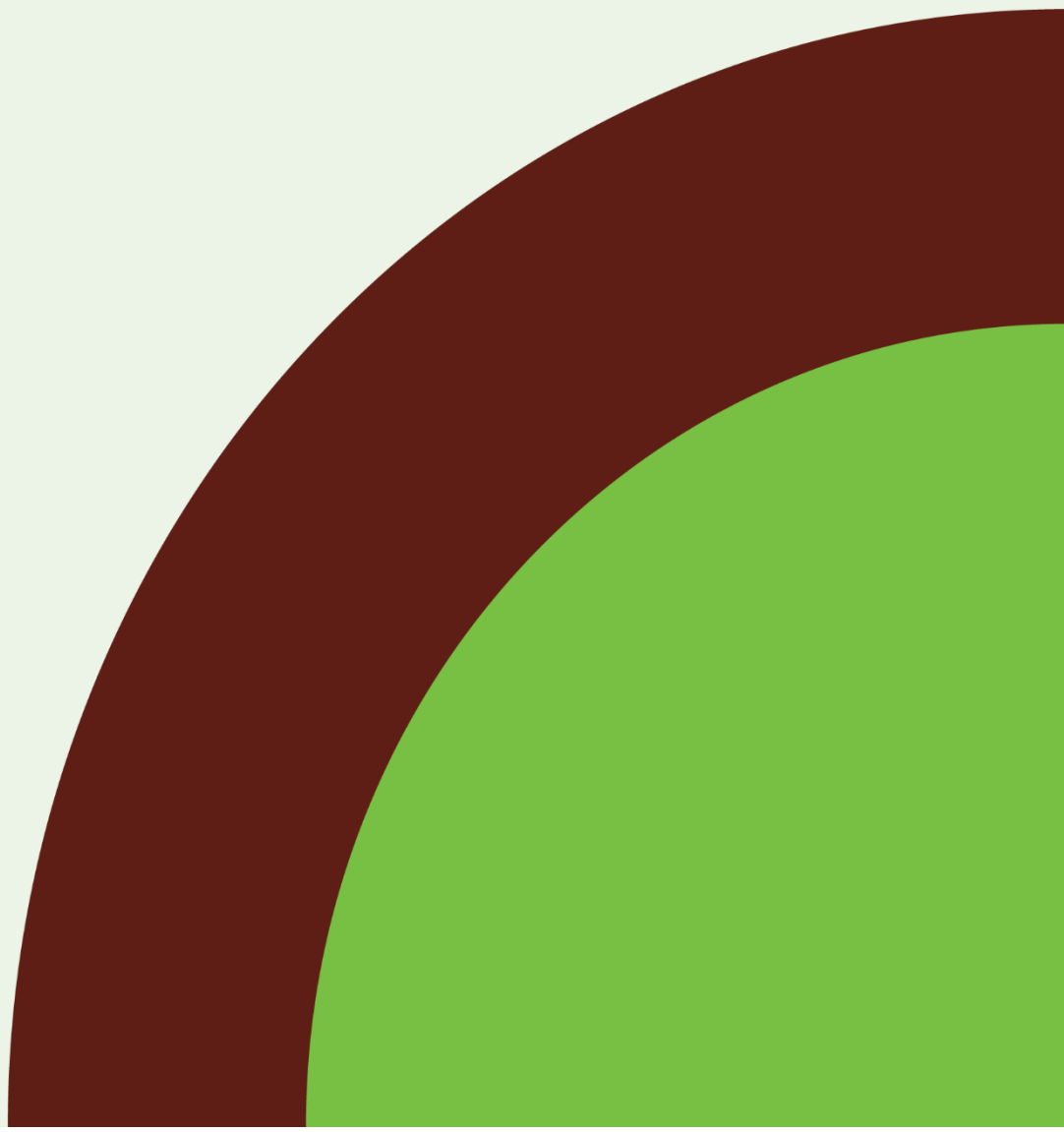


# CRVS Systems Improvement Framework

Stage 2: CRVS

Strategic & Action Plan (CRVS-SAP)

NOVEMBER 2025 (VERSION 2.0)





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## Introduction and overview

Stage 2 of the Framework supports the development of a CRVS Strategic and Action Plan (CRVS-SAP) to improve or strengthen the system. A strategy is a way of describing *how* you are going to get things done. It is less specific than an action plan (which tells the who-what-when); instead, it tries to broadly answer the question, "how do we get from here to there?" A good strategy will consider existing resources (people, money, materials, etc.) and potential risks.

