



Information note

Comprehensive multi-sectoral national CRVS strategies

How many countries in Asia and the Pacific have developed national CRVS strategies?

At least 18 countries in Asia and the Pacific have developed national CRVS strategies, with more countries planning to do so over the coming year. Countries who have not established national CRVS strategies generally fall into these categories:

1. The national CRVS system is well-established and therefore, it is perceived that a comprehensive strategy is not needed
2. A national strategy is being developed or is currently under revision and political endorsement
3. There are significant impediments to formalizing national strategies such as lack of collaboration and awareness among relevant ministries
4. Work on improving the CRVS system has just started recently

The development of national strategies in some countries receive support from development partners including the Pacific Community, Australian Bureau of Statistics, UNICEF or WHO.

Why should national CRVS strategies be developed?

A strategy is a “method or plan chosen to bring about a desired future, such as achievement of a goal or solution to a problem”. In other words, a national CRVS strategy should outline how a country aims to reach the goals and national targets of the CRVS decade. Thinking strategically means going from ad hoc activities to prioritized and systematized actions with a larger impact.



What have countries committed to as part of the Regional Action Framework on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific?

A key principle in the Regional Action Framework is that countries should take the lead in improving national CRVS systems. To do so, one of the implementation steps of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific highlights that countries should: ‘Develop and implement a comprehensive multi-sectoral national CRVS strategy, aligned, where appropriate, with the action areas of the Regional Action Framework, with political commitment, adequate funding, and a clear delineation of responsibilities for stakeholders to establish accountability for the implementation’.

Links between the national CRVS and other implementation steps of the Regional Action Framework



The comprehensive assessment (Implementation Step B) and inequality assessment (Implementation Step E) of CRVS systems provide a foundation for the multi-sectoral national CRVS strategy. Independent on the situation in the specific country, the development of the national CRVS strategy should benefit from the inputs of the multiple stakeholders involved in implementing CRVS activities through the national CRVS coordination mechanism (Implementation Step A). The strategy should also include the nationally set RAF targets (Implementation Step C) as well as the plan to monitor and report the achievements of the targets (Implementation step D). The regular monitoring of the plan and all relevant information should be reported to the ESCAP secretariat (Implementation Step H) by the national focal point (Implementation Step G) as part of the country’s commitment to the RAF but also to facilitate knowledge sharing and cooperation.

Links between the national CRVS and the action areas of the Regional Action Framework

Though the content of the multi-sectoral CRVS strategy can differ vastly across countries and according to the priorities for CRVS improvement identified in the comprehensive assessments, the Regional Action Framework suggest that the action areas serve as a basis for Government and development partners to focus and organize efforts towards developing, implementing and supporting multi-sectoral national CRVS strategies, including delineating the responsibilities of involved

stakeholders'. These action areas are: political commitment; public engagement; participation and generating demand; coordination; policies, legislation and implementation of regulations; infrastructure and resources; operational procedures, practices and innovations; and production, dissemination and use of vital statistics. The level of attention to each of these action areas will then depend on the assessment of the situation in the country. An example would be a country who is still using a paper based system, might need to give more attention to Action Area F: Operational procedures, practices and innovations, as an example through introducing innovations to increase access to registration, such as mobile registration and use of information technology for registration and maintaining civil registration records or by conducting thorough technical analysis and risk assessment to establish how digital technologies can best be used to support CRVS processes in a scalable and sustainable way, and ensuring that mitigation strategies are in place when there are possible threats to the rights of individuals, such as privacy.

Further resources

- Mikkelsen, Lene (2012), *Strategic planning to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems: Guidance for using findings from a comprehensive assessment*, Health Information systems knowledge hub, Working Paper Series Number 23 September 2012, available from: <http://www.getinthepicture.org/resource/strategic-planning-strengthen-civil-registration-and-vital-statistics-systems-guidance>
- Statistics South Africa (2013), *Strategic Planning Guide for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics*, available from <http://getinthepicture.org/resource/strategic-planning-guide-crvs>
- *Examples of national strategies from Asia and the Pacific can be found on www.getinthepicture.org*

Suggested content of a comprehensive national CRVS strategy

1. **Background/intro:**
 - What is CRVS
 - Why is it important
 - Overview of the national CRVS systems
 - Links to SDGs and national development plans
 - National, regional and international commitments including the RAF
2. **Vision and mission**
3. **Approach**
 - Stakeholders
 - Assessments to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the CRVS system
 - Mapping
 - Prioritization of action areas
 - Prior assessments
 - Improvement instruments
4. **National targets/goals/outputs**
 - RAF targets
 - Statement of outputs
5. **Challenges/issues**
 - Lack of resources -why is this important
 - Inequalities in access
6. **Actions:**
 - Issue
 - Action
 - Responsibility
 - Timeframe
 - How do we know this has been achieved?
7. **Resources/ support needed**
 - Plan for achieving this, cost estimates
8. **Coordination and monitoring of progress**
9. **Endorsement**
10. **Possible revisions**

