



## Safe Blood Cross-Country In-person Learning Event April 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024

A synthesis report of key learnings and findings



## About the Accelerator

The Health Systems Strengthening Accelerator (Accelerator) is a global health system strengthening initiative, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with co-funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that supports local partners as they find their own pathways to meaningful and lasting health systems change. The Accelerator is led by Results for Development (R4D), with support from Health Strategy and Delivery Foundation (HSDF), headquartered in Nigeria, and ICF. Additional global, regional, and local partners will be selected in partnership with USAID/Office of Health Systems and USAID Missions based on demand.

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### Cover photo

Colleagues from the blood transfusion services of Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda, and Namibia, Accelerator partner countries, are shown here. Credit: Aphrike Studios and Media.

### Disclaimer

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AfBTS	African Blood Transfusion Society
BTD	Blood Transfusion Division
BTS	Blood Transfusion Service

HSDF	Health Strategy and Delivery Foundation
HSS	Health Systems Strengthening
HSSA	Health Systems Strengthening Accelerator
ISBT	International Society for Blood Transfusion
LMIC	Low-and-Middle Income Countries
MBTS	Malawi Blood Transfusion Services
MCHN	Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN)
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MoH	Ministry of Health
NamBTS	Namibia Blood Transfusion Service
NBSP	National Blood Safety Program
R4D	Results for Development
SBAH	Safe Blood Access Hub
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## Executive Summary

From April 23 -25, 2024, the Health Systems Strengthening Accelerator (Accelerator) facilitated concurrent events of action-oriented cross-country learning among the Accelerator Strengthening Safe Blood Systems supported countries, Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda. The Accelerator proposed concurrent learning collaboratives with two groups to optimize time and resources and accommodate different

target audiences for each topic theme. During the concurrent learning events, participants shared successes and best practices on priority technical topics to address key challenges faced by national blood transfusion services (BTSs). The participants worked to develop and foster a network of professionals and experts in safe blood services. The learning event focused on two priority topics: (1) Sustainable and innovative financing for national safe blood services and (2) Generation and use of routine safe blood data for decision-making and performance management.

In addition, we had experts from The African Blood Transfusion Society (AfBTS) and the Namibian Blood Transfusion Services to share their knowledge regarding the inherent complexity of funding blood systems and blood transfusion data. The learning event also served as a platform for sharing and learning from other countries' BTSs and how they have applied and adapted approaches to address priority BTS challenges.

The flagship learning event was held in Windhoek, Namibia. The three-day event, which was held at the Avani Windhoek Hotel and Casino, was informed by the findings from the key informant interviews and priority setting conducted with the blood transfusion services in Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda.

The learning event hosted 20 representatives from the three blood services, along with six (6) representatives from the Namibia Blood Transfusion Service (NamBTS), three (3) representatives from Results for Development (R4D), and two (2) representatives from USAID. Participants were immersed in extensive sessions led by subject-matter experts from the AfBST and NamBTS on topics ranging from principles of cost recovery, domestic resource mobilization for safe blood, use of an investment case, best practices for routine safe blood generation, management and use, the use of blood system data for improved clinical outcome and health system strengthening, and how to build effective and integrated national blood data system. Participants also applied some insights from the expert sessions during the plenary by collaborating to improve safe blood data generation and use and mapping strategies for BTS resources. They also had practical sessions on developing advocacy strategies and messages for their respective BTSs.

Furthermore, the event provided a unique opportunity for participants to tour the NamBTS facilities and hear directly from the executive team on their road from relying on donor funds to full cost recovery. The learning event also provided participants with the opportunity to connect with experts and each other to exchange knowledge and strengthen their capacity by sharing experiences, best practices, and strategies to strengthen their safe blood systems.

This report provides an overview of the key insights from the Safe Blood cross-country learning event. It suggests potential directions for future support to country BTSs through learning initiatives and/or technical assistance.

## Overview of the Accelerator

The Health Systems Strengthening Accelerator (Accelerator) is a five-year initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Health Systems and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Launched in October 2018, this program aims to enhance self-sufficiency in health

systems within low- to middle-income countries (LMICs). Led by Results for Development (R4D), in collaboration with the Health Strategy and Delivery Foundation (HSDF) and ICF, the Accelerator focuses on identifying and addressing critical health system challenges.

The program operates by engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including government officials and local and regional technical organizations. Its goal is to deepen understanding of systemic health issues, pinpoint their root causes, and use global and regional insights to develop contextually appropriate solutions.

Throughout its operation, the Accelerator has established partnerships with USAID Missions and various leaders and partners across countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda, and Togo. It collaborates with several USAID bureaus, including the Asia Bureau, the Office of Maternal Child Health and Nutrition, and the Bureau for Democracy, Development, and Innovation (DDI).

## Overview of the Cross-Country Learning Event

### Context and objective

Supported by the Office of Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN) within USAID's Bureau for Global Health, the USAID Health Systems Strengthening Accelerator (Accelerator) program provides technical assistance to strengthen the national safe blood systems in Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda. Among other interventions, the Accelerator team—comprised of Results for Development (R4D) and the Health Strategy and Delivery Foundation (HSDF)— facilitates cross-country learning among safe blood stakeholders from these countries. This initiative encourages the exchange of strategies, insights, and solutions to address critical challenges in blood systems across these countries.

The Accelerator's collaborative learning approach aims to expedite improvements in safe blood systems. By leveraging country-led, demand-driven learning methods alongside technical assistance provided to national blood services, the program intends to nurture cross-country relationships. This effort enhances experience-sharing and collaborative problem-solving, ultimately supporting stakeholders in their roles involving leadership, decision-making, and oversight to drive significant changes in health systems.

### Topics

Topics for cross-country learning were identified and prioritized by safe blood stakeholders from all three countries through key informant interviews and a co-creation session during the International Maternal Newborn Health Conference (IMNHC) in May 2023, held in Cape Town, South Africa. High-level representatives such as Directors, CEOs, and Medical Directors from the three countries agreed on the following priority topics based on the discussions and emerging themes: (1) sustainable funding sources and strategies; (2) hemovigilance; (3) blood donor recruitment, retention, and management; (4) coordination between the national blood service and regional/district hospitals; and (5) routine data generation, use, and management (covering service delivery and blood donor data).

In August 2020, directors and managers involved with the Accelerator were invited to select priority topics for discussion in the Virtual Learning Sessions (VLS), choosing from a list that reflected the priority



themes and approaches identified in the first two years of the Accelerator's operations. These discussions aimed to enhance the relevance of the sessions to the teams' ongoing work and the overall goals of strengthening health systems in their respective countries.

- BTS Topics from the KIIs include:
  - Financial management/Funding, including capital project
  - Staffing and Human Resource (HR) needs (competency training for HR
  - Quality Assurance/Hemovigilance
  - System Coordination and Alignment
  - Generation and use of safe blood data
  - Procurement of blood system commodities
  - Storage and distribution of blood, blood products and commodities
  - Donor retention strategy for safe blood system
  - Leverage technology to improve safe blood system
  - Hospital Coordination for safe blood system
  - Development of policies and guidelines (Malawi only mentioned)
  - Research and innovation (Rwanda only mentioned)

Following the co-creation session at the International Maternal Newborn Health Conference (IMNHC), the cross-country learning activity was organized around five key themes, namely:

- 1) Funding strategies for sustainable blood transfusion services
- 2) Hemovigilance across the blood transfusion chain
- 3) Blood donor recruitment, management, and retention
- 4) Coordination between the National Blood Service and regional/district hospitals
- 5) Safe blood data generation and use for performance management and decision making

These themes were selected based on the feedback from representatives of the country Blood Transfusion Services (BTSs). This approach ensured that the learning activities were directly aligned with the specific needs and challenges identified by the stakeholder.