In essence, a strategic and action plan is a working document that helps organizations explain what they want to achieve and the steps they will take to achieve it. The plan should be both strategic and prioritized: **strategic** in the sense that it must comprehensively address all critical areas identified during Stage 1; and **prioritized** in the sense that it must be realistic, as not all actions can, or need, to be done immediately.

As developing a strategy depends on in-depth knowledge and skills in a variety of areas, the core team should, as necessary, seek planning and management advice to develop the CRVS-SAP. The team should take the following important considerations into account:

- If a prior CRVS strategy exists, terminologies and concepts should be consistent, and any differences should be explained for continuity.
- Government buy-in for the CRVS-SAP and alignment of the plan with the country's overall development goals and national development plan, to ensure domestic co-financing and sustainable domestic sources of funding for the medium- to long-term.
- Timeline for transition to full government ownership of the improved system and ideally institutional arrangements to ensure increased domestic funding as external funding decreases.
- Terminologies and concepts should be aligned with government budgetary approval requirements to facilitate the financing of improvement efforts as part of government activities.
- Creating an inventory of ongoing and planned CRVS system-strengthening efforts, including broader international and national initiatives that can be expected to have a positive impact on CRVS.

## Step 1. Formulate the strategy

A strategic plan defines the direction an organization needs to follow to achieve its missions and vision. Strategic goals, outcomes, and objectives drive a strategy. A strategic goal can be defined as the desired result the proposed CRVS system aims to achieve. The goal is where we want the system to be in the long term. Often a strategic goal is so general that it is expressed in nontechnical, qualitative terms rather than in quantitative terms, for example, "an efficient and effective CRVS system that meets user-needs".

An outcome is a change in the status of a system that results, wholly or in part, from a strategy, plan, or program. An example of an outcome of the CRVS system may be stated as, "distance to registration service reduced to less than five kilometres for all people". Using outcomes to drive strategy means planning backward from the as-desired system.

The core team should define the gap — the difference between what you wish for and where you currently are (done by referring to the baseline data collected during Stage 1). Filling the gap becomes



the strategic objective. Strategic objectives direct the activities of the organization or system and form the foundation on which decisions on actions are made. They provide direction for everyone in the organization and motivation for individuals to achieve the objectives. Good objectives also help delegate authority effectively. All activities in the CRVS system should be linked to a strategic objective, whether they are new activities, improvement initiatives, or maintaining existing processes.

**This step has five main activities:**

1. **Review strategic goals, outcomes, and objectives**
2. **Develop sub-objectives**
3. **Examine potential implications on the enabling environment**
4. **Compile a strategy map**
5. **Identify strategic risks.**

## 1.1 Review strategic goals, outcomes, and objectives

Firstly, and particularly in contexts where there has been a break between implementation of Stages 1 and 2, the core team should review the previously agreed vision, mission, and values of the CRVS system (Stage 0) along with key performance indicators (KPIs) (Stage 1). Any previously set goals, outcomes, and objectives should be reviewed for relevance, particularly if major system changes have already occurred, such as the expansion of digital services or implementation of a national identity system. As part of the review, ensure the objectives:

- provide direction to achieve the mission,
- are based on the results of the prioritization and ranking of potential redesign ideas discussed in Stage 1, and
- are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).

### What are SMART objectives?

- **Specific.** That is, they tell how much (e.g., 10%) of what is to be achieved (e.g., what behavior of whom or what outcome), and by when (e.g., by 2030).
- **Measurable.** Information concerning the objective can be collected, detected, or obtained.
- **Achievable.** It is feasible to achieve them. While objectives should be challenging, they should not be unrealistic.
- **Relevant** to the mission. Your organization has a clear understanding of how these objectives fit in with the overall vision and mission of the system.
- **Time-bound.** Your organization has developed a timeline (a portion of which is made clear in the objectives) by which they will be achieved.

