

# **Session: Alignment Working Group**

## GFF Investors Group Meeting

**November 16, 2021**

# Background

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- The Alignment Working Group (AWG) is a two-year, timebound collaboration between partner countries and donors mandated following discussions about the need to bolster alignment efforts at the 12th GFF Investors Group meeting in March 2021.
- Grounded in the basic alignment tenets of one plan, one budget and one report, the goal of the AWG is to maximize the effectiveness of health spending in order to improve health outcomes by:
  1. **Developing and delivering guidance and policy recommendations** that helps optimize existing country-led processes to enhance alignment and to objectively track progress over time; and
  2. **Operationalizing short and medium-term activities** to assist partner countries to advance their alignment efforts

# AWG membership

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To make the working group small and effective, and ensure that there is a strong representation of partner countries, the members of the AWG represent different constituencies that are part of the GFF Investors Group:

**1. Ministers of health from GFF partner countries**

Four active members: Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Rwanda

Five new members: Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mozambique, Senegal and Sierra Leon

**2. UN (one member)**

World Health Organization

**3. Global health fund (one member)**

Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance

**4. Bilateral agencies (two members)**

United Kingdom and United States

**5. Foundations (one member)**

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

# AWG broad objective, principles and activities

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## Objective:

To advance the alignment agenda at the country level and give **voice to partner countries** in the discussion around how external and domestic financiers can **better align** their support and technical assistance to country priorities and systems.

## Principles:

- ✓ Country leadership
- ✓ Alignment to drive results
- ✓ Evidence driven

## Activities:

- ✓ Political economy analysis
- ✓ Diagnostic exercise guidance
- ✓ Maturity Model

# How we work

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## Meetings

**Health Ministers Network:** meets quarterly to discuss strategic issues related to alignment and provides a space for experience sharing among countries

**AWG Principals Meeting:** meets monthly to track progress against workplan and provide high-level inputs

**AWG Technical Alternates Meeting:** meets bimonthly to work on key activities and review materials delivered by expert consultants

## AWG support

Coordination and documentation of meetings, along with the contracting of consultants, has been provided by a core secretariat of Global Financing Facility staff.

# Political economy of alignment

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Understanding the major drivers and barriers of alignment is an important prerequisite for improving the process. As such, a **political economy analysis** was undertaken to define what works, what does not, and why. Some general takeaways to note include:

1. The health partnership between countries and development partners, particularly the level of alignment, is at different stages in different countries and, even within a particular context, alignment is dynamic and can shift rapidly.
2. Alignment to national priorities is possible only if an adequate enabling environment is in place that both countries and development partners have been actively involved in creating, and which is backed by strong leadership and political will.
3. Understanding the implications of proposed changes is important as they will create friction and impact different parties in many ways. Those facing these disruptions might oppose changes because they do not see how they fit into the process.

# THEORY OF CHANGE ON ALIGNMENT

**Problem:**  
Governments and development partners are failing to work together effectively and efficiently to maximize resource to meet country needs

## Common Barriers



## Inputs

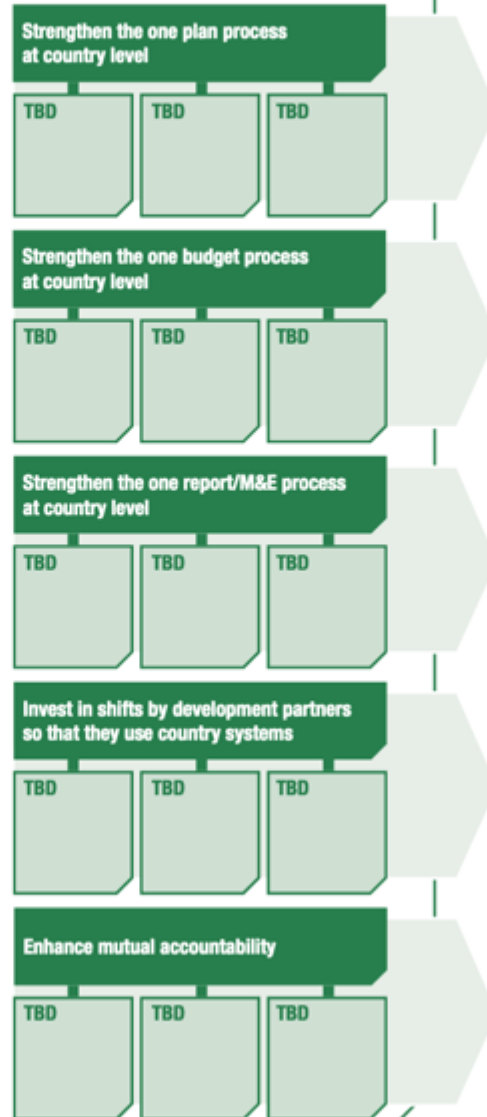
- Invest in country systems through aligned technical assistance and resources
- Use existing tools (UHC2030; OECD/DAC) as well as country-led Maturity Model and Diagnostic Tool
- Enhance global initiatives such as the Alignment Working Group

## Strategic Shift

- Behavioural change by governments to enhance commitment to UHC2030 principles, ownership, coordination and strengthening country systems
- Behavioural change by development partners to enhance alignment
- Functional mutual accountability mechanisms at country and global levels

## Activities

Specific activities will be different from country-to-country due contextual factors as well as alignment status



## Outputs



## Outcome

Enhanced efficiency and value for money

## Impact

Contribution towards improved universal health coverage and reaching the unreached



# **AWG recommendations to enhance alignment**



# Recommendations to enhance alignment

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The proposed alignment framework recommends the use of a *diagnostic exercise* to track the progress of alignment together with a *Maturity Model* to determine the level of alignment and develop improvement mechanisms.