From May to September 2023, the facilitation team engaged with country Blood Transfusion Services (BTSs) and Accelerator implementation teams to collaboratively design and plan the webinar sessions. These sessions focused on the most timely and significant sub-topics, identifying relevant examples and speakers to ensure the content was pertinent and engaging. The final concept notes and agendas for these sessions are included in the annex of the report.

### **Format and methodology**

The cross-country learning team (HSDF) hosted webinars from November 2023 – February 2024 that were structured around three priority topics, delivered across three virtual sessions lasting 90 to 120 minutes each. These sessions combined plenary and small group discussions, utilizing interactive tools to foster an active and participatory atmosphere. At the start of each theme, facilitators conducted brief interactive exercises to reintroduce essential terms, concepts, and definitions relevant to the discussion.

The in-person learning event was hosted in Namibia as the BTS representatives from Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda highlighted their interest in learning more about NamBTS. HSDF coordinated and worked with the NamBTS to develop expert sessions the NamBTS co, as well aswell and co-designing and developing the agenda for a tour of the NamBTS facilities. Each session featured presentations by expert facilitators and an overview of each of each the Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda blood systems – including their challenges and opportunities. The participants had the opportunity to delve deeper into specific examples related to the topic to extract common themes, challenges, and key learnings across different countries' Blood Transfusion Services (BTSs).

The facilitation strategy primarily utilized session icebreaker polls, participant questions, comments, feedback during the sessions, and facilitators' summary recaps. Post-event surveys, detailed in the appendix, were also crucial for gathering participants' feedback and lessons learned from the session.

### **Audience**

Participants from the Accelerator activity teams, along with local and regional partners and USAID counterparts, were invited to share experiences and insights during the learning event. The involvement of Accelerator partners was crucial to the success of the learning events. Esteemed members from the country blood transfusion services—such as Malawi Blood Transfusion Service (MBTS), Liberia's National Blood Safety Program (NBSP), and Rwanda Blood Transfusion Division (BTD)—along with colleagues at USAID in Washington, and the Accelerator consortium's partners R4D, all played invaluable roles.

### **Outputs**

Findings from the cross-country learning event are summarized in this report.



## Learning Objectives

The specific objective of this three-day learning event included strengthening capacities in funding and innovative sources of funding and generation, management and use of safe blood data

### **Theme 1:** Sustainable and innovative financing for national safe blood services

- Understand the financing strategies within each country and associated challenges and successes;
- Identify challenges and possible solutions, including cost recovery, to building a sustainable financing plan for each country context with internal and external funding mechanisms that are in line with strategic growth;
- Learn how to leverage investment cases to secure funding from both government and donors and adapt targeted solutions and approaches that have been deployed in similar contexts; and
- Plan advocacy efforts to secure commitment from senior government decisionmakers, ministries of finance, departments of policy and planning, etc., to raise adequate domestic financing.

### **Theme 2:** Generation and use of routine safe blood data for decision-making and performance management

- Understand the challenges to routine blood data collection (types, uses, and sources of blood data) within each country;
- Review how to prioritize blood indicators for nascent to advanced blood systems, including usage/wastage of blood products and hemovigilance (adverse and near-miss events from blood transfusion) to strengthen the safe blood system; and
- Adapt or adopt lessons learned from the ongoing pilot project in Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Malawi on feasible indicators and implementation learnings.

## Synthesis of In-person Learning Event

### Day 1: Introduction and tour of the Namibia Blood Transfusion Service

Day 1 of the learning session began with a welcome and introduction from HSDF representatives Julie Wieland and Dr. Olasunbo Makinde who thanked everyone for attending the learning event, providing a recap and overview of the previously held learning webinars and emphasized the need for participants to connect with each other and exchange ideas and knowledge towards achieving the objectives of the event. HSDF also reiterated the objectives of the event and the agenda for the tour of NamBTS field visit. Prior to setting out for the field visit, all participants had time for a short networking activity to meet participants from other countries and share experiences.

At the NamBTS Facility, the country participants were greeted by the NamBTS mascot “Blood Buddy” before introductions were made by Mrs. Christa Gouws, the General manager of the NamBTS. Following this, there was a presentation on the overview of the NamBTS since its inception, facilitated by Mr.

Israel Chipare. During the presentation, and throughout the day, emphasis was made on the importance of having a “custom” “fit-for-purpose”, “context-and country-specific” blood system that takes into consideration, demand, supply, socio-economic context, government support, stability, and several other factors that may affect the blood system. Additionally, the importance of a good quality management system (QMS) for effective and efficient transfusion chain. The NamBTS emphasized how the NamBTS QMS was strengthened through collaboration.



Figure 1: Tour of NamBTS facility and learning about the testing procedures



Figure 2: NamBTS Blood Buddy group photo the testing procedures

Following this overview, the group was divided into two and toured the facility – the components and plasma fractionation, electronic blood bank management, and storage conditions. Each group was shown the process of tracking, labeling, storing and separating the blood using the different equipment in the NamBTS facility. The participants were then led into the blood donation room and taken through the blood donation process. The tour ended with the group coming back together in the conference room to discuss more in depth, the quality management system, branding and communication strategies. Following the tour, the participants came back to the hotel to discuss and draft presentations on their experiences, insights gained and potential application of the learnings within their own BTS and share out in plenary.



Figure 3: Mr. Israel Chipare (NamBTS) explaining the testing procedures for blood

### Key Learning Questions Emerging from Discussions on Blood Donor Mobilization and Retention

- *How does the NamBTS fund itself?*
- *How is blood made safe for long-distance trips?*
  - ✓ *The courier service maintains the standard temperatures using (temperature-validated) ice packs and they are a government-owned courier service.*
  - ✓ *Blood gets to the storage facilities overnight which helps with regulating the blood temperatures.*
- *How is all the data collected from the hospitals?*
- *How is the BTS registered and what is its governance like?*
  - ✓ *The BTS is an NGO registered by the MOH and is run by donors who NamBTS also report to*
  - ✓ *BTS governed by a five person board committee.*
- *How do you manage hospital blood banks?*
- *NamBTS has standards and guidelines for Blood transfusion on which hospitals are trained.*
- *They also have the lab transfusion information system which can provide information on blood from donor all the way to patient (in a confidential format)*
- *How did you break even after PEPFAR's withdrawal?*
- *How do you work effectively with the MOH?*
  - ✓ *There are policies specifying each stakeholder's responsibilities, although we are working towards unification of all systems.*

## Day 2: Break out into themes

On Day 2, the group broke out into their respective concurrent learning themes. Key learnings are highlighted below.

### **Theme 1: Sustainable and innovative financing for national blood services**

The session began with Dr. Farouk Mohammed's (AfBST) context-setting presentation on financing the safe blood system. Dr. Farouk stressed the importance of hyper-visibility of safe blood as a cross-cutting health priority, getting blood transfusions and safe blood out from under the umbrella of HIV. By doing so, safe blood funding could be separately allocated. Furthermore, he suggested that each country develop country-specific plans to circumvent public financing delays. The country landscaping presentations followed this presentation.

Each country, Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda, each gave overviews of their country's blood systems. Liberia took the group through the Liberian blood system history and the current status of Liberia's funding landscape, highlighting challenges faced along the way. The discussion focused on government support, and that the blood system has been underfunded and not funded for the two years. Liberia also highlighted that when the blood system is funded, it is often fragmented. Through support from the Accelerator, the National Blood Safety Program (NBSP) conducted a situational analysis and used that as context to draft a foundational document and eventually a policy document, the first for the country.

