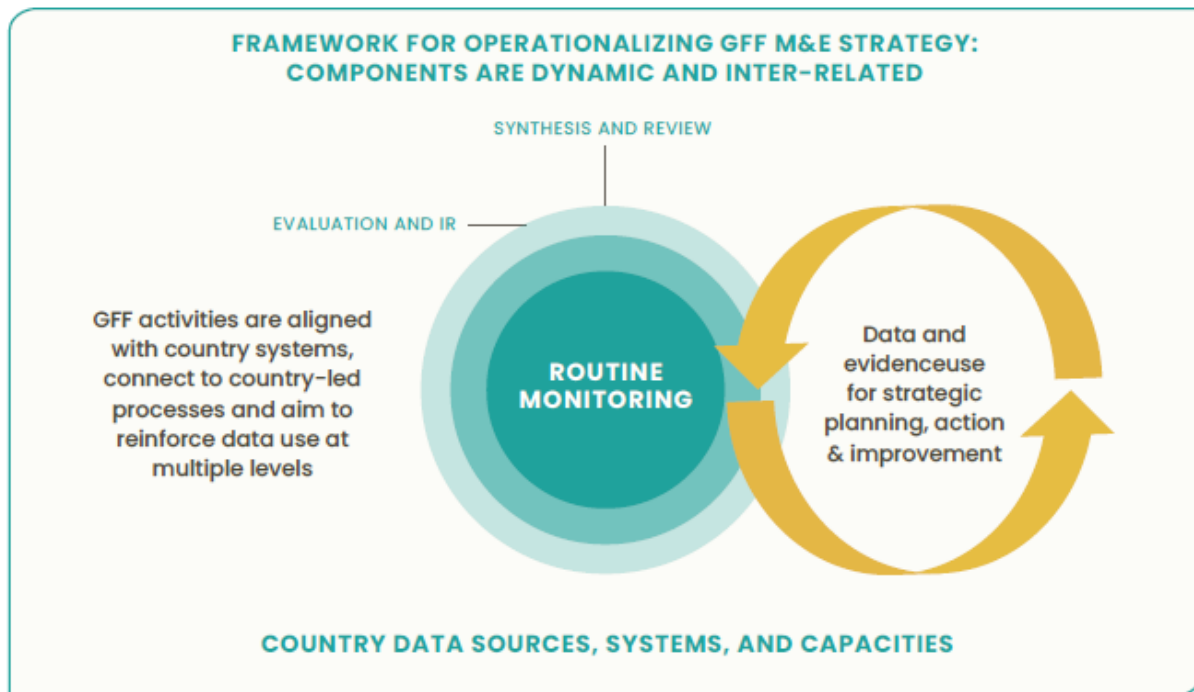
The Investors Group (IG) is requested to provide feedback on the GFF approach to strengthening country data systems and monitoring performance of its strategy as summarized in this paper and articulated further in the GFF Results Measurement Framework. This feedback will be considered now and as part of next steps in the development of the GFF Strategy 2026-2030.

RESULTS MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

The Results Measurement Framework reflects the country-orientation of the GFF model and provides a structure for examining GFF's contribution to progress, recognizing that improvements achieved are led by and belong to the countries. It is grounded on the GFF Logic Model and the GFF Strategic Direction on results (Strategic Direction 5). Core to the GFF results strategy is a data-driven approach to developing and implementing country investment cases including prioritized reforms to strengthen primary health care (PHC) systems and reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health and nutrition outcomes (RMNCAH-N). This approach also involves supporting countries to use data and learnings from rapid-cycle analytics and implementation research for planning, identifying solutions to health system challenges, improving the financial sustainability of health system investments, and for monitoring and accountability purposes.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual underpinnings of the GFF results strategy, centered on alignment with country systems, promotion of country leadership, and a recognition of the dynamic interrelationships between data generation, analysis, data use, system strengthening, and country capacity building.

FIGURE 1. | GFF Results Strategy: Strengthening country capacity for collecting, analyzing, and using evidence.



The GFF Measurement Framework encompasses four interlinked components allowing for a holistic and flexible monitoring approach, given wide variation in the country investment cases and GFF supported activities. These four components are:

1. Overall performance assessment towards the GFF Strategy (2021-2025) based on the GFF logic model and supported by the Key Performance Indicators
2. Country specific monitoring tailored to country investment cases and country projects co-financed with the World Bank
3. Activities to strengthen country data sources, systems, and capacities
4. Analysis of cross-cutting thematic areas core to the GFF Strategy and relevant to all GFF partner countries.

Each of these components is described further below.

Component 1: Overall performance assessment toward GFF strategy

This component of the framework describes three sets of standardized indicators tracked across the portfolio to assess the overall performance of the GFF strategy: impact, outcomes, and strategy key performance indicators, as illustrated in Figure 2.

