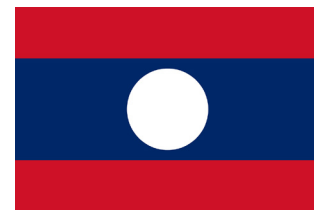




Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) – Priorities and Actions



Key actions areas for a strengthened CRVS system in Lao PDR (2024)

Context

In 2022, Lao PDR embarked on projects to gain an overview of available vital statistics sources and to conduct a CRVS-related inequality assessment, through technical and capacity strengthening in demographic skills for relevant national CRVS stakeholders, supported by ESCAP and UNFPA. [The First Synthesized Analysis of Available Vital Statistics in Lao PDR](#) was published by UNFPA in 2024. [The Inequality Assessment Report](#) was published in 2023 and provides an overview of civil registration completeness in Lao PDR and the drivers behind low birth registration.

Based on key findings from this inequality assessment, relevant national CRVS stakeholders convened for a 1-day workshop in Vientiane (supported by Lao Statistics Bureau, UNFPA and ESCAP) to identify strategic action areas to improve completeness of civil registration and ensuring that this data is shared and utilized for the production of vital statistics.

This document outlines the recommendations that national CRVS stakeholders classified as priority areas and the potential strategies that can support achievement of these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Citizen Management Inter-ministerial Coordinating Committee should integrate a Unique Identification Number (UIN), so that every person has one UIN, allowing linkages across databases

- Integrate national ID registers with the CRVS system, ensuring CRVS is the foundational system, to help create a universal, inclusive ID system.
- Ensure that the appropriate legal and institutional frameworks are in place to support the establishment of one UIN that can be utilized by all relevant Ministries and agencies.
- Through integration with the CRVS system, ensure that a person's identity begins at birth and is retired upon death. Establishing ID later in life has the potential to impact delivery of child-related services and failure to retire ID upon death increases the risk of identity theft and fraud.
- UINs are particularly useful in the context of digital records processing, as it becomes possible to search for and reconstruct all vital events linked to an individual throughout their life course.





RECOMMENDATION 1

- Use of a UIN may also facilitate the search for identity information across different government platforms.
- UINs consisting of a random number sequence have increasingly become standard procedure in order to mitigate any privacy concerns linked with the personal data contained within logical constructs (e.g. using a series of personal information such as date of birth, sex, area of residence etc.,).
- A deduplication process should ensure that the same person does not have multiple identity records or numbers (i.e., that they are unique in the database).

EXAMPLE

In Kyrgyzstan, all vital events are registered digitally and linked using a UIN which is assigned to every individual at birth and stored in the central civil register. The central civil register is one of several databases that forms a larger information and communications technology system known as the Unified Population Register, that stores identity information linked using the UIN. Legal and identification credentials are issued upon request, such as identity cards and travel documents. Other government agencies that require access to this identity data for the purpose of service delivery, are granted access based on a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (ESCAP, 2023: <https://repository.unescap.org/handle/20.500.12870/689>).

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Citizen Management Inter-ministerial Coordinating Committee should intensify its efforts to establish and secure a sustainable data-sharing system and culture

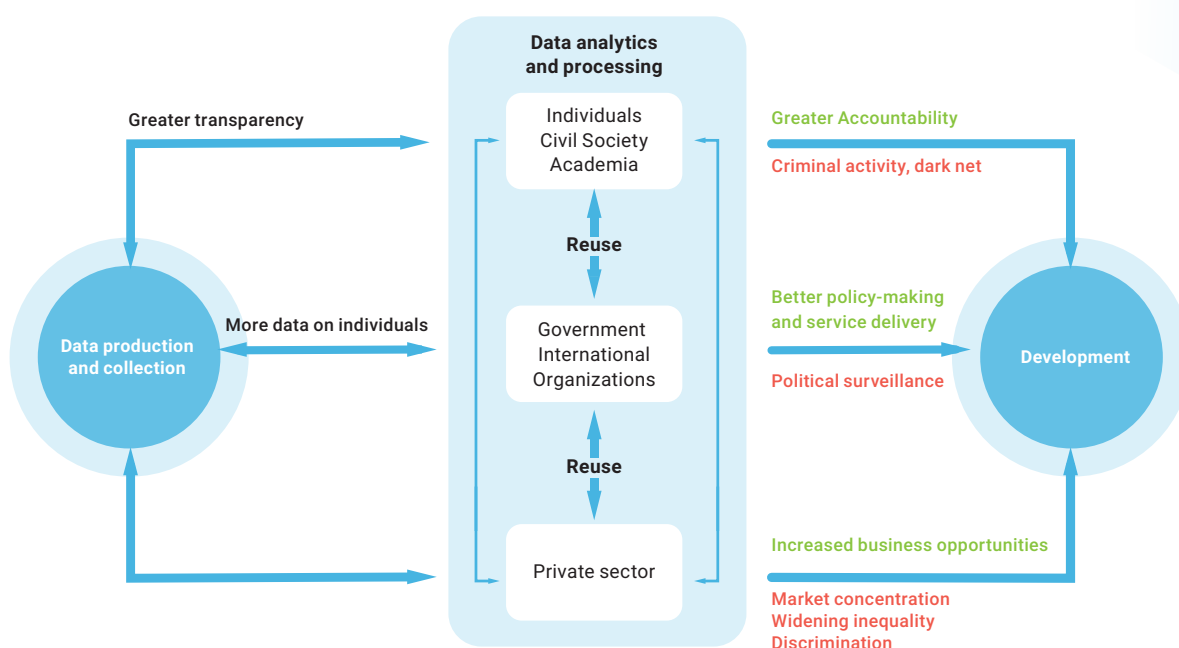
- Public administration can benefit from increased efficiency and data sharing opportunities provided by digitization of civil registration systems.
- When interoperability with various functional registers* is achieved, its efficient functioning is conditioned upon the availability of up-to-date identity information based on civil registration as the foundational system.
- The development of a digitized identity system in which civil registration and identity management systems are operated by a single agency has been achieved in many countries through institutional reforms.
- The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics can support the move to increased data integration and adherence to them will support the safeguarding of privacy, confidentiality and assure quality.
- Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB) should carefully consider the potential changes to their data governance arrangements and role.
- There is a need to build some flexibility into existing and new governance arrangements to ensure they are agile to respond to the rapidly changing context in which national statistical offices are working. It is likely that country-level data governance arrangements will need to continue to evolve.