## 1.2 Develop sub-objectives

The development of sub-objectives is critical to realizing the strategic objectives. The summarized information from the assessment phase, captured in Stage 1, should serve as key inputs for developing sub-objectives. However, sub-objectives need to be more specific and to cover all areas of the system.



Note that sub-objectives may not be needed for every year of the strategic plan. As the years go on, it is fine to create new yearly sub-objectives that connect back to the overall goals, outcomes, and objectives of the plan.

## Country examples

### Rwanda National CRVS Strategic Plan (2017/18–2021/22)

- **Vision:** Make every life known and count
- **Mission:** To build a modern, timely, complete and integrated CRVS system to ensure legal identity for all, good governance and evidence-based decision making for sustainable development
- **Strategic goal:** to be able to support evidence-based development and transformation of society
  - **Strategic outcome 1:** Legal identity and rights for all
    - **Strategic objective 1.1:** To improve the legislative environment and align with international practices and enforce laws and regulations
      - **Sub-objective 1.1.1:** Improve the legislative environment
    - **Strategic objective 1.2:** To increase the coverage of registrations of births, marriage, divorce and death registrations, including raise awareness of the population
      - **Sub-objective 1.2.1:** Create public awareness on civil registration
      - **Sub-objective 1.2.2:** Decentralize civil registration services
  - **Strategic outcome 2:** Good governance and accountability
  - **Strategic outcome 3:** Reliable statistics

### The Philippine CRVS Strategic Plan (2023–2028)

- **Vision:** A dynamic CRVS system aligned with international standards, that promotes the rights and well-being of all Filipinos
- **Mission:** To provide quality, timely and relevant civil registration services and vital statistics that are responsive to the needs of all stakeholders
- **Strategic goals:**
  - **Strategic goal 1:** Enhanced capacity for CRVS
    - **Strategic objective 1.1:** By 2023, a legislative and policy agenda that aims to strengthen civil registration system has been developed
    - **Strategic objective 1.2:** By 2023, a strategic and national approach has been adopted for the improvement of CRVS
    - **Strategic objective 1.3:** By 2025, an updated compilation of issuances and circulars on CRVS from the Civil Registrar General has been disseminated to LCROs and Phil. FSPs
    - **Strategic objective 1.4:** By 2028, partnerships and collaborations within and among stakeholders-agencies of CRVS are strengthened
    - **Strategic objective 1.5:** By 2028, standardization of competency and staffing complement of local civil registry offices
    - **Strategic objective 1.6:** By 2028, a CRVS Capacity Development Plan is in place



- **Strategic objective 1.7:** By 2028, a CRVS Monitoring and Evaluation Plan is in place
  - **Strategic goal 2:** Universal and responsive civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events
  - **Strategic goal 3:** Improved accuracy, quality, timeliness, and completeness of CRVS data on births, deaths and other vital events
  - **Strategic goal 4:** Increased awareness, support and utilization of CRVS data

#### Additional resources

Annex 19. CRVS-SAP template

## 1.3 Examine potential implications on the enabling environment

As part of determining the feasibility of the CRVS-SAP, the core team should examine how any new processes or changes to the system (as defined in the goals, outcomes, and/or objectives), might affect the broader civil registration, vital statistics, and national identity management systems, including what other changes need to occur within the enabling environment. This task should be carried out by the core team through a consultative process, ideally in a meeting with only a few relevant stakeholders. The team should discuss and document the changes needed for each organizational capability to implement the new process.

**Table 5** provides an example of the potential changes and requirements needed to implement a redesigned birth registration process to decrease the number of visits needed for completing registration and obtaining a certificate. Depending on the implications of the redesign, the team may decide that the proposed processes need further adjustments.