GFF CORE MONITORING INDICATORS, 3 DOMAINS

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| IMPACT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adolescent birth rate 2. % of births < 24 months after preceding birth 3. Maternal mortality ratio 4. Stillbirth rate |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Neonatal mortality rate 6. Under-five mortality rate 7. Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe) 8. Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe) |

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| OUTCOMES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ANC4 2. IFA supplementation at ANC 3. Institutional deliveries 4. Kangaroo Mother Care 5. Early initiation of breastfeeding 6. Postnatal care (for women and babies) 7. Exclusive breastfeeding (<6 months) 8. Immediate postpartum family planning 9. Couple Years Protection |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Penta 3 11. ORS and zinc 12. Vitamin A supplementation (2 dose) 13. Careseeking for symptoms of ARI 14. Minimum acceptable diet 15. Share of government expenditure to health 16. Budget execution 17. Expenditure to frontline providers 18. Out of pocket expenditure |

STRATEGIC DIRECTION



The Results Measurement Framework includes reference sheets that describe each indicator definition and how they are tracked in more detail. To facilitate transparent access to results, the GFF publishes values on its publicly available data portal.¹

Component 2: Country specific monitoring tailored to country-led investment cases and projects

Central to the GFF model is recognition that no one-size-fits-all approach to measuring progress will work, given variations in health systems and the epidemiological, demographic, economic and political conditions across the GFF supported countries. Countries lead the development, implementation, and regular reviews of investment cases that are uniquely tailored to their situations and contexts. The GFF provides guidance on how to prepare investment cases and associated results frameworks and provides technical support to countries on how to collect, analyze and use data on investment case implementation. These results frameworks are owned and led by countries—GFF support for their development and use is oriented toward strengthening national and sub-national systems and processes, rather than meeting donor-specific needs.

¹ <https://data.gffportal.org/>

The GFF also prepares investment summaries for every partner country, which contain indicators for assessing the value-add of GFF supported activities, co-financed projects, and reforms being implemented. Data for these indicators usually come from country routine monitoring systems and are updated annually through the public-access GFF data portal. Documentation on investment cases and World Bank co-financed projects is also available on country-specific pages on the GFF data portal.

The GFF Secretariat supports countries in adapting their investment cases and associated results frameworks as needed—for example when a new co-financed World Bank project is introduced, when countries revise activities based on new priorities or in response to findings from progress assessments. Key Performance Indicator 13 in the Strategy Measurement Framework tracks progress in strengthening these country-led results frameworks.

Component 3: Activities to strengthen country data sources, systems and capacities

Central to the GFF agenda and to Strategic Direction 5 is enhancement of country capacity to collect, analyze, monitor, and use their own data for investment case monitoring and beyond. In the long term, improved country analytical capacity will foster better data use and evidence-based decision making, leading to more sustainable outcomes. High quality country data will also translate into better data for monitoring overall GFF performance.

To achieve these objectives, GFF is investing in country health information systems, including civil registration and vital statistics systems (CRVS), health management information systems (HMIS), maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response (MPDSR) systems as well as health financing systems. Increasingly, the GFF is also investing in strengthening country data sources related to supply chain and human resources for health.

The GFF delivers on this support through a partnership approach. While many partnership initiatives are important to the GFF results strategy, three that are particularly noteworthy include:

- Countdown to 2030.² In partnership with Countdown to 2030, the GFF helps connects public health institutions, ministries of health and GFF liaison officers to assess progress of country programs and investment cases and to strengthen country analytical capacity. One specific benchmark of the collaboration, which is the focus of Key Performance Indicator 14, is to support countries to strengthen a regular process for updating their RMNCAH-N coverage and equity analysis annually, based on all available data sources.
- Frequent Assessments and Systems Tools for Resilience (FASTR).³ Through FASTR, GFF has worked with multiple partners to support countries to design and conduct timely, rigorous and low cost approaches to monitoring primary health care and RMNCAH-N service delivery, while strengthening underlying capacity and data systems. This includes timely analysis and use of monthly HMIS data, high frequency phone surveys and rapid qualitative follow up research.
- Monitoring & Action for Gender & Equity (MAGE).⁴ Through its MAGE partnership with Johns Hopkins University, the GFF strengthens integration of gender and equity within all of its results measurement and data use activities. The four objectives of MAGE include: 1) strengthening capabilities and services of the GFF Secretariat on gender & equity M&E, 2) increasing access to and uptake of gender & RMNCAH-N data,

² <https://www.countdown2030.org/>

³ <https://data.gffportal.org/key-theme/rapid-cycle-analytics-and-data-use>

⁴ <https://www.mageproject.org/>

tools and evidence, 3) improving engagement with and capacity of GFF countries on gender & equity M&E, and 4) strengthening systems and sustainability at GFF on gender & equity M&E.

