

ASSESSMENT, ANALYSIS AND REDESIGN OF CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS PROCESSES - MALDIVES

Report on the implementation of
Stage 1: Assessment, analysis,
and redesign of the CRVS
Systems Improvement Framework





*The shaded areas of the map indicate ESCAP members and associate members.**

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1 INTRODUCTION

Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) are closely linked to a person's legal identity, including their right to recognition as a person before the law and their formal relationship with the state. A birth certificate provides individuals with documentary evidence proving their name, age, and family relationships. A death certificate constitutes a final and permanent record of the fact of death, which is needed by next of kin to manage the legal or financial consequences of death. Additionally, recording every life event is also an opportunity to produce accurate, complete and timely vital statistics on the health and demographics of the population, as well as maintain a national civil registry or population database.

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) authorities of Maldives are continuously exploring mechanisms to develop policies for addressing challenges while also taking advantage of regional and global good practices. With this goal in mind, Maldivian authorities recently implemented a new online birth and death registration platform. To further improve the platform, they also accepted the invitation of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to apply the CRVS System Improvement Framework¹ as a novel approach for analysing, redesigning and improving vital events registration processes.

This report documents the results of the work of the Maldives Core Team in the implementation of the "Assessment, analysis, and redesign" stage of the CRVS System Improvement Framework. Using the methodology and the tools defined by the CRVS System Improvement Framework, the Core Team, supported by a Country Coordinator and a Senior Adviser, organised a range of online and in-person consultations to apply the Framework tools. The consultations enabled the Core Team to provide detailed descriptions of existing birth and death registration business processes, analyse aspects of the processes affecting performance, and design a vision for improving registration business processes, overcoming performance bottlenecks, and increasing overall efficiency.

The report is organised into four distinct parts. The first part introduces the key characteristics of the Maldives CRVS system, as well as background information on the CRVS System Improvement Framework and the methodology for implementing the Framework implementation in the context of Maldives CRVS business processes. The second part of the report provides a detailed description of birth and death registration business processes as presently operated in Maldives. The third part of the report documents the analysis conducted by the Core Team to determine existing business processes, performance bottlenecks and their root causes, as well as redesign suggestions and how best to prioritize improvements. Finally, the fourth part of the report envisions the processes that would emerge after improvement policies are implemented.

Maldives CRVS system

The Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system of Maldives is a well-rounded system which continuously delivers on its main task of ensuring universal birth and death registration for the population residing in its territory. The legal framework for civil registration in the Maldives is mostly founded in the law on birth registration and death certification, enacted in 1993.

¹ CRVS Systems Improvement Framework (2021). Available at <https://getinthepicture.org/resource/crvs-systems-improvement-framework>

Concerning the primary CRVS stakeholders, the Ministry of Health, along with the Local Councils and the Department of National Registration (DNR) are the authorities responsible for the CRVS system. DNR is responsible for the collection of birth forms and death forms, and their entry into the online database, while the Ministry of Health maintains the notification system for births and deaths, including information collected with the forms completed at the time of occurrence of the vital event.

Meanwhile, the National Bureau of Statistics, a bureau of the Ministry of National Planning and Infrastructure, is responsible for the production and dissemination of vital statistics. Moreover, the government of Maldives established a CRVS coordination committee in 2017, which is chaired by the State Minister of Health, and includes representatives from the Department of National Registration, the National Centre for Information Technology and the National Bureau of Statistics.

Registration can occur at two hospitals in the capital city Malé, six Regional Hospitals, 13 Atoll Hospitals, 168 Health Centres, 189 Island Councils or 19 Atoll Councils. Legally, births must be registered within seven days of their occurrence, with applicable fees, and while registering a death has no legally defined limit, it is necessary to obtain a funeral permit and is free of charge. Birth registration rates approach universal converge, and death registration completeness was estimated to be around 100% in 2020. The establishment of the online birth and death platform GEMEN, a software application built on the Government Network of Maldives or GNM (e-Government platform), helped in improving the CRVS system, but some challenges remain.

