
Strategy
2030
Belgian
Red Cross
Flanders
helps
people help

Strategy
2030

Foreword

At Belgian Red Cross-Flanders, we look forward every five years with a new strategy:

STRATEGY **2010** — **EFFICIENCY**
Do things right to prevent waste.

STRATEGY **2015** — **EFFECTIVENESS**
Do the right things: what should we continue to do, and what should we stop doing?

STRATEGY **2020** — **INNOVATION**
Reach the right target audience through research.

STRATEGY **2025** — **NEW TECHNOLOGY**
Use the right tools.

STRATEGY **2030** — **IMPACT**
Achieve the right scale of activities to make the greatest possible impact.

Dear reader

With Strategy 2030, we are looking further ahead than ever before. Because the world is changing rapidly: geopolitical tensions are rising, the effects of climate change are becoming more visible, polarisation is growing, more people are struggling with their mental health, and vulnerable groups increasingly feel let down.

We aim to deliver solutions that truly work. This is why we went beyond internal analysis. We carried out an extensive analysis of the societal challenges before the challenges within our own organisation. We then set up strategic working groups in which volunteers contributed ideas on concrete, realistic, yet ambitious objectives to meet these changing needs. In the spring of 2025, we travelled through every Flemish province, so that every volunteer could make their voice heard directly.

The result? A strategy that truly comes from our volunteers and prepares our organisation for the future.

With Strategy 2030, we also aim to strengthen our public awareness. Everyone should recognise Belgian Red Cross-Flanders as a professional, efficient and honest organisation. We highlight where we truly excel, so that we can further build the trust of the general public. We know that we can only achieve our goals by working together: vertically across different levels, horizontally across different disciplines. And by building an organisation that is agile and resilient enough to adapt to whatever the future brings.

With Strategy 2030, we therefore maximise our external impact. We want to help as many people as possible with the limited resources we have, by focusing on those areas where we can contribute most.

Together, we make a difference. Discover how we will do this over the next five years.

Hans Verstraete,
Community President

Philippe Vandekerckhove,
Chief Executive Officer





"He who fails to prepare, prepares to fail"
- Benjamin Franklin

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Strategy 2030 at a glance

Strategy 2030 is structured around **five domains** and **four levers**. These levers are essential for achieving the objectives within the different areas. Together, they are key to maximising our impact and contributing to our mission to help vulnerable people, both at home and abroad.

Disaster preparedness

Transfusion & transplantation

Migration & shelter

Self-reliance

Export of expertise

Volunteering

Communication

Scientific research

Sustainable funding

The five domains

We focus on five domains to make the biggest possible difference.



1.

Disaster preparedness

We strengthen our capacity to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies. Through an integrated emergency plan, more training and practice opportunities for volunteers, a Medical Unit and Municipal Volunteer Corps, we build a Flanders that is ready to respond to any crisis.

2.

Transfusion & transplantation

We guarantee a sustainable and safe supply of blood and plasma in Belgium. Our goal: to always be able to meet the demand for blood products, even in crisis situations. We invest in a diverse donor base, innovate with new applications and strengthen our unique position of expertise in diagnostics.

3.

Migration & shelter

We provide targeted assistance to vulnerable groups: emergency shelter and relief in crisis situations, tailored support for residents in our reception centres and for former residents as they make an independent start. In addition, we bring nuance to a polarised issue through quantitative scientific research on migration.

4.

Self-reliance

We help people become more resilient by teaching them life-saving skills and supporting their mental health. Through accessible first-aid training and activities, we aim to reach more young people and young adults. Thanks to initiatives such as our Library Service for hospitals and care institutions, we provide a social safety net where loneliness exists. In this way, we build a resilient society.

5.

Export of expertise

We use the expertise we have built up in Flanders to provide sustainable support abroad. In doing so, we focus on maximising impact through the roll-out of existing, successful products and proven methods. Our focus lies on (re)building blood services, preventing plasma wastage, strengthening global disaster preparedness through first-aid training, and ensuring the rapid deployment of emergency aid.