Malawi's overview began similarly with an overview of the current funding state, including the challenges. Malawi Blood Transfusion Service (MBTS) has a fully automated blood grouping system and supplies 70 percent of the blood supply for the country. MBTS discussed some of the bottlenecks with the cost recovery, including the cost markers or total unit costs of blood, including testing, distribution, etc. The MBTS highlighted the recent efforts in collaboration with the Accelerator, with the first convening the high-level technical working group that has supported the collaboration process between MBTS and regional hospitals.

The Rwanda Blood Transfusion Division (BTD) presented its funding overview, providing a brief history of the blood system and how they have achieved 100 percent voluntary non-remunerated blood donors (VNRBD). They highlighted the policies and procedures that have been put in place to ensure the population has blood when needed. They highlighted their vein to the distribution system and that they were looking forward to learning more about cost recovery and other innovative sources of financing.



*Figure 4: Participants during group work*

Dr. Farouk and Mrs. Christa Gouws (NamBTS) conducted an interactive panel discussion following the country overviews. During the discussion, Mrs. Gouws highlighted the road NamBTS took to reach full cost recovery, including the policies that needed to be implemented and the continued advocacy with the Ministry of Health. Following the discussion, Mr. Israel Chipare (NamBTS) went further in-depth into NamBTS's road to cost recovery and the foundational and ongoing reforms to support the cost recovery funding scheme.

Adeel Ishtiaq (R4D) presented findings from an ongoing review of cost-recovery approaches to fund national blood services. The last presentation was from representatives from Liberia and Malawi, who each presented their experience developing a Global Financing Facility proposal and safe blood investment case, respectively. The day also included group work on mapping strategies for funding resources for their respective country's blood services.

## Strategic Framework - Liberia

Strategy	Action Step(s) and target(s)	Strategic enablers	How will this be measured? What is the data needed?
Evidence based advocacy	High level advocacy utilizing data to engage government and stakeholders	Quality Data BTS Champions/ advocators	Adequate Resources made available
<i>Ensure quality data management and tracking of indicators</i>	Develop the NBSP M&E framework aligned to the national system.	National Blood Safety Program and the Health Management Information System	Availability and utilization of quality data
Improve HR for blood data system	Conduct staffing needs assessment for RBCs  Recruit qualified and adequate staff.	MOH/NBSP	Efficient optimization of Operations through trainings

Figure 5: Strategic framework for Liberia that was developed during the session

### Theme 2: Generation and use of routine safe blood data for decision-making and performance management

The day began with Dr. Carla van Zyl (NamBTS) presenting the need to build a quality data collection system across all levels of the blood system – from collection to use or vein to vein. She provided an overview of Namibia’s safe blood management system, focusing on the available data management system, types of data, and their sources across the entire health system. She used a specific dataset from past NamBTS data to demonstrate safe blood system data utilization for decision-making and performance management.

Country presentations on the current status of generation and use of safe blood data followed this. Liberia gave an overview of its decentralized systems. It noted that blood collected at the hospital blood banks is being tested, and this information is sent to the county level and then to the national level. However, NBSP highlighted that blood donations are often family donors and there is a need to conduct more social mobilization to address this issue.

Malawi provided an overview of its data system and the lack of integration with the overall health system that causes issues with budgeting and blood estimations. MBTS stated that they HMIS and LMIS are not in line with the MBTS needs to conduct budgeting and blood estimations that effectively meet the needs and demand. They also highlighted that the blood estimation in use is from 2015, and there is a need to make periodic real-time estimations due to the overestimates of the hospitals that request blood.





*Figure 6: Participants during the panel discussion in Theme 2*

Rwanda gave an overview of its system, indicating that demand is from 80 hospitals nationwide with a population of 18 million. They use the previous year's blood needs to calculate the projected blood



*Figure 7: Participants working on the draft strategy framework*

needs within three to five percent for the upcoming year. They also highlighted their testing system, noting that they must undergo an approval process for the rare blood groups, which makes the data supply low, resulting in some delays. For distribution, the Blood Transfusion Division (BTD) noted using ZipLine, a drone company that delivers blood to hospitals some distance from the regional hospital. For data, Rwanda noted that they employ full-time staff for data collection.

They then use eProgesa, a local network that transfers the data to Google sheets and then moves to the HMIS.

Following the country overviews, Sr Judith Sinvula (NamBTS) presented on building a national system for blood data generation, especially integrating safe blood priorities into the HMIS/DHIS and the necessary enabling policies and priorities to facilitate safe blood data integration. Mr. Hilary Charuma presented NamBTS as a case study on safe blood data generation and use, while Mr. Wilfred Dzama (MBTS) presented the early findings from the data pilot at the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital. Finally, during



the session, the group broke out into their country BTS teams to draft strategies to improve their data performance.

## Strategic Framework - Malawi

Strategy	Action Step(s) and target(s)	Strategic enablers	How will this be measured? What is the data needed?
Evidence based advocacy	Advocate for Adequate funding based on evidence	Integration of data management system from vein to vein	Number of funding sources
	Advocate for regular blood donation		
Maximising return on investment on new technology	Implement Apheresis technology	Engaging with ministry of health and funders	Number of blood products on offer
Expansion of screening technology	Preparation of screening cells	Capacity and skill sets	Number of hospitals supplied with cells

*Figure 8: Example of the drafted strategic framework from MBTS*

### Day 3: Advocacy

Day three began with Mr. Israel Chipare (NamBTS) leading the group through the updates to the WHO national blood service costing methodology. He walked the group through the updated tool and its potential uses within the blood services. This was followed by an interactive discussion led by Dr. Mohammed Farouk (AfSBT) and Ms. Julie Wieland (HSDF) on the importance of advocacy to fund national blood services and support a robust blood donor base. During the discussion, examples of advocacy tools and best practices were presented. This was followed by a presentation led by Ms. Wieland on using the “Five whys of marketing” to develop key messages for specific audiences to tell a story. Following the presentation, each country group worked together to draft key messages to five (5) stakeholders, i.e. donors, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, blood donors, and other safe blood systems relevant stakeholders and then presented their messages to the group for feedback.



Figure 9: Participants during group work

### Advocacy Messages - Rwanda

#### Who are you targeting?

- Hospital Physicians

#### What's the Value?

- 1 Unit of Packed Red Cells can save lives of up-to 6 Neonates in need of an emergency transfusion.

#### What is your message?

- Dear Physician, a wasted unit of blood component is potentially a wasted life of your patient. Prescribe when it is the only remaining option and use the available blood units efficiently.
- You may consult the national guidelines on rational use of blood products that is available in your service for information of indications and doses.
- Please return the unused units to the BTS to prevent wastage.

Figure 10: Example of an advocacy message

Following the advocacy session, Mr. Adeel Ishtiaq (R4D) and Ms. Mila Nepomnyashchiy (USAID) went through a co-creation session on the “Safe Blood Access Hub.” The “Safe Blood Access Hub” is meant to bring together country officials, technical and funding partners, and other country actors for sustained blood system strengthening. It may provide agenda-setting and leadership, co-create and deploy knowledge-sharing resources, and help mobilize direct support to national safe blood systems. The co-creation led the participants through a process of understanding what stakeholders should be included and the technical and operational aspects that should be included. Some stakeholders highlighted include professional organizations such as the International Society for Blood Transfusion, funders such as USAID and Rollback Malaria, patient advocacy groups, professional associations such as hematology, and the private sector such as Abott and Viking.