**Table 5** Worked example of potential changes and requirements to the enabling environment

Enabling environment characteristic	Examples of potential implications of redesign and required changes
<b>Business processes</b>	Community Health Workers will be designated as informants of birth registration. As such, they will complete and submit the birth registration application and collect the birth certificate on behalf of the family. The health facility, hospital, or other data entry point will enter registration information into the central IT system and print the birth certificate. Therefore, the CRVS organizational structure will change.
<b>Human resources</b>	Community Health Workers and staff at health facilities, hospitals, or other data entry points will need to be trained on the new process, forms, and technological requirements.
<b>Financial resources</b>	Budgets may need to be adjusted, or domestic resources may need to be mobilized to fund new process commitments.
<b>Physical infrastructure</b>	Health facilities, hospitals, or other data entry locations will have to be assessed for their ability to accommodate new services (such as dedicated offices, office equipment, etc.) and be adjusted accordingly.



<b>Information technologies (IT)</b>	The new process will require an IT solution that will link electronic data capture at health facilities, district hospitals, or other data entry locations to the central civil registration IT system.
<b>Management and coordination</b>	A monitoring system will need to be designed, implemented, and managed to allow for measurement and reporting on the performance of the certification process.
<b>Policies, laws and regulations</b>	<p>The legal and regulatory framework must be amended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Community Health Workers as informants for the civil registration of births</li> <li>• Allow registration information to be entered and birth certificates to be printed at a health facility, hospital, or other data location</li> <li>• Permit Community Health Workers to pick up and deliver birth certificates to family</li> <li>• Ensure strict data security and protection procedures are in place, to minimize the risk of fake birth certificates being created and prevent unwarranted access to the central IT system.</li> </ul>

## 1.4 Compile a strategy map

The strategy map is a dynamic visual tool that describes and communicates the strategy (see **Figure 8**). This is distinctly different from the business process maps used in Stage 1. It ensures that the strategic objectives are balanced, covering all aspects of the CRVS system. As the strategy map shows cause-and-effect relationships, it allows organizations to:

- clarify strategies,
- identify key internal processes that drive strategic success,
- align investments in people, technology, and organizational capital for the greatest impact, and
- expose gaps in strategies and take early corrective action.

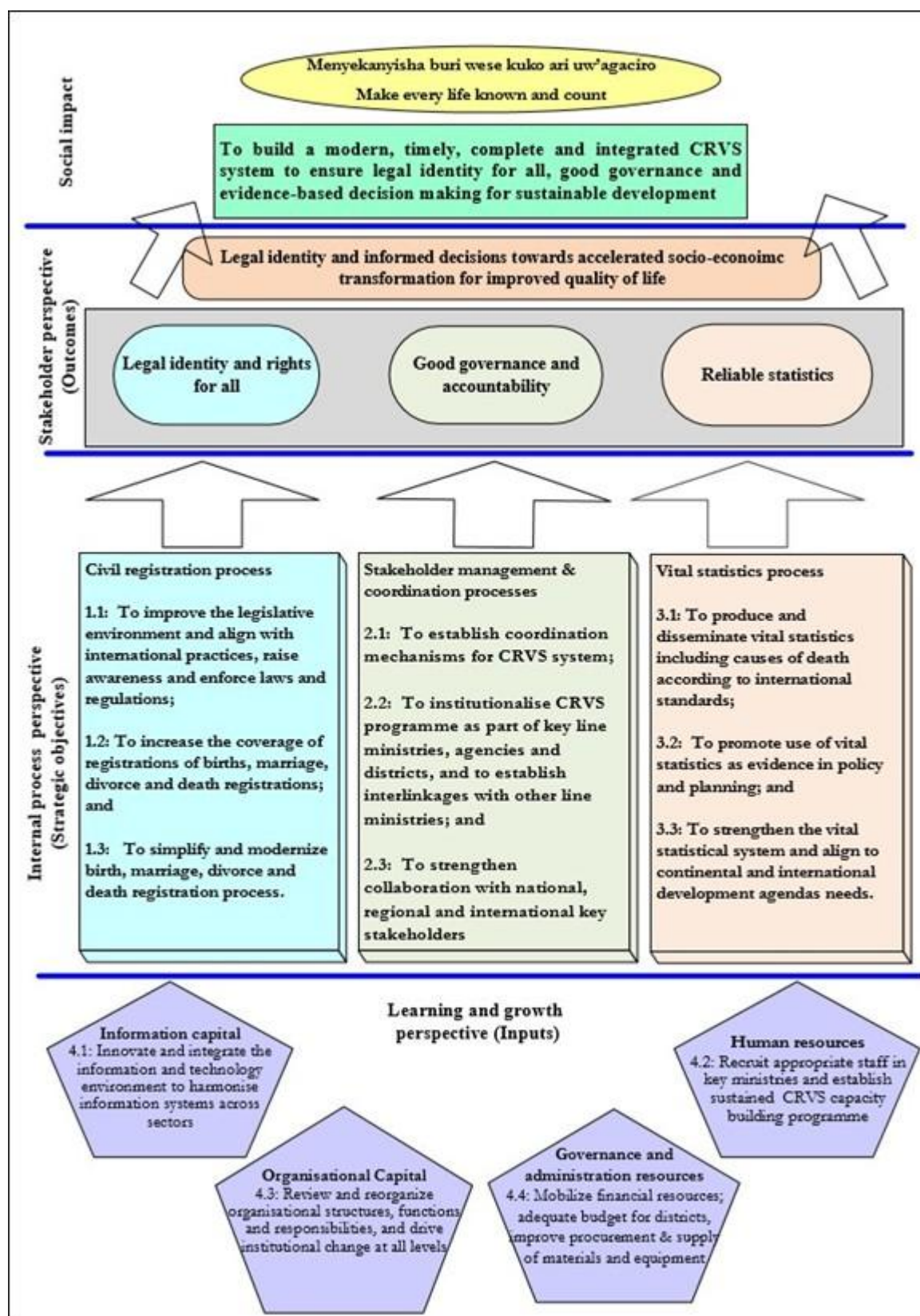
Strategy development is an iterative process. Following the compilation of this strategy map, the strategic objectives and sub-objectives should be revisited.