The four levers

To realise our ambitions, we rely on four powerful levers that run through every strategic domain. These are not isolated elements, but guiding principles that support everything we do.



1.

Volunteering

Volunteering is an essential part of how Belgian Red Cross-Flanders operates. It makes our activities scalable and locally rooted, thereby increasing our social impact. By removing barriers and supporting volunteers, we ensure that their efforts remain sustainable and effective. In this way, we strengthen our impact.

2.

Communication

Our story must sound clear and compelling. Everyone – from the general public to our dedicated volunteers – must understand what we stand for and why it matters. In so doing, we strengthen our image, build trust and foster a community that supports our mission.

3.

Scientific research

We are logical, not ideological. We make choices based on solid facts and scientific research. In our chosen areas – blood components and donations, disaster preparedness, first aid training and volunteering – we continue to pioneer and innovate with the aim of providing more efficient assistance. In this way, we not only maintain our relevance, we set the standard.

4.

Sustainable funding

Our independence safeguards our mission. By diversifying our income and deploying it strategically where we make the greatest impact, we ensure that we will be there. Today, tomorrow, and for all the crises yet to come. Because good intentions without resources remain nothing but dreams.

Specific targets for 2030: maximising external impact



Disaster preparedness

500
active emergency service volunteers attached to **112 control centre**

300
volunteer MDs and nurses working in **the Medical Unit**

Transfusion & transplantation

1,000,000
litres of plasma collected

1,500
blood donors of **Sub-Saharan African origin**

Migration & shelter

1,000
people helped with **emergency food parcels**

3,000
ex-residents reached via **information points**

Self-reliance

300,000
people **trained in first aid**

500,000
conversations with residents of care homes via our Library Service

Export of expertise

1,000,000
people in Africa reached via **the First Aid Blended Learning app**

€16,500,000
invested in **our unique field of expertise**

**The overview contains only a few selected indicators and is not exhaustive.*

The five strategic domains



1.

Disaster preparedness

Professionalising, preparing and being ready when it really matters.

In the current context, we must be prepared for disasters more than ever before. Geopolitical risks, climate threats and health crises make a rapid and efficient response crucial. That is why we focus on standardised operations with central coordination and the professionalisation of our volunteer efforts.

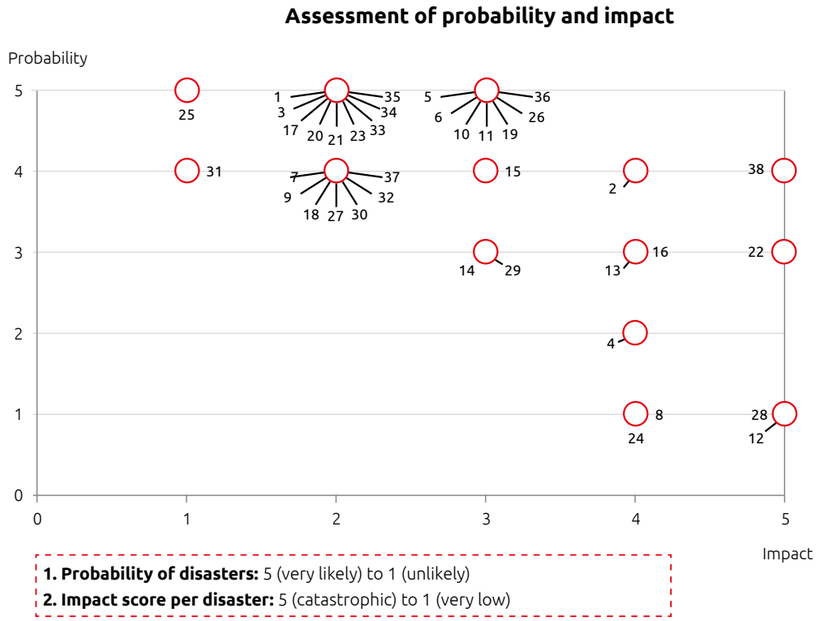
A single, widely supported contingency plan
We work on a single integrated emergency plan for Flanders. This plan strikes a balance between central coordination and local operational capacity. This enables us to respond quickly and effectively when it matters most. We invest in the professionalisation of preventive emergency response and expanding our network of 112 emergency response centres. Our specific goal: to grow to 500 active volunteer EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians) attached to a 112 emergency response centre.