Participants discussed the when, how, what, and where of organizing a convening of blood and health system stakeholders, including NBTs, funders, implementers, and experts. All participants agreed that a good first step would be to hold a virtual convening. Malawi noted that virtual convenings, especially cross-country convenings, should continue as there is much benefit that can be derived. They also suggested leveraging the recently developed investment case to package evidence about the importance of blood system strengthening. Liberia highlighted that national blood transfusion services need training and scale up support for ensuring sustainable VNRBD supply and promoting rational use of blood to bridge the gap in blood system strengthening and clinical supervision through bespoke/blood-focused mechanisms. Rwanda and Namibia reiterated the need for data to highlight the gap, draw attention to the interventions and impact. Potential outputs from the SBAH could be a mapping of countries and opportunities and/or a publication on a ‘call to action’. At the end of the session, participants were thanked for the inputs and participation and to expect follow up on the SBAH as it begins to take form and the addition of partners.



*Figure 11: Co-creation activity for the Safe Blood Access Hub*

The event ended with reflections on the presentations over the past two days, what had been accomplished, the strategic frameworks developed that could be leveraged for future activities. Each country safe blood team presented their reflections on their experiences and the event and the way they envision applying the learnings. A survey was conducted following the event, the results are presented below. Over 60 percent of the participants stated they felt equipped with sufficient knowledge to lead their team to improve the blood system. While 70 percent stated that topics presented provided a robust learning experience (Figure 11). Almost 53 percent of participants said there are extremely likely to continue to foster cross-country learning (Figure 12).

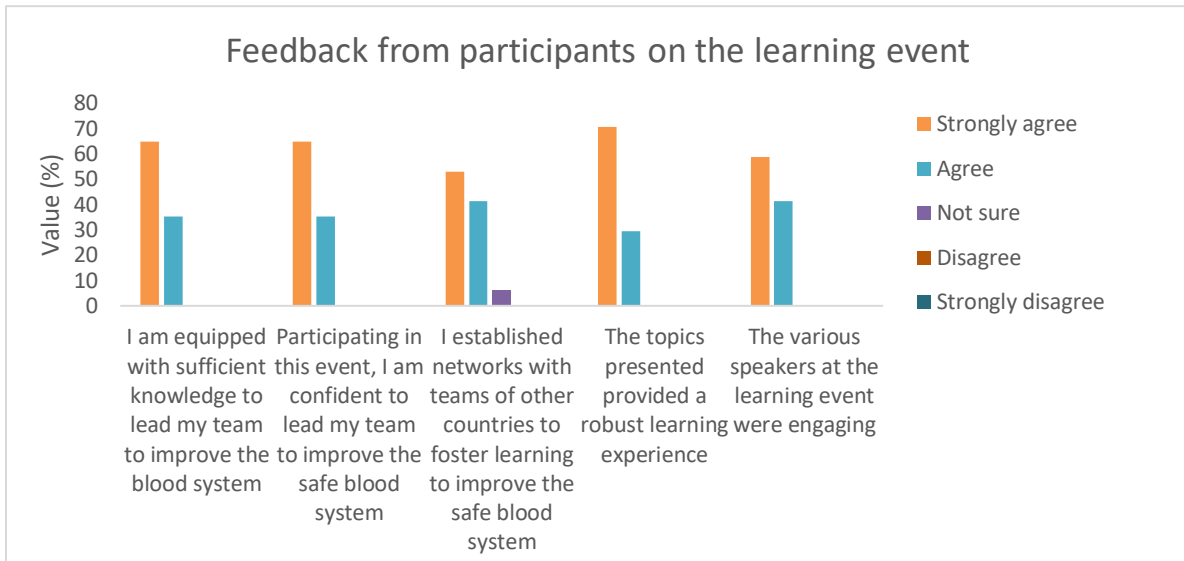


Figure 12: Feedback from participants on the topics presented and knowledge gained and potential use from the learning event in Namibia.

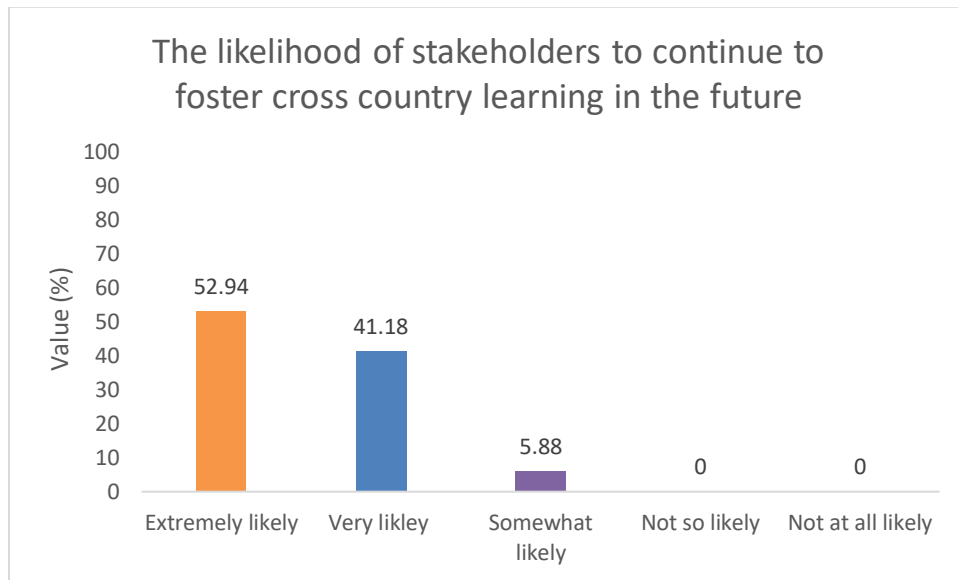


Figure 13: Feedback from participants on the likelihood of continuing the cross-country learning and sharing of knowledge following the learning event in Namibia.

The learning event ended with country blood system representatives making connections and developing relationships with one another that will continue beyond the event. HSDF will follow up with Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda representatives with key informant learning checks to understand better the knowledge and skills that have been applied from learning events – webinars and in-person learning events.

## Annex 1: Learning Event Concept Note

Concept Note: In-person Cross-Country Learning Event

USAID Health Systems Strengthening Accelerator: Strengthening Safe Blood Systems in Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda

**Proposed Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup>– 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**Composition of TA Support Team:** HSDF, R4D, USAID, and expert facilitators

**Location:** Windhoek, Namibia

### **Learning collaboratives/themes**

- (1) Sustainable and innovative financing for national safe blood services
- (2) Generation and use of routine safe blood data for decision-making and performance management

### **Cross-Country Learning: Background and Context**

With support from the Office of Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN) within USAID’s Bureau for Global Health, the USAID Health Systems Strengthening Accelerator (Accelerator) program provides technical assistance to strengthen the national safe blood systems in Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda. Among other interventions, the Accelerator team—comprised of Results for Development (R4D) and the Health Strategy and Delivery Foundation (HSDF)—is organizing and facilitating cross-country learning among safe blood stakeholders from Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda to facilitate sharing of approaches, learnings, and solutions for key blood system challenges. Topics for cross-country learning were identified and prioritized by safe blood stakeholders from all three countries via key informant interviews and a co-creation session in May 2023 at the International Maternal Newborn Health Conference (IMNHC) in Cape Town, South Africa. These priority topics include: (1) sustainable funding sources and strategies; (2) hemovigilance; (3) blood donor recruitment, retention, and management; (4) coordination between the national blood service and regional/district hospitals; and (5) routine data generation, use, and management (covering service delivery and blood donor data).

Collaborative learning among these stakeholders has the potential to accelerate progress in strengthening safe blood systems. By using country-led, demand-driven joint learning methods to complement the technical assistance to the national blood services in Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda, the proposed learning event will foster cross-country relationships, facilitate experience-sharing and problem-solving, and support stakeholders in their leadership, decision-making, and supervision responsibilities to drive health systems change.

