What is MSF
Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal and Newborn Health (SRMNH) services are crucial to the health of women and children and a core component of every health system. In the light of discussions about sustainable and affordable health care across all regions of the world, the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) has developed the Midwifery Services Framework (MSF) to help countries apply the latest evidence, standards, and guidance to improve their policy and programming environment for developing and implementing SRMNH services provided by midwives.

Why MSF
The MSF offers a systemic approach for health system strengthening and improvements in the quality of sexual and reproductive health care. The quality of maternal and newborn health services can be improved by the integration of midwife-led services across the health system. Research shows that midwives, educated to international standards, licensed, regulated and fully integrated into well-functioning health systems can provide the full scope of interventions necessary for maternal and newborn health as well as for family planning. Over 80% of all maternal deaths, stillbirths, and neonatal deaths can be averted by care from midwives. Furthermore, continuity of care from midwives improves other health outcomes, reduces unnecessary interventions, and improves the quality of care, including women’s satisfaction with care. It is clear that midwives have an essential role in accelerating progress for the survival and wellbeing of mothers and children and for ensuring quality of care (QoC).

The Midwifery Services Framework provides health planners, maternal and newborn health experts, policy makers, and other stakeholders with an evidence-based tool to develop new or strengthen existing midwifery services to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency. The MSF supports the implementation of the model of midwife-led continuity of care, which research has proven to be the most effective and desirable model of care provision for women and their families.

The objectives of the MSF are to:
- Provide detailed guidance on how to set up, develop, or improve midwife-led continuity of care services that fit a country’s specific health system, health workforce, and population needs.
- Operationalise the common understanding of the fundamental role that midwife-led continuity of care services play in improving women’s and children’s health.
- Build on the current commitment to reducing maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity with a practical approach to making access to midwives available to all families.

The MSF:
- explains core midwifery and health system concepts,
- outlines a step-by-step approach on how to establish SRMNH services: including discussion of the package of care that women and newborns need, education of midwives, regulation of midwives,

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4. Ibid
effective management of the maternal and newborn health sector workforce, and the enabling environment that midwives need in order to achieve positive outcomes
➢ builds in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the MSF process, and
➢ results in a clear to-do list regarding organising the health care system to fully enable midwife-led care and developing the services around the needs of women and their families.

**MSF 2020**

The MSF was developed in 2015 by SRMNH experts convened by the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM). Between July 2015 and April 2018, with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the MSF was implemented in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, and Togo. In December 2018, the ICM engaged an independent evaluation consultant to review progress of the implementation of the Framework in these six countries. The MSF evaluation was designed to:
➢ identify conditions that led to optimal uptake of the Framework; and
➢ recommend any changes to improve future implementation.

The evaluation concluded in May 2019.

ICM convened a panel of experts in June 2019, to review the findings, reflect on the implications of these findings for future implementation of the Framework, and to revise the MSF accordingly. The Panel suggested a number of modifications to the MSF. The diagram below provides an overview of the MSF 2020.

**Overview of the MSF 2020**

**Timeline for MSF implementation:**
Identification of participating country: Dec 2019 to March 2020
Preparatory phase: April 2020 to September 2020
MSF workshop: October 2020
MSF Follow-up: October 2020 to October 2021 (the ICM exits, but, the MSF implementation continues beyond October 2021, the ICM is sent regular updates on the MSF implementation).