### Additional resources

[What is a business strategy map and why is it important?](#)  
[Having trouble with your strategy? Then map it](#)



Figure 8 Example strategy map from the National CRVS Strategic Plan of Rwanda



Available at: [http://statistics.gov.rw/sites/default/files/documents/2025-02/CRVS\\_Strategic%20Plan\\_Final\\_Final\\_14\\_June-2017.pdf](http://statistics.gov.rw/sites/default/files/documents/2025-02/CRVS_Strategic%20Plan_Final_Final_14_June-2017.pdf)





## 1.5 Identify strategic risks

Every single element of strategy can be influenced to some extent by uncertainty. While the concepts of risk and uncertainty commonly conjure images of what could go wrong, the idea of managing strategic risk includes consideration of seizing opportunities as they arise.

Risks can be externally based (for example, “what happens if disaster strikes the community?”) or internal (for example, “what happens if a key statistician suddenly retires, or a critical piece of technology fails?” or “what if the government does not mobilize sufficient resources to co-finance the improvement process or sustainably maintain the improved system?”). These occurrences are usually unexpected and can become a major distraction that prevents the entire organization from executing the planned strategies.

Organizations that are faced with risks realize that they may have to abandon strategies; ideally, they adapt and change the course of the originally developed strategies. The worst-case scenario occurs when organizations forge ahead with strategies that are no longer appropriate simply because they appear on a strategic plan.

Effective risk management includes:

1. **Risk Identification:** The first step to managing risks is to identify them. Many risks can be divided into risk categories, like technical or organizational, and listed out by specific sub-categories like technology, interfaces, performance, logistics, budget and financing, etc.
2. **Risk Assessment:** Once the risks are identified, they need to be prioritized by looking at their likelihood and level of impact. In most cases, a risk assessment matrix is used to do so (see **Figure 9**). This provides an idea of how likely the risk is to impact project success as well as how urgent the response will need to be.
3. **Risk Mitigation:** Now it's time to create a contingency plan with risk mitigation actions to manage risks, usually recorded in a risk response plan. You also need to define which team members will be risk owners, responsible for monitoring and controlling risks.
4. **Risk Monitoring:** Risks must be monitored throughout the CRVS-SAP life cycle so that they can be controlled.