Professional Medical Unit
We build a Medical Unit comprising 300 volunteer doctors and nurses to strengthen and professionalise our medical response. By harnessing the medical expertise of our volunteers, they become a crucial link in a robust crisis-oriented medical response.

Local Volunteer Corps
Together with Flemish local authorities, we established Municipal Volunteer Corps that focus on logistical and administrative tasks during emergencies. This ensures that aid delivery runs smoothly and efficiently, allowing regular emergency responders to concentrate on what they do best: saving lives. In addition, we develop a crisis tool that can be used as a standard solution for managing spontaneous citizen assistance.

High-quality logistical support
We identify which materials are essential in the event of disasters and incorporate them into a warehouse. In this way, we ensure that we always have sufficient, standardised and deployable materials available. Furthermore, we develop a standardised emergency stock that can be used in various types of disasters, both nationally and internationally.

Prioritised preparedness for eight types of disaster based on probability and impact



1. Probability of disasters: 5 (very likely) to 1 (unlikely)
2. Impact score per disaster: 5 (catastrophic) to 1 (very low)

1. Storms & thunderstorms
2. River flooding
3. Flooding
4. Coastal flooding
5. Cold snap
6. Heatwave
7. Drought
8. Water shortage
9. Earthquake
10. Forest fire
11. Invasive species
12. Meteorite impact
13. Solar storm
14. Terrorism (infrastructure)
15. Terrorism (soft target)
16. CBRN attack
17. CBRN (transport)
18. Mass event
19. Cybercrime
20. Hacktivism
21. Hybrid threats
22. Geopolitical risks
23. Espionage in critical infrastructure
24. Fuel shortage
25. Consequences of (trans)migration
26. Disinformation
27. Seveso
28. Nuclear accident
29. Power cut
30. Telecommunications disruption
31. Global epidemic
32. Epidemic (no treatment/vaccine)
33. Epidemic (healthcare)
34. Ozone peak
35. Pollution peak (air quality)
36. Animal diseases (contagion between animals)
37. Animal diseases (transmission to humans)
38. Combination of crises

Source: RKV analysis based on data from the National Crisis Centre

2.

Transfusion & transplantation

A sustainable, safe and cost-effective blood and plasma supply.

Blood products save lives. Day in, day out. Demand for plasma is growing. The challenges become more complex, but one thing remains constant: everyone deserves the right blood product at the right time. That is why we build a robust organisation that is ready for the future. We focus on five priorities that together ensure continuity, quality and impact.



Growth in plasma
In Belgium, 25,000 patients rely on plasma-derived medicines for their treatment. Their lives depend on it. We want Belgium to become self-sufficient, so that we are no longer dependent on imported plasma. Our ambitious goal: 1,000,000 litres of plasma by 2030. This requires a significant effort. We recruit new donors on a massive scale and mobilise our departments and volunteers to achieve this goal together. Because every litre of plasma collected means hope for a patient. In this way, we take an important step towards self-sufficiency to provide sustainable help to patients who depend on plasma-derived medicines.

Innovation in blood products
We look beyond the present. By investing in innovative applications of blood products, such as nasal sprays and eye drops, we open doors to better prevention and treatment. These breakthroughs not only improve patients' quality of life, they also strengthen our role as a pioneer in healthcare. Through innovation, we can help up to five times as many people with the same number of donations, a crucial boost to our impact.

