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# Vital statistics report writing

Workshop on data analysis and report writing for civil registration based vital statistics

*Nadi, Fiji*

*30 January – 03 February 2023*

Bloomberg  
Philanthropies



Pacific  
Community  
Communauté  
du Pacifique



UNITED NATIONS  
**ESCAP**

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

# Why is writing vitals statistics reports important?

Some **immediate** benefits of reports...

- ✓ Creates a single source of truth about the CRVS system, its data and reliability
- ✓ Creates a single place to access this information
- ✓ Turns complex data and numbers into something meaningful



# Why is writing vitals statistics reports important?



## Longer-term benefits of reports...

- ✓ Identifies systemic issues in the CRVS system which can then be targeted for improvement
- ✓ Allows international, regional and national reporting requirements to be met
- ✓ **Most importantly**, allows decision makers to develop national health policy and set priorities – with the ultimate goal of improved health for all!



# Why is writing vitals statistics reports important?

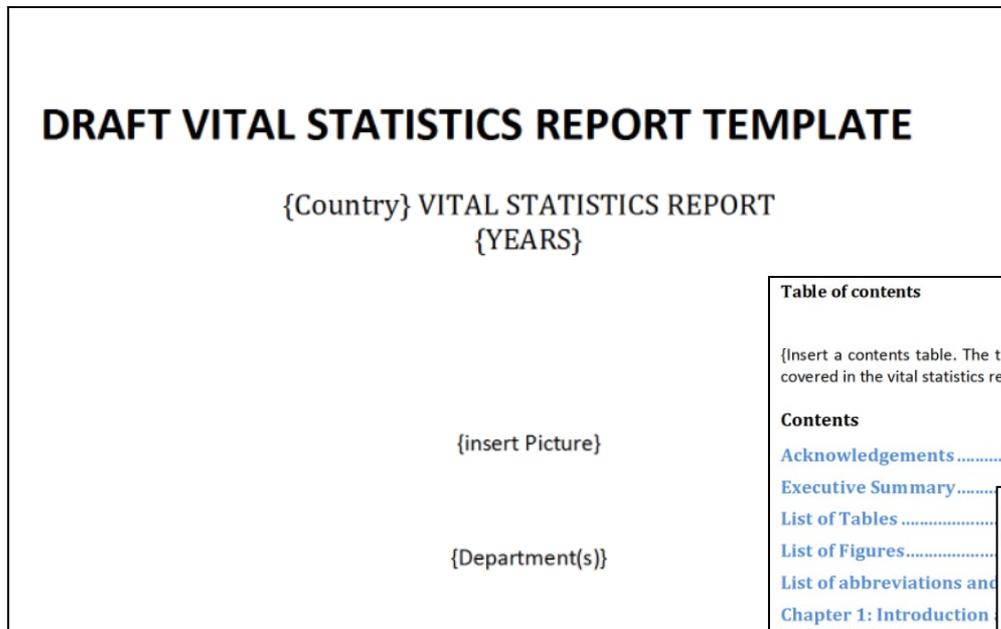


Benefits **you** because...

1. The main workshop output will be a draft vital statistics report based on your country's data
2. The next step (after the workshop) is for each country to finalise this draft or finalise the analysis you created during this workshop to share with you CRVS committee

# How do we write our vital statistics report?

- ◆ The main tool you can use to write your reports is the Draft Vital Statistics Report Template



**Table of contents**

{Insert a contents table. The table of contents provides a summary of key themes and sub-themes covered in the vital statistics report. An example is provided below}

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Please take time to read the template early in the workshop

# The Template

- ◆ Breaks report down into sections
- ◆ Each section explains what you could consider writing about, and what that section could contain
- ◆ Poses questions you should ask yourself as you write to make sure you have considered important things
- ◆ Contains sample text that could actually be used to start the writing process
- ◆ Note: Facilitators are also a great resource



# The Template: an example

## Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology

### 1.1 Introduction

{What vital statistics are, why vital statistics are important for health policy, planning and program evaluation, plus the broader uses of vital statistics}

{ The practical applications of vital statistics in the country, which are the key beneficiary sectors and how does the country stand to lose if such statistics are not produced}

{About this report – i.e. is this the first one, what years does it cover, which vital events does it cover , who was it written by, why is this report important in your country etc.}

{About the country – population size/ location / key health and development concerns/ logistics issues – i.e. population distribution, which population groups does the data cover, where is the data sourced from, is data reporting complete in remote regions etc. – depending on audience}.

### Sample text

*The objective of the report is :*

- *To present statistics on live births and deaths by selected socio-demographic and geographic characteristics for the years (state the period); and trends in mortality over a (state the period); and*
- *To present the causes of death for (state the period); based mainly on the underlying causes of death.*

But note that facilitators are a major resource as well, and we are here to help!



## Beginning

- Title Page, Summary Indicators, Acknowledgements
- Executive Summary (often the last section to write)
- Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures

## Body

- Introduction and Methods
- Births and Fertility
- Mortality
- Causes of Death

## End

- Conclusions – main points
- Recommendations

## References & Appendices

- Reference tables
  - Statistical notes, more methods
  - Source documents (i.e. Census, surveys)
- 

# Principles to get Started

- ✓ Start with dot points
- ✓ Write as we progress through the workshop
- ✓ Stick to headings & sections
- ✓ One topic per paragraph
- ✓ Practice and seek feedback from each other & facilitators

Figure 16.6 Key things to remember when writing a document

## 1 Decide what to say

- Understand your subject
- Be clear on your reasons for writing the document
- Tools such as an outline list, mind map, fishbone diagram or triangle diagram can be used to identify the key points of what you want to say

## 2 Put the points in order

- Decide on the order or priority of your points
- Make sure key points occur first (or early) where possible
- Put your points in a logical order
- Remember to put the most important points in each section first.

## 3 First identify the subject

- This gains and focuses the readers' attention
- Describe what has to be done

## 4 A paragraph for each idea

- Keep paragraphs as short as possible
- Use only relevant facts

## 5. Use simple words

- Don't use jargon

## 6 Don't use too many words

## 7 End by pointing out the way forward

- This will help maintain readers' attention
- Helps concentration
- The reader doesn't lose the subject or sentence

## 8 Revise your document

- Don't leave the reader wondering what next.
- End by repeating your purpose in writing
- Give the reader some idea of what you expect from them

An excellent resource is available on pp 159 of the course book.

# Communicating findings to leaders and policy makers



- ◆ Much like we have to think about where our source data comes from, we need to think about the uses and users of our analysis and report...
- ◆ We also need to consider what the priorities of these stakeholders might be...
- ◆ Why?
- ◆ Because while analysis and publishing our data is important, the ultimate aim is to ensure that the data is used to inform policy and planning decisions

**The more we understand who our stakeholders are and their priorities, the more we can adapt our report to this target audience...**

# Communicating findings – Identifying data users/report users

Before you start writing your report, and as you are writing your report, think about...

- who will be interested in this report?
- what departments are they from?
- what exactly are they interested in?
- how can we make sure we write to this audience?

# Communicating findings – what users might be interested in...



Likely areas include:

- Key health concerns and priorities in your country
- Policy concerns specific to departments (births vs deaths)
- International and regional reporting requirements and targets
- Major and novel findings from your analysis



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**Q&A**