RECOMMENDATION 2

EXAMPLE

In Türkiye, the Central Civil Registration System was established in 2000, following an approximately 30-year long process to shift legacy paper-based vital event registration to digital records. This coincided with the shift from a vital events-based register to a person-based register, comprising a unique personal identification number assigned to each registered citizen and foreigners settled in Türkiye. In addition to storing civil registration information, the Central Civil Registration System also stores other personal information such as place of residence address and can therefore be characterised as a population register. The Identity Information Sharing System introduced in 2005 is a nation-wide data interoperability layer that enables secure, one-way access to permitted data in the Central Civil Registration System, thereby significantly increasing the speed and efficiency of services provided to citizens and foreigners by the users of the system. The system has become the backbone of the eGovernment infrastructure in Türkiye and currently more than 2,500 entities benefit from its implementation (ESCAP, 2023: <https://repository.unescap.org/handle/20.500.12870/6898>).



Note: Positive impacts are shown in green; negative impacts are shown in red

Source: ESCAP (2024), [Stats Brief: Data Governance, Practices in Asia and the Pacific](#)

* Functional registers which are usually established or authorized by the Government for a specific purpose, store the identity information of rights/service users and aim to provide accurate and up-to-date information on a subset of a population for administrative purposes, to support efficient service delivery (e.g. Education Management Information Systems)

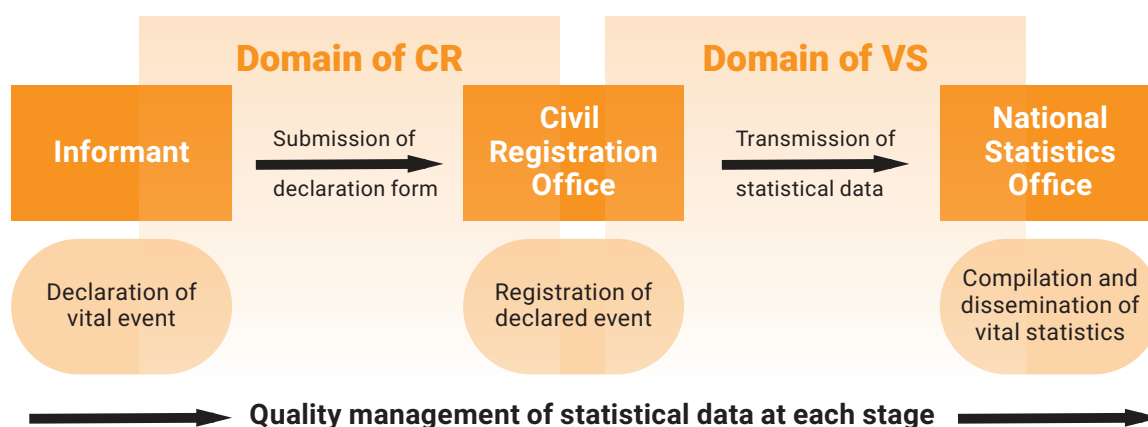


RECOMMENDATION 3

Quality of civil registration data needs to be reviewed on a regular basis before tabulation and analysis