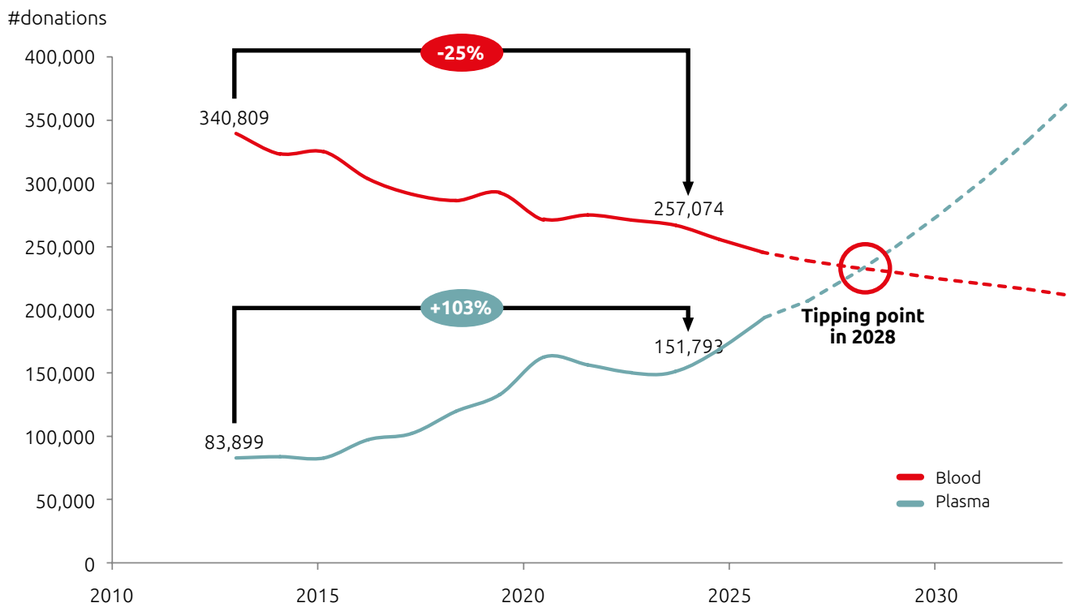
A diverse donor base
Our society is rich in diversity. Our donor pool must be too. Because only with a diverse pool of donors can we help every patient. We focus in particular on donors of

Sub-Saharan African origin, due to their unique genetic characteristics and the growing medical need. Our goal: 1,500 donors of Sub-Saharan African origin in our donor base.

Strengthening our global position as experts
We possess unique expertise in blood transfusions. Hospitals rely on us for advice and diagnostic testing, without having to invest in complex knowledge and equipment themselves. Yet this crucial role often remains under the radar. That is why we are fully committed to advanced testing technologies and comprehensive clinical advice. In addition, we want to raise the profile of our expertise more explicitly, including through publications in scientific journals and other forms of knowledge-sharing and support, also abroad. In this way, we will become even stronger as the reliable partner that healthcare providers need.

Being prepared for emergencies
Disasters do not give warning. Floods, war, terrorism, pandemics: they can jeopardise the blood supply. That is why we develop a contingency plan and emergency stockpile to ensure that we can provide life-saving blood products even in the most difficult times. Whether it concerns civil crises or specific military requirements of the Ministry of Defence: we are ready.

More plasma than blood donations as of 2028



Medical advances reduce the demand for red blood cells, whilst the need for plasma is rising as more patients require plasma-derived medicines. We expect the number of plasma donations to exceed whole blood donations by 2028, which requires us to adapt our operations.



3.

Migration & shelter

Using our accumulated expertise to provide greater support to vulnerable groups.

Our reception centres for asylum seekers face challenges due to limited availability of places. To ensure we can continue to support these vulnerable groups in the future, it is important to explore additional needs and opportunities outside the traditional reception structures.

Empowering residents of reception centres
By better tailoring reception conditions to the specific needs of residents, we can provide them with more targeted support. This enhances their mental wellbeing and helps them rebuild their independence in the future. As these needs can vary greatly from person to person, we focus on greater differentiation between reception centres.