### **Cross-Country Learning Workshop in Namibia: April 23-25, 2024**

This proposed learning event will respond to demand from Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda to learn about (1) sustainable funding of national blood services, and (2) generating and using routine blood-related data to support impactful reforms in each country. To optimize time and resources and given the different target audiences for each topic, the Accelerator proposes to conduct two learning collaboratives with two groups concurrently. The first day of the learning event will begin with a plenary with all participants present. This will be followed by each group of participants joining their chosen

individual learning collaboratives and participating in field visits customized to the respective topic. The learning event will conclude with a closing plenary on the last day to facilitate sharing of findings and key takeaways between the groups (please refer to the proposed agendas appended to this concept note for more details).

## **Theme 1: Sustainable and innovative financing for safe blood services**

### **Context**

In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), securing sustainable domestic funding for safe blood services is crucial to addressing public health challenges and expanding the blood system infrastructure. Historically, funding has come from ministries of health, donors, and/or blood service “cost recovery” and other revenue generation mechanisms. Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda have all seen donor funding decrease in recent years, which can affect the safety and availability of blood and blood products. There is a need for sustainable funding solutions and frameworks that respond to immediate needs and contribute to the long-term efficacy of blood services.

**Problem statement:** As support from external donors has reduced and/or ceased against a backdrop of already low health system funding for national blood services, national blood services need to find new sustainable funding sources by exploring domestic revenue mobilization and cost recovery mechanisms and leveraging investment cases.

The Accelerator will host a collaborative workshop with the participants from the three blood services to share information, develop participants’ capacity, and co-create/co-develop tools. This theme would focus on reviewing the various domestic and donor funding mechanisms that are in line with the strategic growth of a national blood service and on building a roadmap for resource mobilization, including identifying priorities, requirements, and timelines of different funding mechanisms. To achieve this, participants will:

- Identify the challenges and barriers experienced within their country systems;
- Explore how to leverage investment cases to secure funding from both government and donors; and
- Build sustainable financing plan by identifying possible resource mobilization options, innovative financing mechanisms and areas for efficiencies.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Understand the financing strategies within each country and associated challenges and successes;
- Identify challenges and possible solutions, including cost recovery, to building a sustainable financing plan for each country context with internal and external funding mechanisms that are in line with strategic growth;
- Learn how to leverage investment cases to secure funding from both government and donors and adapt targeted solutions and approaches that have been deployed in similar contexts and

- Plan advocacy efforts to secure a commitment from senior government decision-makers, ministries of finance, departments of policy and planning, etc., to raise adequate domestic financing.

### Learning Goal

This learning event will foster increased “how-to” knowledge and skills to identify, leverage, and roadmap internal and external funding options that match the needs of individual country blood systems. At the end of the collaborative, participants are envisaged to have a greater understanding of the fiscal levers for safe blood systems that promote data-driven financing and innovative approaches towards improved sustainability.

### Outputs

(1) Co-created advocacy brief, and (2) “how to” mobilize domestic and external resources using investment cases and other tools and processes

### Target audience

Two participants from each country for a total of six participants, such as:

- Directors and/or CEOs of the Blood Transfusion Services in Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda
- Finance Managers/CFOs of the Blood Transfusion Services in Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda

## Theme 2: Generation and use of routine safe blood data for decision-making and performance management

### Context

Safe blood data generation, management, and use thereof help to provide evidence for strategic decision-making and ensure oversight of service quality and compliance with guidelines for the overall blood system. Currently, each of the three country blood services is able to track the donors and recipient facilities of specific blood units but needs more information about facility-level management of blood inventories (e.g., wastage and expiries), clinical use of blood and blood products, and transfusion outcomes. This poses a challenge for the blood transfusion service strategic planning as blood services have to rely on limited historical data on collections, requisitions, and issuance and are unable to track changing national demand and disease trends, plan collection efforts and organizational investments in a forward-looking manner and monitor and correct adverse outcomes. There is a need for information systems supporting effective data collection in health facilities to track blood use, clinical indicators, and expiries and wastage to enhance the sourcing, safety, distribution, storage, and use of blood from donor recruitment to transfusion.

**Problem Statement:** At the national level, information on the sourcing, safety, distribution, storage, and use of blood products is often unavailable and/or incomplete. Support for prioritization of safe blood indicators, integration of blood data indicators into health and logistics management information systems, development of reporting templates, and data collection and reporting from health facilities are needed for strategic planning and monitoring of the national blood program.

The Accelerator will host a collaborative workshop with participants from the three blood services to share



information, develop participants' capacity, and co-create/co-develop tools. This theme would focus on reviewing and discussing the health system function of routine generation of safe blood data collection, blood management, and its use within blood transfusion services within each country, covering the sourcing, safety, distribution, storage, and use of blood and blood products. To achieve this, participants will:

- Identify the challenges and barriers experienced within the existing blood data collection practices;
- Explore how to design and prioritize blood safety indicators for vein-to-vein tracking from donors to blood services, hospitals, labs, clinical wards, and patients; and
- Co-develop a best practices data management plan to strengthen the national health information system to track blood data at the national and facility levels.

### Learning Objectives

- Understand the challenges to routine blood data collection (types, uses, and sources of blood data) within each country;
- Review how to prioritize blood indicators for nascent to advanced blood systems, including usage/wastage of blood products and hemovigilance (adverse and near-miss events from blood transfusion) to strengthen the safe blood system; and
- Adapt or adopt lessons learned from the ongoing pilot project in Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Malawi on feasible indicators and implementation learnings.

### Learning Goal

This learning event will foster increased knowledge and skills for prioritizing blood data indicators, identifying areas for improved data reporting performance and collection, and lessons learned in gathering, reporting, analyzing, using and disseminating blood transfusion data and information in order to strengthen the safe blood system.

### Output

Co-created document on routine blood data collection, indicators and tools, including timelines for reporting that can be adapted for context.

### Target audience

Two participants per country for a total of six participants, such as:

- Laboratory manager/Laboratory Operations Officer
- Medical Officer
- Data and information managers for blood transfusion safety
- Responsible officers for blood service monitoring and evaluation

## **Annex 2: Learning Event Agenda**

### **In-person Cross-Country Learning Event**

USAID Health Systems Strengthening Accelerator: Strengthening Safe Blood Systems in Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda

### **Draft Agenda**

#### **Theme 1: Sustainable and Innovative Sources of Funding for Safe Blood Services**

Dates: 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Venue: Avani Hotel

## OBContext

In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), securing sustainable domestic funding for safe blood services is crucial to address public health challenges and expand the blood system infrastructure. Historically, funding has come from ministries of health, donors, and/or blood service “cost recovery” and other revenue generation mechanisms. Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda have all seen donor funding decrease in recent years, which can affect the safety and availability of blood and blood products. There is a need for sustainable funding solutions and frameworks that respond to immediate needs and contribute to the long-term efficacy of blood services.

**Problem statement** As support from external donors has reduced and/or ceased against a backdrop of already low health system funding for national blood services, there is a need for national blood services to find new sustainable funding sources by exploring domestic revenue mobilization and cost recovery mechanisms and leveraging investment cases.

The Accelerator will host a collaborative workshop with the participants from the three blood services to share information, develop participants’ capacity, and co-create/co-develop tools. This theme would focus on reviewing the various domestic and donor funding mechanisms that are in line with strategic growth of a national blood service, and on building a roadmap for resource mobilization, including identifying priorities, requirements, and timelines of different funding mechanisms.

