The GFF requires that all country platforms embody two principles of the Business Plan: inclusiveness and transparency. To support countries to operationalize these principles, the GFF has established minimum standards that countries are expected to adhere to. These can be found in the GFF Business Plan Annex 6. “Minimum standards for country platforms”.

To strengthen the minimum standards, civil society organizations (CSOs) engaged in the GFF processes propose expanding on the existing principles of inclusiveness and transparency, and adding principles of independence and accountability. They provide below an enhanced list of Minimum standards for country platforms. The below recommendations result from the CSO Pre Meeting to the Global Financing Facility Learning Meeting, organized by the GFF Investors’ Group CSO representatives, with support from the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health on 14 November 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya. The list reflects perspectives from 45 representatives from 13 countries, including ten of the twelve GFF countries.¹

CSO proposed minimum standards for country platforms:

**Inclusiveness and participation**

1. Key constituencies for the country platform will include: government (both national and decentralised, as relevant); civil society²; private sector; affected populations; technical agencies (H4+ and others); multilateral, bilateral agencies and foundations; parliamentarians, and health care professional associations.

2. Members of the civil society, health care professional associations, private sector (PS), and affected populations constituencies should be selected for membership in the country platform in a participatory and transparent manner. They should be identified by their own constituencies through existing broad, effective, and inclusive platforms, where possible covering the continuum of care. Investor Group (IG) representatives for the relevant constituencies should support countries in the identification of existing national platforms within their constituencies. The identified platforms should develop and make public selection criteria and a selection process. These criteria should include the ability of the selected representative to systematically consult with groups within and outside their constituency for broader consultation.

3. Country platforms will include at least two seats for CSOs, representing broad coalitions. Country platforms should also permit a number of non-member organizations access to meetings and resources through observer status.

4. Country platform constituency members will undertake a process of meaningful, participatory and inclusive consultation with other stakeholders within their constituencies in a manner that provides them with opportunities to express broadly representative views on the GFF’s proposed plans, financing arrangements, implementation and monitoring, and allows the country platform to consider and respond to them. Constituency specific consultations and updates should be organized on an on-going basis and at regular intervals and should be supported financially by the platform. One clearly indicated member for each constituency will act as the focal point for constituency engagement, and will be responsible for developing and implementing the constituency engagement strategy.

5. The country platform will develop and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) for engaging with a broader range of stakeholders that are not part of the country platform. A draft of the SEP will

¹ The list also builds on recommendations in the Population Action International paper RAISING THE BAR: Recommendations to Strengthen the GFF Minimum Standards for Country Platforms to Enhance Participation, Transparency, and Accountability and the outcomes of various PMNCH CSO constituency telephone and online consultations.

² Defined as not-for-profit non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and faith-based organizations
be made public, and the country platform will seek the views of stakeholders that are not members of the country platform on its content and implementation. The SEP might include details on constituency specific outreach, but will go beyond to engage groups that might not be represented on the country platform.

6. Participation in the country platform implies full and active involvement of all constituencies, from the beginning of the process, including:
   a. Preparing and implementing the Investment Case and the health financing strategy, including active participation in meetings, receiving and contributing to the preparation of materials (reviewing and inputting on drafts, being part of planning processes, etc), determining the approach to quality assurance, review drafts, endorsing the final version and implementing activities as relevant.
   b. Agreeing to changes to the Investment Case and/or health financing strategy in the course of implementation.
   c. Determining the approach to technical assistance and capacity building to support implementation of the Investment Case and health financing strategy.
   d. Receiving and reviewing data about performance in the course of implementation.
   e. Reporting on implementation.
   f. Being fully engaged in development and operationalizing of accountability mechanisms for tracking implementation and financing flows.

Transparency

The following documents will be made publicly available on MOH and GFF websites and will be disseminated to a listserve (with voluntary registration) within the following timeframes; for documents approved by the country platform, they will be made public within a month of approval; for meeting summaries and action points, they will be made available within a month of the meeting; and for documents that are being tabled for discussion or review, they will be made available at least two weeks before relevant meetings or deadlines:

1. Country platform operational procedures, including:
   o member selection processes, criteria, length and replacement of members;
   o terms of reference;
   o current list of members (with names/designations and contact details alongside agreed roles and responsibilities);
   o minimum frequency of meetings and timelines for provision of documents ahead of and after meetings;
   o voting rules including quorums; and
   o stakeholder engagement plan.

2. Updates on all meetings and opportunities for input, including:
   o minutes and attendees of meetings at which Investment Cases and health financing strategies were developed (including meeting attendees and documentation explaining decisions around the prioritization of particular interventions/approaches);
   o minutes and attendees of all further meetings, specifically logging agreed actions following implementation reviews of the Investment Case, as well as responsible persons (including their functions- to allow follow up in case of turnover) and timelines for carrying out those actions; and
   o versions of investment cases and documents made available for input, with modality for input and timelines (for instance if placed online for a web-based consultation) – and updated versions including rationale for how input was included or why it was not.

3. The final Investment Case and health financing strategy, including the results framework and the costed implementation plan.

4. Agreements between financiers about which elements each will cover.

5. Final health financing strategies.

6. Disbursement data from each financier and budget analysis of government funds covering allocation, disbursement and utilisation/absorption.

7. Progress reports on the achievement of targets in the results framework, compiled using high-
quality, referenced data and evidence from multiple sources (including independent sources).
8. Evaluation reports, compiled using high-quality, referenced evidence from different sources.
9. Quality and timely progressive reports with articulated evidence based results.

For all country platform meetings, ensuring:

a. All consultation meetings are posted at least 2 weeks in advance on the GFF and MOH websites and through email – including all documents, and a list of participants with emails so that representatives can be reached ahead of time
b. Where possible meetings are available live through webcast for those who want to listen.

**Independence and Accountability**

1. Country Platforms should align their accountability and monitoring processes with other national processes in order to strengthen national capacity for monitoring progress and reporting.
2. Annual health sector reviews should be used as a forum to jointly review Government- and independently-provided reports on GFF results, and should include all constituencies outlined under Inclusiveness and Participation above.
3. An independent annual review of the adherence to the minimum standards above and to the country platforms’ own operational procedures and stakeholder engagement plan should be produced and made public.
4. Should any citizen of the countries where the GFF is implemented, or any member of the country platform, hold a grievance related to the principles above not being respected, they will have final recourse to an ombudsman, according to procedures drafted and made public by the GFF Secretariat. The GFF secretariat will have a redress policy that outlines the consequences of non-compliance to the minimum standards.³
5. The country platform will create an accountability working group to develop an accountability strategy for the implementation of the investment plan. This strategy will take into account centralized and decentralized levels. It will prioritize national and local community-based accountability through the use of scorecards and citizens’ hearings and will also include budget analysis and advocacy. The implementation of this strategy will be funded independently from the GFF.

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³ The GFF secretariat has the fiduciary obligation to ensure that a transparent and accountable process has been followed according to World Bank rules and regulations and may block IDA/Trustfund agreement if a set of agreed upon indicators are not met: these could include for instance stakeholder representation on country platform, timely provision of information, investment case open for public comment etc.