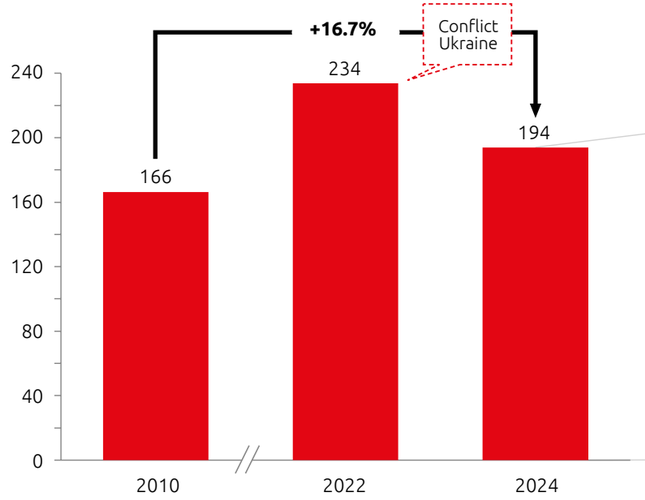
Support for former residents
Building a new life in an unfamiliar country is overwhelming. When people leave the reception centre, whether by choice or not, they deserve a fair chance at this new start. However, it is often difficult to know where to turn with their questions or concerns. That is why we open information points across Flanders. Places where people can obtain information, support and a listening ear. Our goal: to reach 3,000 former residents and provide real help. Because no one should be left to cope on their own.

Targeted help in emergencies
When a crisis strikes, every second counts. We stand ready to organise emergency shelter and aid immediately: tents, blankets, and emergency kits containing food and hygiene supplies for the first and crucial 48 hours. We assist the government and ensure that the most vulnerable people find protection. These emergency kits can be deployed in any crisis situation where emergency shelter is required, creating synergies with other areas such as crisis preparedness.

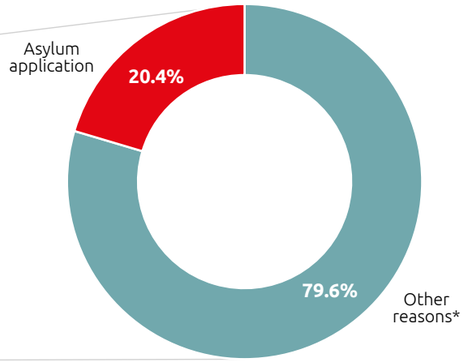
Scientific research
We actively promote our role in the reception of asylum seekers and underpin this by investing in impactful and quantitative research. This enables us to provide objective insights into a polarised issue.

Mapping international immigration in Belgium

International immigration in Belgium,
in numbers of people (x1,000)



Reason for immigration in 2024,
in percentages



Source: Fedasil, DVZ, CGVS, Statbel
**Family reasons, study reasons, reasons relating to paid employment, etc.*

The proportion of asylum seekers in immigration figures is often greatly overestimated. In 2024, approximately 40,000 people applied for asylum in Belgium. That is 20% of the total number of immigrants in 2024.

4.

Self-reliance

Greater resilience and preparedness for everyone.

True strength lies in preparation. We don't just help people in crisis situations – we empower them to cope with whatever life throws at them. Through local first-aid courses, online tools and heart-warming initiatives such as our Library Service, we are building a resilient society. Four pillars form the foundation of this work.



Training the public in first aid
If resuscitation is started quickly in cases of cardiac arrest, the chances of survival increase significantly. To increase the likelihood that there will always be someone nearby who knows what to do, at least 3% of the population must be able to perform CPR and use a defibrillator. That is why Belgian Red Cross-Flanders aims to train 200 additional volunteer instructors who, together with current instructors, will be able to train 300,000 people in life-saving first aid by 2030. In addition, we are making our first aid app the most reliable guide to first aid. This way, help is not a matter of chance, but a certainty. Always within reach.

