

Civil Registration & Vital Statistics Program



Guidance for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Governance Mechanisms





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Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and raise issues for consideration in the establishment or evolution of good Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) governance structures and functions. The information provided is general, and countries may use it to inform the development of a structure that best suits the needs of the CRVS system and the country overall, given the existing administrative and reporting structures.

It is strongly recommended that every country has a High-Level Interagency CRVS Coordination Committee and an Interagency CRVS Technical Coordination Committee. Together, they form the core governance structures of the CRVS system.

The High-Level Committee provides strategic guidance, policy direction, and overall oversight. The Interagency CRVS Technical Coordination Committee complements this with technical direction and oversight by supporting and coordinating the implementation of the day-to-day operation of the CRVS system. In some contexts, such as highly decentralized or federated governments, there may be multiple subnational technical coordination committees. Subject-Specific Technical Working Group(s) may also be established to focus on specific technical topics. These can be dissolved once deliverables are achieved.

It is advisable to conduct a stakeholder analysis to understand needs and identify potential roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders before establishing a committee or group. Formal terms of reference should be defined for each of the committees and should include concrete objectives and meeting frequency, with membership officially mandated and documented.

To enhance sustainability, the committee/group may be anchored within an established reporting structure.

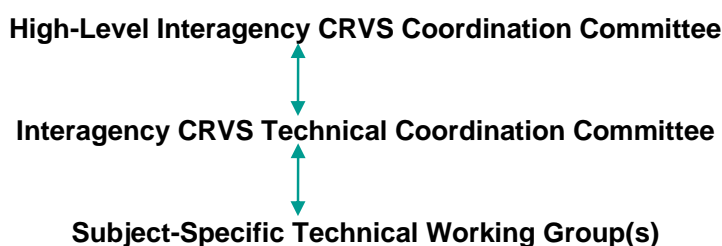


Figure 1. Sample CRVS Governance Structure



High-Level Interagency CRVS Coordination Committee

Function

- Serve as an ultimate accountability mechanism for the performance of the CRVS system by providing overall policy direction and oversight of, and advocacy for the CRVS system.

Responsibilities

- Provide leadership, coordination, and oversight in the operation of the CRVS system and any improvement plans the government may have adopted.
- Make high-level policy decisions on issues related to maintenance and strengthening of the national CRVS system including those needed to facilitate the assessment of the CRVS system and implementation of national CRVS plans.
- Identify and coordinate sources of support—financial and technical—from stakeholders (international or national) for CRVS improvement activities.
- Serve as a single, national focal point for development partners and other key CRVS stakeholders.
- Oversee the work of the Interagency CRVS Technical Coordination Committee and Subject-Specific Technical Working Group(s).

Reporting

- Report to the highest level of government (Prime Minister's or President's Office) on the status, needs, and progress of the CRVS system.

Composition

- Chaired by a minister or other senior government representative who can influence all other ministries and organizations.
- Members should include policy leaders and policymakers, such as the senior-most civil servants in-charge of civil registration; health; general administration; finance (often strategic to ensure adequate budgeting); law/justice; local government/municipal administration; education; information and communication; information technology; national identity management; and any other agency involved or interested in CRVS.
- The Secretariat should be hosted by a key agency in the CRVS system such as the civil registration organization. If it is deemed appropriate, it may be helpful to ask trusted development partners to support the Secretariat (the committee itself should only include government officials).

Coordination

- Some countries may have specific provisions in the law empowering a single government agency to coordinate the activities of CRVS stakeholders and obliging stakeholders to collaborate with the coordination committee.
- The committee should be established permanently, have legal status, and meet at least twice a year.



Interagency CRVS Technical Coordination Committee

Function

- Responsible for implementing and coordinating the operational and technical aspects of the CRVS system.

Responsibilities

- Provide strategic direction, technical and management oversight, and leadership to ensure a well-functioning, effective, efficient, and sustainable national CRVS system per the national CRVS law, strategic plan, and international standards on CRVS.
- Develop detailed cost-bound work plans with specific activities, responsibilities, and timelines to maintain, monitor, and improve the CRVS system.
- Review progress of an annual CRVS action plan and conduct comprehensive assessments of the national CRVS system; support and monitor implementation of the comprehensive multi-sectoral national CRVS strategies; and advise the production of relevant reports such as a national vital statistics report.
- Ensure that efforts across departments and ministries contribute to a shared goal or vision for the CRVS system and promote interagency coordination.
- Ensure CRVS improvement efforts are linked with relevant national development plans and activities.
- Conduct consultations with wider stakeholder groups, such as international development partners, and solicit information, advice, and guidance on steps necessary to improve CRVS.
- Facilitate knowledge sharing and open discussions that improve communication and enhance understanding of each stakeholder's needs and challenges.

Reporting

- This committee should report to the High-Level Interagency CRVS Coordination Committee.

Composition

- The chair should be the Registrar General, and members should include representatives from the civil registration office, the national statistics office, national identity management, the health sector, provincial and local governments, civil society, key development partners and donors, and other institutions directly involved in the practical operation of the CRVS system (as applicable).
- Membership should be reviewed annually to ensure active participation from all the ministries represented.
- The Secretariat should be hosted by a key agency in the CRVS system such as the civil registration office. Governments may ask trusted development partners for support with the Secretariat.
- Include or be able to call upon subject matter specialists who can provide advice on topics such as on quality assurance and ensure compliance with international standards.

Coordination

- The Interagency CRVS Technical Coordination Committee should be at the national level, however similar committees can be set up at regional or lower levels to



facilitate coordination between local CRVS agency representatives across the various levels of the larger system.

- Meeting frequency of at least once per quarter or more as needed.

Subject-Specific Technical Working Group(s)

Function

- Develop a detailed topic-specific workplan with targeted activities, responsibilities and timelines.

Responsibilities

- Technical working group(s) often focus on system improvement activities such as harmonization of how vital events are captured and counted, digitization, standardization of disease classification and reporting of cause-of-death, quality assurance, and legal review and related revisions of the regulatory framework.

Reporting

- Technical working group(s) should report to the Interagency CRVS Technical Coordination Committee.

Composition

- Include technical representatives from all the concerned ministries (e.g. ministry of foreign affairs, national identity management stakeholders, coronary or judicial medical examiner system representatives).
- Include or be able to call upon subject matter specialists for the performance of duties where specialist technical expertise is required (e.g. provide advice on quality assurance and ensure compliance to international standards).
- Membership should be reviewed annually to ensure active participation from all the ministries represented.

Coordination

- Subject-specific technical working group(s) (e.g. national disease classification technical working group) can be established in one of the ministries involved in CRVS (e.g. ministry of health for disease classification).
- Technical working group(s) may be time-bound.
- Technical working group(s) should be set up on an as-needed basis.
- Meeting frequency can be once per quarter or as needed until no longer necessary.

References

- ESCAP Information note: National multi-sectoral CRVS coordination mechanisms [<http://getinthepicture.org/resource/information-note-national-multi-sectoral-crvs-coordination-mechanisms>]
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- UNSD Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System [<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/standmeth/principles/M19Rev3en.pdf>]



- IIVRS Technical Paper No. 6: Coordinating Role of National Committees on Vital and Health Statistics [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/isp/isp_iivrs.htm]
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- Official communication from the Economic Commission of Africa to the Civil Registration Authorities and National Statistics Organizations in its member states regarding preparatory arrangements for comprehensive assessment and planning process of CRVS systems (12 August 2013).