## **Three enablers of success for applying the framework have been identified:**

1. Clarity on tool ownership at global and country levels
2. Strong political will, ideally outside the health sector, to get partners to coalesce around the alignment agenda
3. Operational capacity (e.g., trained staff) at the country level to facilitate and deploy the tool

# Diagnostic exercise

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- The *diagnostic exercise* aims to provide a 'health check' of a country's status against the domains of one plan, one budget, and one report.
- It is intended to be conducted by government and development partners using a set of guiding questions as an entry point for dialogue.
- The goal is to establish a baseline understanding of a country's alignment status and can ultimately be used on a routine basis to track progress overtime.
- It is not intended as a means of conducting cross-country comparisons.
- The exercise is almost entire based on data sources drawn from globally and nationally-accepted processes, as well as specific assessment frameworks like the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability tool.

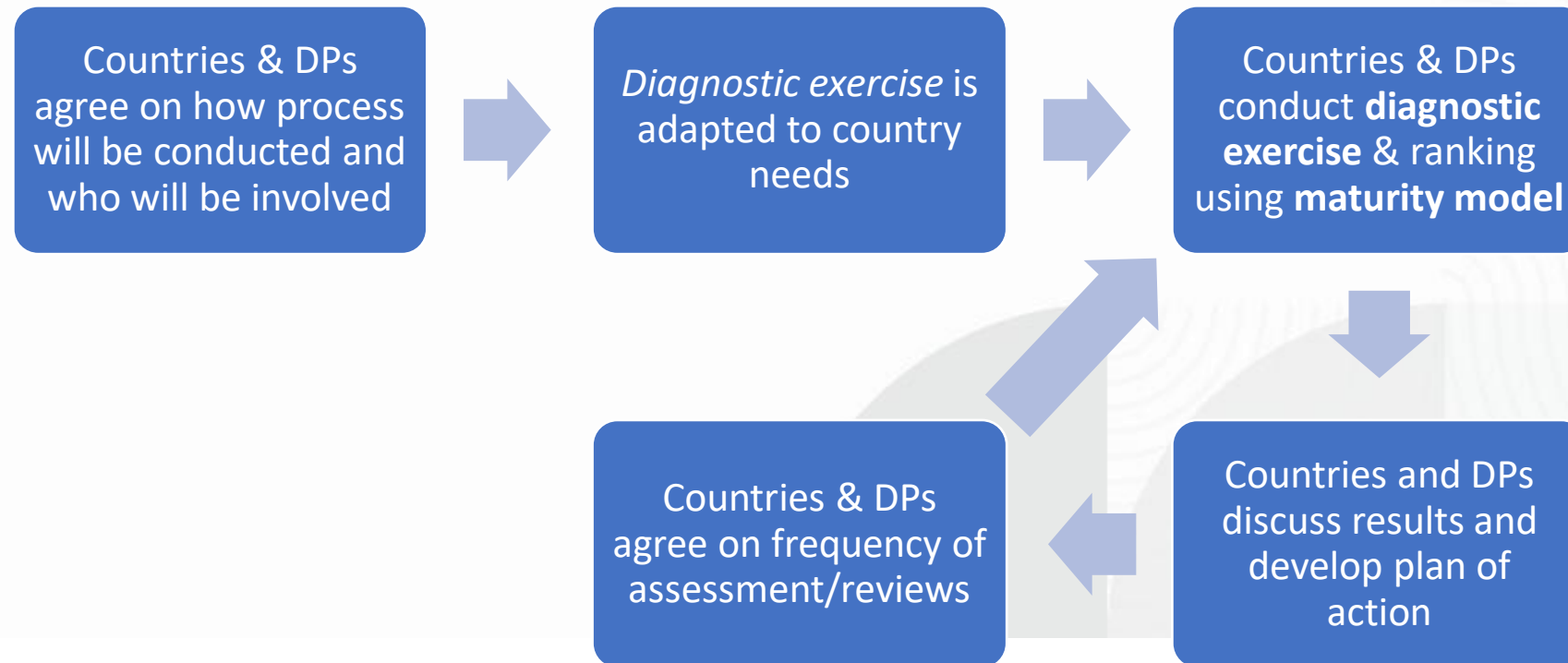
# A 5-level Maturity Model

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- Following on from the initial *diagnostic exercise*, the *Maturity Model* would then be deployed, which proposes the use of several criteria against the three domains (one plan, one budget, one report), each of which has benchmarks that describe country status against a 5-level scale.
- The benchmarks are incremental and hence reflect progress made from one level to the next, or the additional effort required to attain the next level.
- The model is comprised of recognized, tried, and tested indicators to measure alignment.
- The outcomes of questions used during the initial *diagnosis exercise* can be used to interrogate the status of each domain under review. Where several criteria are found to contribute to one outcome, these have been merged for the sake of simplicity.

# Process flow: design to implementation

The *diagnostic exercise* and *Maturity Model* ranking are designed to allow for both self and peer assessment. This will allow for inward and outward reflection of progress and challenges and support meaningful dialogue.



# Way forward

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- ✓ **We request endorsement for this alignment framework to be piloted** in up to eight countries, four of which are already active members of the AWG and have been instrumental in the framework's development.
- ✓ For each pilot country, the process will be:
  - Government-led
  - Overseen by the AWG;
  - Financially supported by IG members; &
  - Technically supported by the GFF secretariate
- ✓ Building on lessons from these pilots, including a potential process evaluation, specific components of the framework will be refined as needed to ensure the groundwork is in placers for successful scale up.