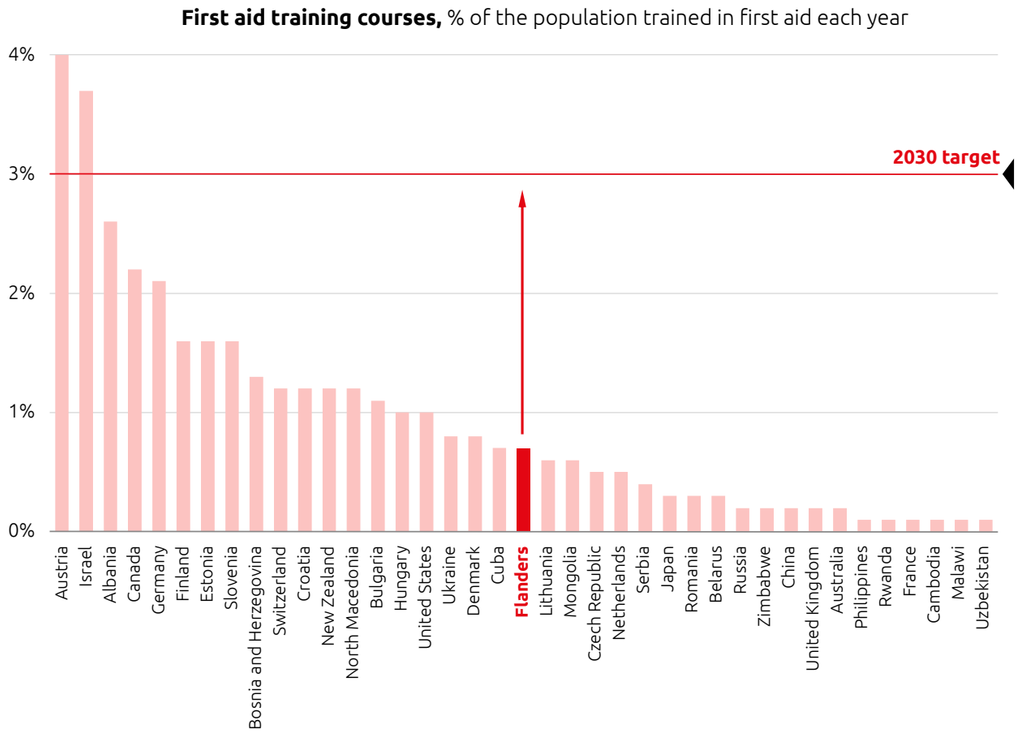
Library Service: reducing loneliness
Loneliness can be deadly; a conversation can save a life. That is why we are significantly expanding Library Service – our initiative in which volunteers bring a book and social contact to residents of care homes. Our goal: by 2030, we aim to have 500,000 conversations with residents. In this way, our volunteers offer weekly support to people who need it. A book can bring people together, but a listening ear, a kind word and a genuine moment of attention really make the difference.

Strengthening mental resilience
Mental wellbeing among young adults is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Young people are vulnerable to feelings of loneliness and other mental pressures. As many as 57% of young adults say they sometimes feel lonely, compared with 37% of other adults (aged 25 and over).1 By supporting them now, we also strengthen their resilience for the future. That is why we significantly scale up our Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) programme. Our specific goal: 10,000 trained individuals by 2030, so that more people can recognise the signs when someone is struggling and know how to help.

Reaching young people and young adults
The future of our organisation begins with young people. We strengthen the Red Cross Youth to teach more children and young people the basics of first aid and to inspire a new generation of volunteers. In addition, we remove barriers so that we can offer young people and young adults an attractive, relevant opportunity to volunteer. Because if we reach them now, they will make a difference for the rest of their lives.

(1) De Witte, J., Heylen, L., Schepers, W., Gryp, D., Haüssermann, F., De Donder, L., Van Regenmortel, T. (2024). Loneliness in Flanders. Part 1. Creating space for connection. HIVA KU Leuven, Leuven

Room for growth in first aid training



Source: IFRC (FDRS); Eurostat

To ensure that there is always someone nearby in Flanders who can quickly start CPR, many more people need to be trained in first aid.



5.

Export of expertise

Using our expertise globally to create lasting impact.

What we have built up in Flanders – expertise, experience, scientifically proven methods – can save lives far beyond our borders. In countries where the blood supply is precarious and disaster preparedness is lacking, we make a difference. We put this into practice through concrete actions.

Rebuilding blood services
In many countries, the blood supply is woefully inadequate. Patients are not receiving the blood products they need. We can change that. We send specialist staff and volunteers to help strengthen or completely rebuild local blood banks. In this way, we help build a safe healthcare chain, even in places where infrastructure and expertise are scarce.