Some of the remaining challenges include personnel limitations, including limited numbers, resources, and training. The limited resources result in inconsistent data quality, most prominently in cause of death coding. Challenges also persist with the registration of vital events of Maldivian citizens occurring abroad. However, as part of their continued efforts in improving digital platforms for vital events registration, CRVS authorities are also looking into the design of registration business processes. The authorities hope to leverage opportunities provided by digitized data processing, with the view toward increasing overall efficiency of the registration process, and simultaneously improving the overall experiences of the end-users. Furthermore, CRVS authorities are reviewing the civil registration act to provide a strong legal basis for the processes.

Background on the CRVS System Improvement Framework

The CRVS System Improvement Framework is based on important lessons learned and experiences shared by countries that conducted the comprehensive assessment to prepare a strategic action plan. Under the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative, as well as other global and regional system strengthening efforts, the Framework draws on experiences in supporting system-wide approaches. Building on existing CRVS system-strengthening guidelines developed by the Africa Programme for Accelerated Improvement of CRVS (APAI-CRVS), the World Health Organization (WHO), the University of Queensland, and others, the Framework introduces a unique, process-centric approach. It provides guidance for countries in applying a multi-sectoral, participatory approach to continually improving the performance of their CRVS systems. The Framework introduces systems-thinking tools such as, process mapping as a key strategy to engage stakeholders, methods for improving understanding of the CRVS system and its weaknesses, identifying solutions, and monitoring changes in performance over time.



The Framework is composed of three stages:

- Stage 1: Assessment, analysis, and redesign;
- Stage 2: Development of the strategic and action plan; and
- Stage 3: Implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

The approach of measuring, analysing, and redesigning business processes to improve performance significantly – which is applied in the Framework – is known as business process improvement.

With the overall goal of improving registration business processes, Maldivian CRVS stakeholders focused on the stage 1 of the Framework with two key objectives:

- 1) identifying issues affecting the performance of business processes in the CRVS system and the root causes of these issues, and**
- 2) identifying redesigns that should be implemented to address the performance issues and root causes.**

Following the initial consultations on the Framework and discussions on CRVS processes, Maldivian CRVS stakeholders decided to strictly focus on improving birth and death registration business processes.

1.1. Methodology

In line with the Framework, Maldivian CRVS stakeholders established a National Core Team responsible for Framework activities and comprised of experts and managers from Maldives CRVS system stakeholder institutions. The work of the National Core Team was facilitated by the National Coordinator. The National Core Team and the National Coordinator were supported by the senior CRVS advisor, who provided strategic and senior-level input to the process.

With COVID-19 restrictions in place, the work was organised as a series of one-on-one, online consultations and weekly, online Core Team consultations. In line with the Framework, the work of the Country Team was implemented through the following stages:

1. Identifying and documenting current birth and death registration processes.
2. Gathering performance information on current birth and death registration business processes.
3. Identifying performance issues of current birth and death registration business processes and identifying root causes of the issues.
4. Defining policies for improvement of birth and death business processes.
5. Redesigning birth and death registration business processes.
6. Developing birth and death registration process descriptions and process maps for redesigned CRVS business processes.

This report documents the results of the work of the Core Team from each of these six stages.



2

AS-IS ANALYSIS OF SELECTED BUSINESS PROCESSES

To achieve the first stage of the process, birth and death registration process are documented verbally and graphically using the business process description table (see Table 1 and Table 2) and business process maps (see below Figure 1 and Figure 2). Table 1 and Table 2 provide the business process description of the birth and death processes in a narrative form. For each of the selected CRVS business processes, the process description template was completed by each stakeholder institution of the process and later discussed together with the core team to finalise the process description and the process maps.

2.1 Birth Registration Process of events occurring in health facilities

Table 1: Birth Registration Process of events occurring in health facilities and at home

	As-is Birth Registration Process Description	Who (name of unit/section, institution)	Time taken (days/hours/minutes)
Name of process	Birth registration at health facility	City Council (MCC) - Vital Registration	3-5 days
Process actors	Direct actors: Health facility, Family member, Department of National Registration (DNR). Indirect actors: National Centre for Information Technology (NCIT), Local Government Authority (LGA), family court, gender ministry, embassies/		

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