### 1B Learning Objectives

- Understand the financing strategies within each country and associated challenges and successes;
- Identify challenges and possible solutions, including cost recovery, to building a sustainable financing plan for each country context with internal and external funding mechanisms that are in line with strategic growth;
- Learn how to leverage investment cases to secure funding from both government and donors and adapt targeted solutions and approaches that have been deployed in similar contexts; and
- Plan advocacy efforts to secure commitment from senior government decisionmakers, ministries of finance, departments of policy and planning, etc., to raise adequate domestic financing.

**Participants:** CEO/Director, Finance Manager, CFO

### April 23, 2024 Day 1: Plenary and Field Visit

Timeline	Sessions	Responsible person(s)
8:40 -9:00am	<b>Arrival/Registration/Sign-in</b>	All
9:00-10:00	<b>Welcome and introduction to the Learning Event Context and Objectives</b>	Mrs. Julie Wieland (HSDF) Dr. Olasunmbo

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In this session, introductions of all participants including country teams and their respective representatives, as well as experts, facilitators, USAID and R4D representatives</li> <li>A brief recap from the previous three learning sessions on blood donor mobilization &amp; retention, hemovigilance, and Introduction of Rwanda's newly drafted hemovigilance plan and hospital transfusion committees (HTCs). The Safe Blood website will be presented as a resource to access the previous webinars and slide decks and drafted knowledge products.</li> <li>Following the recap of previous learning session, HSDF will provide an overview of the learning event, present the agenda for the field visit to the Namibian Blood Transfusion Service (NamBTS) and provide an overview of the field visit checklist and subsequent country presentations upon return from the NamBTS</li> </ul>	Makinde (HSDF)
10:00-10:30am	<b>Tea and Health Break</b>	
10:30-10:45am	Bus arrives and takes all the participants to the field visit	
11:00am-3:30pm	<b>Field Visit to NamBTS</b>	
3:30-3:45pm	<b>Arrive back to hotel</b>	
3:45-4:45pm	<b>Country team presentations on experience, insights gained and potential application of learnings from NamBTS field visit</b>	A delegate from each country team to provide the presentation
4:45-5:00pm	<b>Recap of the day's events and introduction to the next day's agenda</b>	Mrs. Julie Wieland (HSDF)
<b>April 24, 2024 Day 2: Review and background on the BTS in each country</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Sessions</b>	<b>Responsible person(s)</b>
8:45-9:15am	<b>Arrival/Sign-in</b>	All
9:00-9:15am	<b>Welcome, recap from Day 1 and overview of the agenda and objectives</b>	Mrs. Julie Wieland (HSDF)
9:15-9:45am	<b>Introduction to financing of Blood Transfusion Services: Types of costs, funding sources, and definitions</b> Dr. Mohammed Farouk will lead an interactive discussion, with country examples, on blood transfusion service types of costs, with a focus on indirect costs, and the types of funding sources, including	Dr. Mohammed Farouk - Managing Director, AfBST

	cost recovery	
9:45 -11:00am	<p><b>Overview and current funding state for each country (Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda)</b></p> <p>Director and/or CEO from national blood transfusion service (NBTS) will provide an overview of their current funding state, noting the challenges and the successes and highlights within their system. Each country presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer session whereby the audience will be invited to ask questions, share comments, reflections and their own experience.</p>	<p>Dr. Onyekashi Subah – Director of Liberia NBSP</p> <p>Mrs. Natasha Nsamala – CEO of Malawi MBTS</p> <p>Dr. Thomas Muyombo – Director of Rwanda BTB</p>
11:00-11:30am	<b>Tea and Health Break</b>	
11:15am-11:40am	<p><b>Prioritizing safe blood investments for optimizing financing and fiscal levers for safe blood</b></p> <p>Dr. Mohammed Farouk will speak about strengthening of safe blood services as a health system strengthening issue, highlighting the importance of accountability and data driven financing, having commitment from the highest levels, including the Ministry of Finance and/or the Ministry/Department of Policy, Planning, and/or Budget to secure adequate domestic financing. He will also speak about integrating safe blood priorities in country planning and budgeting processes and implementing the necessary enabling policies and reforms as key enabling factors.</p> <p>Dr. Farouk’s presentation will be followed by a question and answer session</p>	<p>Dr. Mohammed Farouk – Managing Director, AfBST</p>
11:40am-12:30pm	<p><b>Overview of domestic resource mobilization (DRM), cost recovery and government funding mechanisms</b></p> <p>Dr. Farouk and Mrs. Gouws will provide an interactive discussion on the main components of DRM, the different government mechanisms, private sector inclusion, cost recovery, etc. The challenges and advantages with each funding source will be highlighted, along with country examples.</p> <p>Following the session, the audience will be invited to ask questions, share comments, reflections and country experience on the topics</p>	<p>Mrs. Christa Gouws – General Manger, NamBTS</p> <p>Dr. Mohammed Farouk – Managing Director, AfBST</p> <p>Mrs. Julie</p>

		Wieland (HSDF) to facilitate discussion
12:30pm – 1:00pm	<p><b>Host country spotlight: NamBTS</b></p> <p>Mr. Israel Chipare will present Namibia experience with cost recovery, the history for foundational reforms and ongoing reforms to reconfigure the NamBTS to the level it is today</p>	Mr. Israel Chipare, Chief Operating Manger, NamBTS
1:00-2:00pm	<b>Lunch</b>	
2:00-2:30pm	<p><b>Cost recovery approaches to fund national blood services: Synthesis of country practices, contextual factors, and policy considerations</b></p> <p>Results for Development will present findings from an ongoing review of cost recovery approaches to fund national blood services—highlighting practices and enabling contextual factors from different country contexts as well as key policy considerations for discussion and feedback.</p>	Mr. Adeel Ishtiaq – Program Director, R4D
2:30-3:10pm	<p><b>Group work: Mapping strategies for Blood Transfusion Services resources</b></p> <p>The participants will divide into groups of two and based on the information from presentations and their own country experiences, come up with 3 – 5 resource mobilization strategies and/or options for national blood transfusion services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each group will present their strategies to the audience</li> </ul>	A delegate from each group to provide the presentation
3:10-3:15pm	<b>Energizer</b>	
3:15-3:45pm	<p><b>Development and use of the Safe Blood Investment case in Malawi</b></p> <p>Mrs. Mkamanga will present MBTS’s experience of developing the safe blood investment case, its utility and how and/or if they have used it in the budgeting process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presentation will be followed by a question and answer session</li> </ul>	Mrs. Lillian Mkamanga, Director of Finance & Administration at MBTS
3:45 – 4:15pm	<p><b>Developing the GFF proposal, lessons learned</b></p> <p>Dr. Subah will present NBSP’s experience on developing the GFF proposal, highlighting the challenges and successes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presentation will be followed by a question and answer session</li> </ul>	Dr. Onyekashi Subah – Director of NBSP
4:15-4:45pm	<p><b>Lab storm: challenge question – how can the investment cases be leveraged for both internal and external funding?</b></p> <p>Divide into country teams and using the strategies developed in the</p>	HSDF/R4D team to facilitate