As part of overall risk management, the core team should determine for which population(s) risk differs, whether this is a function of broader power systems, and what this means in terms of risk mitigation and monitoring.



Figure 9 Example risk management matrix

Risk Matrix		Severity				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Likelihood	Almost Certain	Medium	High	Very High	Very High	Very High
	Likely	Medium	High	High	Very High	Very High
	Possible	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium

## Step 2. Develop the action plan

An action plan for CRVS systems improvement describes the comprehensive set of activities, required resources based on the costing (or other) analysis/study commissioned in Stage 0, and phases for implementing the national CRVS strategic plan. The development of the action plan should adopt a multi-stakeholder approach. This will ensure the commitment of participating actors and will greatly improve chances that action plans will be realistic and implementable.

The action plan should be developed iteratively, similar to development of the strategic plan. An initial plan should first be drafted based on the CRVS strategic plan. It is then refined based on a country's constraints (such as funding) and environment. This approach ensures that the plan is grounded in the current context but is not overly constrained. It also allows for the identification of activities that could be implemented if additional resources become available. If a previous action plan exists, the core team should review it before work starts.

As the action plan is developed and specific activities to implement that plan are elaborated, constraints or other observations may require the adjustment of the as-desired business process descriptions and maps. Detailing the activities may also indicate a need to revise the strategy. The core team should allow for such flexibility and make necessary changes to the strategy as well as the desired business processes.



This step has three main activities:

1. **Formulate the action plan**
2. **Determine the funding required to deliver the activities**
3. **Validation.**

## 2.1 Formulate the action plan

For each strategic objective, the core team should start by recording the following details:

- **Activities:** what are the main activities and action steps that need to be undertaken to achieve the objective?
- **Responsibility:** who will be responsible for doing them?
- **Completion date:** when will the activity be completed? In the worked example, timeframes have been provided, but try and be specific (i.e., provide the expected month and year of completion of the activity).
- **Progress indicators:** how will you measure achievement of the activity?

**Table 6 Worked example of activities for achieving the strategic objective “design a digital CRVS system within three years”**

<b>Strategic outcome:</b> A universal and responsive information and communications technology (ICT)-based CRVS system			
<b>Strategic objective 1:</b> Design a digital CRVS system within three years			
Activities	Entity responsible	Completion date	Progress indicators
1.1 Study the desired CRVS process maps to identify key areas that require ICT Intervention	National CRVS Committee	Within 6 months	Desired CRVS process areas that require ICT intervention established
1.2 Define the CRVS systems requirements considering the desired CRVS processes	National CRVS Committee	Within 12 months	CRVS system’s functional and nonfunctional requirements established and approved
1.3 Define the CRVS information technology requirements considering the desired CRVS processes	National CRVS Committee and Ministry of ICT	Within 12 months	CRVS information technology requirements established and approved
1.4 Conduct a comprehensive and consultative analysis of potential gaps in the existing digital systems	National CRVS Committee and Ministry of ICT	Within 18 months	Potential gaps in the existing digital systems for CRVS established
1.5 Design the system architecture for the CRVS digital system	National CRVS Committee and Ministry of ICT	Within 24 months	System architecture for CRVS digital system established and approved



## 2.2 Determine the funding required to deliver the activities

Implementation of the action plan requires both financial and nonfinancial resources. In Step 0, the financial sustainability task team initiated a costing study (or other analysis) to determine the resources needed to fully implement the CRVS improvement roadmap. During this sub-step, the task team should lead the process of determining an estimated cost for each specific activity in the action plan based on the results of the costing study/analysis. The team should also identify non-financial resources such as skilled workers or access to specialized equipment.

It is important to remember that many actions might be achievable without additional resources. Some improvements may even lead to cost savings, while others can be implemented through more efficient and rational allocation of existing resources. Basing the financial estimates on the costing study will generate confidence among stakeholders and decision-makers in the general accuracy of the estimates. Beyond two years it is recommended to present only rough cost projections. With an individual cost estimated for each activity, it is possible to produce cost summaries for each goal, which can be shown in an overview table with the strategic plan.