Avoiding plasma wastage
Precious plasma that can save lives is still too often destroyed due to a lack of refrigeration facilities in low- and middle-income countries. We can and must put a stop to this waste. Together with local partners, we share infrastructure and knowledge. In this way, we make life-saving treatments accessible to more people.

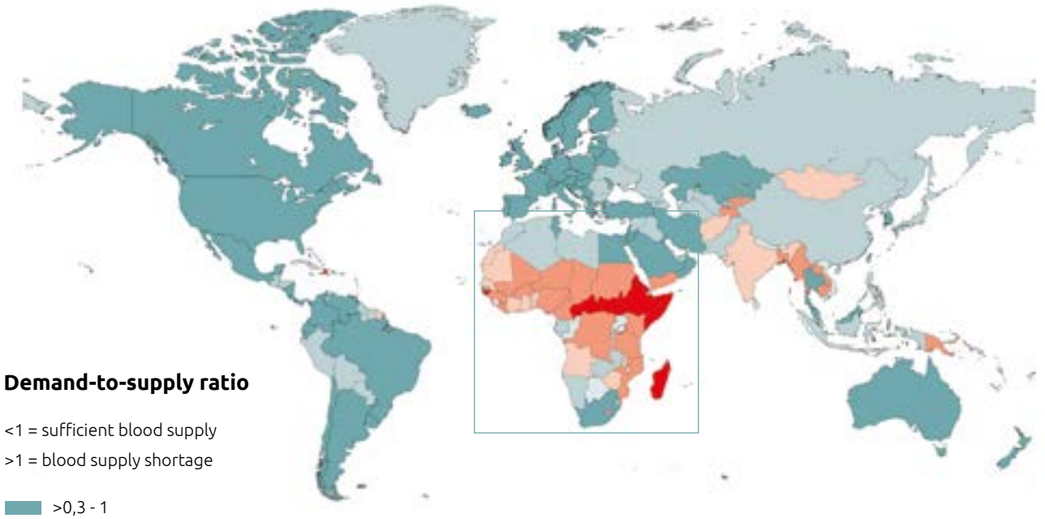
Training and knowledge sharing
First aid training is one of the most cost-effective forms of healthcare. Yet this basic knowledge is lacking in many regions. We roll out first aid training worldwide via our innovative First Aid Blended Learning (FABL) app. FABL combines an online learning pathway with in-person training. By 2030, we aim to reach 1 million people in Africa via the FABL app. We also build an international pool of experts to strengthen local communities.

Rapid deployment for emergency aid
Belgian Red Cross-Flanders is a small player on the international stage during a disaster, but aims to make a difference through speed, decisiveness and expertise. The first 48 hours after a disaster are crucial. That is why we build up a strategic emergency stock and strengthen our position as a rapid, reliable actor. Through the Emergency Relief Fund and a standby pool of experts, we can have impact more quickly and more regularly.

Diversification of funding
As Belgian Red Cross-Flanders, we want to determine which projects we support within international cooperation. To make this possible, we focus on broader diversification of our funding sources. This is all the more important because governments increasingly cut back on spending for international cooperation. By attracting funds for our unique expertise – rather than the other way round, by developing activities solely for the sake of funding – we can more sustainably embed our operations and continue to chart our own course.

Shortage of red blood cells in Sub-Saharan Africa

Estimated global **blood demand-to-supply ratio**



Source: Roberts et al. (2019): The global need and availability of blood products (The Lancet) – based on the WHO Global Status Report (2017 data)

In many African countries, there still is a shortage of red blood cells to meet demand. Sharing our expertise with these countries is therefore essential.

Acknowledgements

The development of this Strategy 2030 is the result of an intensive process that began as early as the summer of 2024 with a thorough environmental analysis. Since then, many people have devoted their time, insights and energy to jointly charting a forward-looking course for our organisation.

We would particularly like to thank all the volunteers who actively participated in the various working groups and focus groups. Their commitment, ideas and critical input were invaluable at every stage of this process. Our sincere thanks also go to residents and former residents of the Ronse Reception Centre for their participation in the focus group.

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