Component 3 of the GFF Results Measurement Framework is also supported by the GFF's Implementation Research and Evaluation (IR&E) Strategy,⁵ through which the GFF aims to:

1. Support countries to strengthen their own IR&E processes and systems for generating and using evidence,
2. Advance a country-led learning and improvement agenda in RMNCAH&N, and
3. Contribute to strengthening country accountability for achievement of measurable results.

The GFF engages with countries in a manner that deliberately contributes to building “learning health systems” characterized by strong country leadership in defining priority health system needs and information systems that generate high-quality, timely, relevant, and actionable evidence on these needs. Success of the strategy also means generating evidence and facilitating learning about the GFF model and its approach to country engagement, such that GFF support remains agile and adapts to what works in different contexts.

Component 4: Analysis of cross-cutting thematic areas

While the GFF approach is country centric with investment cases developed by countries based on their own priorities, achieving significant improvements in women's, children's, and adolescents' health, and delivering on the promise of the GFF Strategy (2021-2025) requires attention to each dimension of the RMNCAH-N continuum of care. GFF undertakes sub-national analyses across the GFF portfolio of countries on thematic areas covering the continuum (specifically maternal, newborn, and child health; nutrition; and sexual and reproductive health and rights). Descriptions of these thematic areas and latest analytical results are available on the GFF data portal key themes pages.⁶

Cross-cutting thematic summaries are also available on the data portal for CRVS,⁷ Gender Equality,⁸ Health Financing,⁹ IDA Investments in RMNCAH-N,¹⁰ and Rapid Cycle Analytics and Data Use through the FASTR Initiative.¹¹

Measuring Health Systems Strengthening

The Results Measurement Framework also addresses the cross-cutting question of how the GFF measures health systems strengthening. The overall GFF model operates through an integrated health systems strengthening approach, which informs all aspects of the GFF's work on data and measurement. Seven key principles guide the GFF's efforts to measure health systems strengthening:

1. Collaborate with governments, non-state actors and other development partners to strengthen alignment around country-led priorities and systems
2. Focus on gaps and bottlenecks within the system that are on the critical path to improved outcomes for women, children and adolescents

⁵ <https://www.globalfinancingfacility.org/resource/implementation-research-and-evaluation-strategy>

⁶ <https://data.gffportal.org/key-themes>

⁷ <https://data.gffportal.org/key-theme/civil-registration-and-vital-statistics-crvs>

⁸ <https://data.gffportal.org/key-theme/gender-equality>

⁹ <https://data.gffportal.org/key-theme/health-financing>

¹⁰ <https://data.gffportal.org/key-theme/ida-investments-rmncah-n>

¹¹ <https://data.gffportal.org/key-theme/rapid-cycle-analytics-and-data-use>

3. Work through national and, where relevant, sub-national systems and processes, in an institutionalized manner
4. Invest in strengthening country systems and capacities
5. Partner with and build upon local expertise, especially within Ministries of Health and among local research & technical institutions
6. Focus on timely data use for systems improvement
7. Integrate gender & equity

The GFF operationalizes this approach through the following actions.

At country level, the GFF:

- Facilitates countries to develop theories of change and results frameworks for Investment Cases and World Bank co-financed projects, with inclusion of prioritized indicators and measurement approaches to track key systems reforms and how they influence women, children and adolescents health, as well as gender and equity.
- Invests in strengthening routine data systems, sources and capacities.
- Engages with national M&E units within Ministries of Health and other government agencies where relevant to connect its investments to national M&E systems and processes.
- Partners with local research and technical institutions to help strengthen country analytical capacity, together with Countdown to 2030.
- Supports implementation research and evaluation (IR&E) of key reforms and strengthening actions prioritized in Investment Cases and co-financed projects to address knowledge gaps and enable learning.
- Implements rapid cycle analytic and data use approaches through the FASTR initiative, to help countries assess and strengthen Primary Health Care systems and RMNCAH-N service delivery in a timely manner.
- Supports country platforms to regularly use data and evidence to inform decision-making.

At strategy-wide level

- Tracks measurable progress in health systems strengthening investments within and across supported countries through its Strategy Key Performance Indicators and Logic Model.
- Generates knowledge and advances cross-country learning on health systems strengthening through its Knowledge & Learning function.
- Facilitates transparent access to information about key reforms and health systems strengthening actions it is supporting in countries via its publicly accessible data portal

As part of its data portal, the GFF hosts a Primary Healthcare Collaborative Data Hub,¹² with the aim of providing clear, insightful, and interactive data visualizations to help policymakers, health practitioners, researchers, and others understand the status and trends of Primary Health Care within and across different countries. This Hub includes data for all low- and middle-income countries and serves as a global public good, in addition to informing specific investments and engagements by the GFF. Metrics included in the PHC Collaborative Data Hub as well as the FASTR tools are aligned with the common PHC metrics under development as part of the WHO-convened alignment process on PHC measurement, linked to the Lusaka Agenda.

¹² <https://data.gffportal.org/key-theme/phc-collaborative-data-hub>