- As recommended by the [UN Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System \(2014\)](#), data quality assessments should be built into each operational stage within the vital statistics system.
- Quality assurance procedures need to be established as regular and routine activities, including at the collection, compilation and processing stage.
- Query practices at the time of registration to ensure that omissions and errors are caught early (data collection stage).
- Follow-up with statistical reports to ensure accurate and complete data transfer (compilation stage).
- Checking and querying statistics during the editing, coding and tabulation stages
- A set of key indicators may be developed through which to regularly evaluate the overall functioning of the CRVS system, for example:
 - **Completeness**
 - **Coverage**
 - **Timeliness**
 - **Quality of cause-of-death codes**
- Apply the [Technical Guidance for Strengthening the Vital Statistics Production Process \(2023\)](#) which provides specific guidance for quality management steps which should be implemented at each stage of the vital statistics production process (pg. 59)

Generic business process of quality management throughout the collection, transmission and production of vital statistics



Source: [Technical Guidance for Strengthening the Vital Statistics Production Process \(2023\)](#)



RECOMMENDATION 3

In addition, in alignment with the recommendations from the first synthesised analysis of available vital statistics in Lao PDR, published by UNFPA in January 2024:

To further advance vital statistics in Lao PDR, the Lao Statistics Bureau should engage in further technical collaboration, coordination and analysis, including:

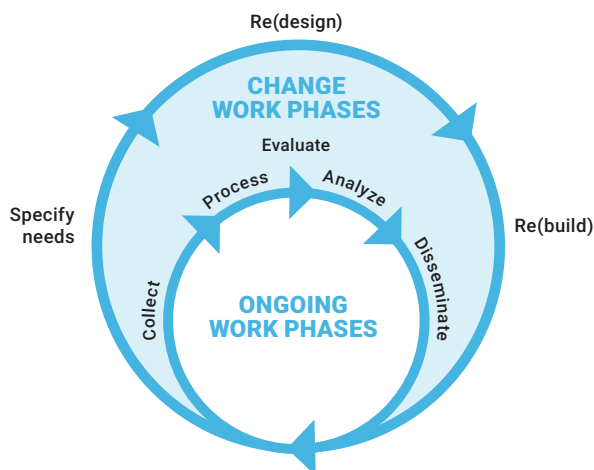
- Discussions with MoHA on emerging strengths and limitations of death registration data in Lao PDR
- A systematic review of the plausibility and quality of deaths data reported in the 2015 Population and Housing census, as LSB prepares for the next census
- A review of the plausibility and quality of reported (childhood) deaths in the LSIS-I and LSIS-II surveys, as LSB prepares for the LSIS-III survey

RECOMMENDATION 4

A feedback mechanism should be introduced whereby data users (Lao Statistics Bureau) can inform the civil registration authorities of any inaccuracies in the data that need correcting

- Ensure that LSB can provide feedback at various levels to the registration offices on the common types of errors.
- Explore potential to establish a pilot at the provincial level to explore modalities for this feedback mechanism before it can be rolled out nationally.
- Consult the [Technical Guidance for Strengthening the Vital Statistics Production Process \(2023\)](#) for guidance on establishing feedback mechanisms.

Change work phases and ongoing work phases of the Vital Statistics Business Process Model (VSBPM).



Source: [Technical Guidance for Strengthening the Vital Statistics Production Process \(2023\)](#)



RECOMMENDATION 5

The Government should continue implementing inequality assessments of civil registration, to improve understanding of which population groups are being left behind and require targeted interventions

- Full implementation of an inequality assessment would require the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) to share available civil registration data according to needed tabulations.
- As the digital civil registration platform is being rolled out, it's important to prioritise interoperability to facilitate data sharing with LSB and other relevant Ministries and agencies.
- Consider implementing a qualitative inequality assessment to explore the reasons for under-registration among specific population groups.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Direct questions on civil registration should be incorporated into the next census in 2025

- Censuses implemented in some countries have included such questions asking respondents about whether children under 5 years of age have a birth certificate and whether they are registered with the civil registration authority; sometimes a birth certificate is requested as proof.
- Based on the answers, an estimate of birth registration completeness may be derived which can also be disaggregated. While this can also be achieved in a survey, the census has the significant advantage of universality.
- Questions may take a similar form to those used in the Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS).

EXAMPLE

In Cambodia, the decennial census asked questions related to registration, including whether births and deaths have been registered (ESCAP, 2017: <https://getinthepicture.org/sites/default/files/resources/Cambodia%20CRVS%20Country%20Profile.pdf>).

EXAMPLE

In Philippines, questions on birth and death registration were included from 2015 in the Census of Population and Housing (CPH). Information on birth registration was collected using the following item: 'Was ____'s registered with the Civil Registry Office?' The item on death registration asked whether any household members died between July 2013 and July 2015, and further, whether the death was registered with the Local Civil Registry Office and whether a household member secured a copy of the deceased's birth certificate (World Bank, 2017: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/ar/913231510728898246/pdf/121394-WP-PUBLIC-PhilippinesbirthregistrationcasestudywebversionSept.pdf>).