	first group work, create a roadmap and identify what it looks like when NBTS resourcing is improved, how can an investment case be leveraged, how countries can improve financing to NBTSs,	
4:45-5:00pm	Recap from the day's events and agenda for the next day	
<b>April 25, 2024 Day 3: Advocacy</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Sessions</b>	<b>Responsible person(s)</b>
8:30-9:00am	<b>Arrival/Sign-in</b>	All
9:00-9:15am	<b>Welcome, recap from Day 2 and overview of the agenda and objectives</b>	HSDF
9:15 – 10:00am	<b>Group work:</b> The country teams from the learning collaboratives bring their roadmaps from their respective learning collaboratives and draft a consolidated roadmap for improved funding and data collection, management, and use	
10:00 – 10:30am	<b>Update from the WHO-led Working Group on changes to national blood service costing methodology</b> Dr. Israel Chipare will overview the work of a WHO-led Working Group to update <a href="#">existing guidance on costing blood transfusion services</a> (1998/2001)—reflecting blood system developments such as increased fractionation into blood products, trend toward centralized testing and processing, and continued prominence of hospital-based blood banks, among others.	Mr. Israel Chipare, Operating Manager (NamBTS)
10:30 –10:45am	<b>Tea and Health break</b>	
10:45-11:15am	<b>Advocacy approaches for national blood services to promote the value of blood to patients, communities and the healthcare system</b>  HDSF and Dr. Farouk will present an interactive discussion on advocacy to fund national blood services and support a robust donor base, providing examples of advocacy tools and best practices.  Mr. Israel Chipare of NamBTS will present the Namibian case study on advocacy, both formal and informal, for budget coordination and data generation and use	Ms. Julie Wieland (HSDF), Dr. Mohammed Farouk (AfBTS)  Mr. Israel Chipare, Chief Operating Manger, NamBTS
11:15-11:45am	<b>Group work: Developing key messages</b> Using the “Five whys of marketing”, HSDF will present how to develop key messages for specific audiences to tell a story. Each country group will then draft key messages to five (5) stakeholders, i.e. donors, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, blood donors, and other safe blood systems relevant stakeholders. Each group will provide a read out of the developed messages for feedback.	Ms. Julie Wieland (HSDF)



<p>11:45am - 1:15pm</p>	<p><b><i>A “Safe Blood Access Hub” to enhance global health attention and assistance for national safe blood systems: Discussion and brainstorm</i></b></p> <p>The USAID Safe Blood program has helped to assess challenges and bottlenecks in countries’ national safe blood systems and provided technical assistance to support key reforms. Going forward, how can we advance such technical assistance, cross-country learning, and close engagement among safe blood and health/global health stakeholders? In this session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USAID and Accelerator partners will share developing thinking on a “Safe Blood Access Hub” to bring together country officials, technical and funding partners, and other country actors for sustained blood system strengthening. The SBAH may provide agenda-setting and leadership, co-create and deploy knowledge sharing resources, and help mobilize direct support to national safe blood systems.</li> </ul> <p>Participants will review the need and agenda for such a platform, discuss technical and operational requirements, and map next steps to advance the idea.</p>	<p>Mr. Adeel Ishtiaq, Program Director, R4D</p>
<p>1:15-2:15pm</p>	<p><b>Lunch Break</b></p>	
<p>2:15-3:15pm</p>	<p><b><i>Plenary – Reflections and Next steps</i></b></p> <p>This session will provide the country teams from each learning collaborative to provide reflections of their experiences and learnings from the event and ways they envision applying the learnings</p> <p>HSDf, R4D, and USAID will give their reflections on the learning event. HSDf will provide an event recap and next steps.</p>	<p><b>Representative from each BTS</b></p> <p><b>Representatives from HSDf, R4D, and USAID</b></p>
<p>3:15-3:30pm</p>	<p><b><i>Key Messages and Wrap Up</i></b></p>	<p>Mrs. Julie Wieland (HSDf)</p>

## Draft Agenda

### Theme 2: Generation and Use of Routine Safe Blood Data for Decision-making and Performance Management

Dates: 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Venue: Avani Hotel

#### Context

Safe blood data generation, management and use thereof helps to provide evidence for strategic decision-making and ensure oversight of service quality and compliance with guidelines for the overall blood system. Currently, each of the three country blood services are able to track the donors and recipient facilities of specific blood units but lack information about facility-level management of blood inventories (e.g., wastage and expiries), clinical use of blood and blood products, and transfusion outcomes. This poses a challenge for the blood transfusion service strategic planning as blood services have to rely on limited historical data on collections, requisitions, and issuance and are unable to track changing national demand and disease trends, plan collection efforts and organizational investments in a forward-looking manner and monitor and correct adverse outcomes. There is a need for information systems supporting effective data collection in health facilities to track blood use, clinical indicators, and expiries and wastage to enhance the sourcing, safety, distribution, storage, and use of blood from donor recruitment to transfusion.

**Problem Statement:** At the national level, information on the sourcing, safety, distribution, storage, and use of blood products is often unavailable and/or incomplete. Support for prioritization of safe blood indicators, integration of blood data indicators into health and logistics management information systems, development of reporting templates, and data collection and reporting from health facilities is needed for strategic planning and monitoring of the national blood program.

The Accelerator will host a collaborative workshop with participants from the three blood services to share information, develop participants' capacity, and co-create/co-develop tools. This theme would focus on reviewing and discussing the health system function of routine generation of safe blood data collection, blood management, and its use within blood transfusion services within each country, covering the sourcing, safety, distribution, storage, and use of blood and blood products.

#### 3B Learning Objectives

- Understand the challenges to routine blood data collection (types, uses, and sources of blood data) within each country;
- Review how to prioritize blood indicators for nascent to advanced blood systems, including usage/wastage of blood products and hemovigilance (adverse and near-miss events from blood transfusion) to strengthen the safe blood system; and

- Adapt or adopt lessons learned from the ongoing pilot project in Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Malawi on feasible indicators and implementation learnings.

**Participants:** Medical Officer, Laboratory Manager, Laboratory Director

<b>Day 1 - April 23, 2024: Field Visit to Namibian Blood Transfusion Service (NamBTS)</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Sessions</b>	<b>Responsible person(s)</b>
8:30 -9:00am	<b>Arrival/Registration/Sign-in</b>	All
9:00-10:00	<p><b><i>Welcome and introduction to the Learning Event Context and Objectives</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In this session, introductions of all participants including country teams and their respective representatives, as well as experts, facilitators, USAID and R4D representatives.</li> <li>• A brief recap from the previous three learning sessions on blood donor mobilization &amp; retention, hemovigilance, and Introduction of Rwanda’s newly drafted hemovigilance plan and hospital transfusion committees (HTCs). The Safe Blood website will be presented as a resource to access the previous webinars and slide decks and drafted knowledge products.</li> <li>• Following the recap of previous learning session, HSDF will provide an overview of the learning event, present the agenda for the field visit to the Namibian Blood Transfusion Service (NamBTS) and provide an overview of the field visit checklist and subsequent country presentations upon return from the NamBTS</li> </ul>	<p>Ms. Julie Wieland (HSDF)</p> <p>Dr. Olasunmbo Makinde (HSDF)</p>
<b>10:00-10:30am</b>	<b>Tea and Health Break</b>	
10:30-10:40am	Bus arrives and takes all the participants to the field visit	
11:00am-3:30pm	<b><i>Field Visit to NamBTS</i></b>	
<b>3:30-3:45pm</b>	<b>Arrival back to hotel</b>	
3:45-4:45pm	<b><i>Country team presentations on experience, insights gained</i></b>	A delegate from