The [CRVS Budget Sustainability Toolkit](#) (9) provides a practical guide for government officials to identify and advocate for increased resource allocation to CRVS, including guidance on how to forecast, track and manage CRVS budgets for enhanced accountability and sustainability, and advocacy tools, templates, examples, and other resources to support implementation.

## 2.3 Validation

Validation of the costed CRVS-SAP is an important activity, usually conducted as part of a workshop, which ensures that stakeholders are informed of the plan. It also provides a way to verify the completeness and correctness of the plan through discussion. Given the resource implications of the plan, stakeholders from the Ministry of Finance should be included in the workshop, so they have the opportunity to review and discuss the costs of the draft CRVS-SAP. Their participation and buy-in are critical to domestic resource mobilization efforts in Stage 3.

The objectives of a validation workshop are to:

- share the costed CRVS-SAP with stakeholders and obtain their feedback,
- discuss and build consensus on the institutional arrangements for implementing the CRVS-SAP,
- obtain preliminary commitment to support implementation in terms of both human and financial resources, and
- agree on further steps to implement the CRVS-SAP.

The first step of the workshop should be to introduce the CRVS strategy map, to provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on the overall strategy, the agreed-upon direction, and the mission and vision to which the CRVS-SAP should be aligned. The strategic plan should then be presented before the presentation of the action plan. The presentation should include the methodology and development process followed, as well as an explanation of the action areas, outputs, associated activities, and costs, including how they were derived from the strategic plan and the costing study or other analysis.



Workshop participants should discuss and agree on the action areas and associated outputs before breaking out into groups for further review of the action plan for each action area. Participants should be given the opportunity to discuss and agree on the initial action areas and associated outputs, and they may delete, add, or amend them. This should be done in a breakout session in which the approved action area should be reviewed by stakeholders divided into teams that correspond to their areas of expertise.

The group should walk through and discuss all the activities of each output to identify missing, unnecessary, or incorrect activities, as well as activities that require amendment. At the end of the session, each team should present to the workshop participants in a plenary session for final validation. During the plenary session, the core team should respond to each comment and document the response.

Following the workshop, the costed CRVS-SAP should be submitted to the national CRVS committee for approval, along with an executive summary of the plan and a recap of key findings from Stage 1.

## Stage 2 – Summary

At the end of this stage, vision and mission statements for the CRVS system should have been reaffirmed, along with the strategy of how to get there – the goals, outcomes, and objectives.

A costed action plan should have been developed alongside the strategy, which outlines the action steps the organization will use to meet its goals, outcomes, and objectives, and the costs of these steps. The proposed changes to the system should be examined in terms of their potential implications on the enabling environment; at the same time, the activities need to be examined in terms of their demand on human and financial resources, physical infrastructure, policies, laws, and regulations, and so on. The draft costed CRVS-SAP should have gone through a validation process before being submitted to the relevant authorities for review and endorsement.

### Before moving to Stage 3, consider:

30. Have the vision and mission statements been reaffirmed?
31. Have goals, outcomes, and objectives been reaffirmed, and sub-objectives developed, as necessary?
32. Are the proposed actions complete, clear, and costed?
33. Has the draft costed CRVS strategic and action plan been developed?
34. Has the final draft costed CRVS strategic and action plan been submitted to relevant authorities for review and endorsement (for example, the technical working group and/or national CRVS committee)?
35. Has the costed strategic and action plan been approved by the national CRVS committee?

### Additional resources

Annex 10. Planning checklist



## References

- 9 **CRVS Budget Sustainability Toolkit.** Washington, DC: Global Health Advocacy Incubator; 2024  
([https://assets.advocacyincubator.org/uploads/2022/05/Budget\\_Advocacy\\_Framework\\_CRVS.pdf](https://assets.advocacyincubator.org/uploads/2022/05/Budget_Advocacy_Framework_CRVS.pdf)).

## Annexes

- Annex 10. Planning checklist
- Annex 19. CRVS-SAP template