	<i>and potential application of learnings from NamBTS field visit</i>	each country team to provide the presentation
4:45-5:00pm	<i>Recap of the day's events and introduction to the next day's agenda</i>	Mrs. Julie Wieland (HSDF)
<b>Day 2: - April 24, 2024: Review and background on the BTS in each country</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Sessions</b>	<b>Responsible person(s)</b>
8:30-9:00am	<b>Arrival/Sign-in</b>	All
9:00-9:15am	<i>Welcome, recap of Day 1 and overview of the agenda and objectives</i>	Dr. Olasunmbo Makinde (HSDF)
9:15-9:30am	<p><b>Technical Framing: Overview of Safe Blood Data Management System:</b></p> <p>Dr Carla will provide an overview of the Namibia's safe blood management system with a focus on the available data management system, types of data and their sources across the entire health system. Using specific dataset demonstrate the utilization of safe blood system data for decision making.</p> <p>The presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer session.</p>	Dr. Carla van Zyl, (NamBTS-Medical Officer)
9:30-11:00am	<p><b>Overview of current routine for safe blood data generation, management, and use in Liberia, Malawi and Rwanda</b></p> <p>A brief presentation on the country's overview of the blood system data system with a focus on the current Safe Blood data system, lesson learnt from implementing current system, system gaps and planned interventions/initiatives/solutions to address some of these gaps.</p> <p>The presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer session.</p>	<p>Mr. Moses Dowee (NBSP – Regional Blood Bank)</p> <p>Mr. Thom Mfunne (MBTS – Lab Manager)</p> <p>Fabrice Ndicunguye – (BTD Quality Assurance and Senior Accreditation Officer)</p>
11:00-11:15am	<b>Tea Break</b>	
11:15-11:55am	<b>Technical Framing and Global Evidence for Safe Blood Data:</b>	Dr. Carla van Zyl,

	<p><b>Availability, Management and Utilization of Safe Blood System Data for Improved Clinical Outcome and Health System Strengthening.</b></p> <p>The data expert will speak to the need to build a quality data collection system across all levels from blood collection to its use by end-users. The harmonization of available data and its integration into existing systems/platforms (such as DHIS). The necessary enabling factors such as policies, stakeholders etc. to reform the safe blood system. The role of safe blood data to improve clinical outcome (such as PPH, Sickle Cell Anemia etc.) and strengthening of the health system.</p> <p>The presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer session.</p>	(NamBTS- Medical Officer)
11:55-12:30pm	<p><b>Building an Effective and Integrated National Safe Blood Data System</b></p> <p>Sis. Judith Sinvula will work us through the building the National system for safe blood generation (prioritization of safe blood indicators) at the national and hospital levels highlighting the performance management and decision-making abilities of national blood transfusion services. She will also discuss the importance of integrating safe blood priorities in HMIS/DHIS2 and the necessary enabling policies and reforms to operationalize routine safe blood data collection. Finally, highlight system challenges and how they are being managed/addressed.</p> <p>The presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer session.</p>	Sr Judith Sinvula (NamBTS)
12:30-1:00pm	<p><b>Overview of Safe Blood Data Collection: Case study of Namibia</b></p> <p>Mr Hilary Charuma will speak to the operating safe blood data collection system across all levels- National and Hospital/Facility level. The integration of data from private hospitals. Factors that have enabled data collection and the integration of existing parallel systems (HMIS).</p>	Mr. Hilary Charuma (NamBTS)

	The presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer session.	
1:00-2:00pm	<b>Lunch</b>	
2:00-2:55pm	<b>Group work:</b> The group will be divided into two groups and tasked to draft three to five strategies for improving the safe blood data collection processes to implement within the national and hospital/facility levels, noting the leaders to involve from HMIS/DHIS, etc.	Dr. Sunmbo Makinde (HSDF) facilitates
2:55-3:05pm	<b>Read out from the groups</b>	
3:05-3:15pm	<b>Energizer</b>	
3:15-4:00pm	<b><i>Data Pilot Project at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Malawi</i></b>	Dr. Wilfred Dzama (MBTS – Medical Officer)
3:35-3:45pm	<b>Questions and answers</b>	
4:00-4:45pm	<b>Group work:</b> Action planning –The country groups will use the strategies generated in the first working session and begin action planning on the strategies. Output will be a framework or roadmap to improve safe blood data collection, management, and use.  Each country team will provide a readout from their work	Dr. Sunmbo Makinde (HSDF)
4:45-5:00pm	<b>Recap from the day's events and agenda for the next day</b>	
<b>Day 3 - April 25, 2024: Advocacy</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Sessions</b>	<b>Responsible person(s)</b>
8:30-9:00am	<b>Arrival/Sign-in</b>	All
9:00-9:15am	<b><i>Welcome, recap from Day 2 event, and overview of agenda and objectives</i></b>	Mrs. Julie Wieland (HSDF)
9:15 – 10:00am	<b>Group work:</b> The country teams from the learning collaboratives bring their roadmaps from their respective learning collaboratives and draft a consolidated roadmap for improved funding and data collection, management, and use	
10:00-10:30am	<b><i>Update from the WHO-led Working Group on changes to national blood service costing methodology</i></b> Dr. Israel Chipare will overview the work of a WHO-led Working Group to update <a href="#">existing guidance on costing blood transfusion services</a> (1998/2001)—reflecting blood system developments such as increased fractionation into blood products, trend toward centralized testing and processing, and continued prominence of hospital-based blood banks,	Mr. Israel Chipare (NamBTS)

	<p>among others.</p> <p>Participants will be asked to provide their reflections, ask questions, share comments, etc.</p>	
10:30 – 10:45am	<b>Tea and Health Break</b>	
10:45-11:15am	<p><b><i>Advocacy approaches for national blood services to promote the value of blood to patients, communities and the healthcare system</i></b></p> <p>HDSF and Dr. Farouk will present an interactive discussion on advocacy to fund national blood services and support a robust donor base, providing examples of advocacy tools and best practices.</p> <p>Mr. Chipare will present the advocacy agenda and best practices of the NamBTS</p>	<p>Ms. Julie Wieland (HDSF) and Dr. Farouk (AfBST)</p> <p>Mr. Israel Chipare (NamBTS)</p>
11:15-11:45am	<p><b><i>Developing key messages</i></b></p> <p>Using the “Five whys of marketing”, HDSF will present how to develop key messages for specific audiences to tell a story. Each country group will then draft key messages to five (5) stakeholders, i.e. donors, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, blood donors, and other safe blood systems relevant stakeholders. Each group will provide a read out of the developed messages for feedback.</p>	Ms. Julie Wieland (HDSF)
11:45-1:15pm	<p><b><i>A “Safe Blood Access Hub” to enhance global health attention and assistance for national safe blood systems: Discussion and brainstorm</i></b></p> <p>The USAID Safe Blood program has helped to assess challenges and bottlenecks in countries’ national safe blood systems and provided technical assistance to support key reforms. Going forward, how can we advance such technical assistance, cross-country learning, and close engagement among safe blood and health/global health stakeholders? In this session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USAID and Accelerator partners will share developing thinking on a “Safe Blood Access Hub” to bring together country officials, technical and funding partners, and other country actors for sustained blood system strengthening. The SBAH may provide agenda-setting and leadership, co-create and deploy</li> </ul>	<b>USAID/R4D</b>



	<p>knowledge sharing resources, and help mobilize direct support to national safe blood systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants will review the need and agenda for such a platform, discuss technical and operational requirements, and map next steps to advance the idea.</li> </ul>	
1:15-2:15pm	<b>Lunch Break</b>	
2:15-3:15pm	<p><b><i>Plenary – Reflections and Next steps</i></b></p> <p>This session will provide the country teams from each learning collaborative to provide reflections of their experiences and learnings from the event and ways they envision applying the learnings.</p> <p>HSDf, R4D, and USAID will give their reflections on the learning event. HSDf will provide an event recap and next steps.</p>	<p><b>Representative from each BTS</b></p> <p><b>Representatives from HSDf, R4D, and USAID</b></p>
3:15-3:30pm	<b><i>Key Messages and Wrap Up</i></b>	Mrs. Julie Wieland (HSDf)