

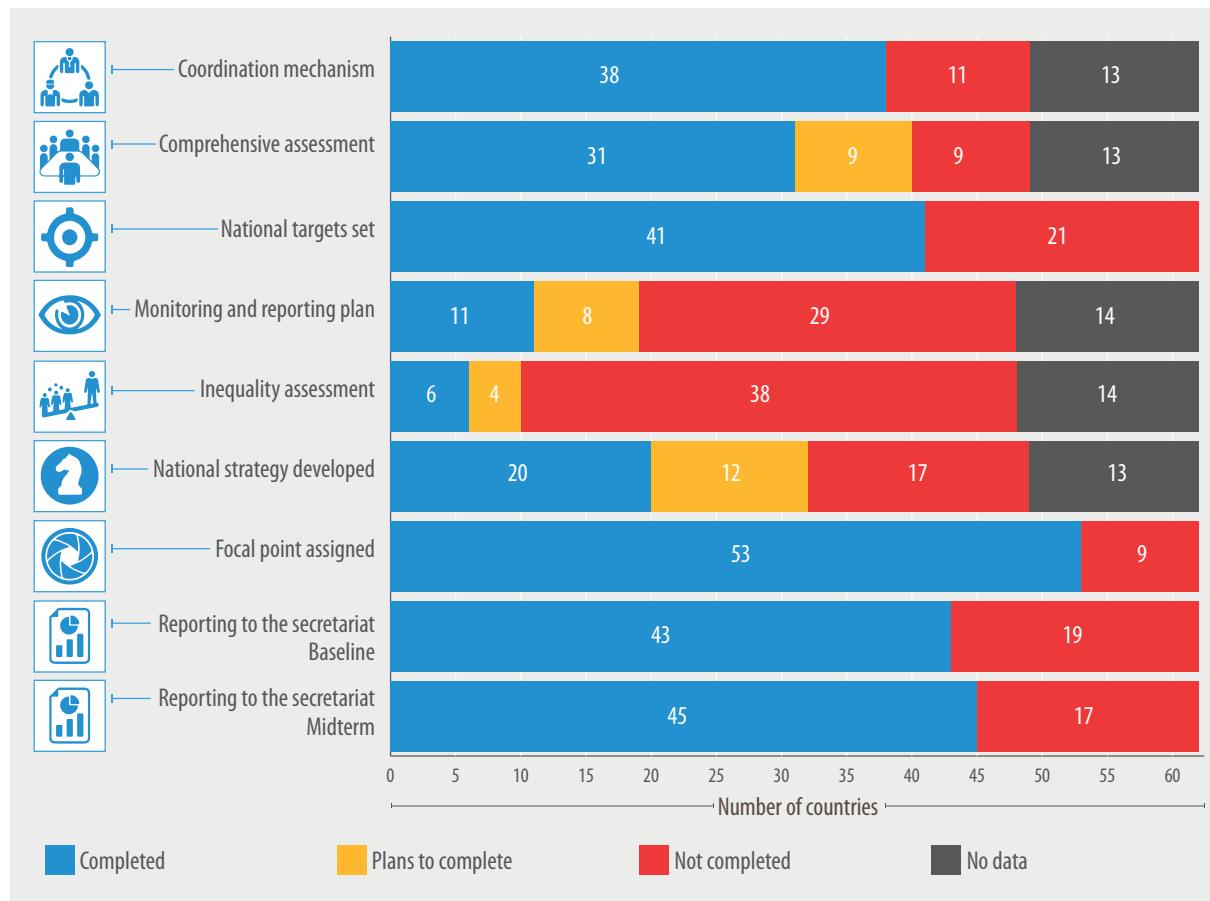
The Regional Action Framework, a catalyst to improve CRVS systems



As seen in previous chapters, progress in improving CRVS requires a long-term approach. Indeed, the ambitious shared vision of the Decade can only be realized through a coordinated and multisectoral effort at local, national and regional levels. The achievement of this vision calls for proactive measures, political commitment, true collaboration and dedicated resources. The Regional Action Framework therefore requires member States and associate members to complete a set of eight implementation steps (see Figure XIV).

The implementation steps follow a logical sequence for countries to identify areas where improvement is needed, set their objectives, monitor progress and report to the secretariat. However, the steps are not only relevant to the implementation of the Regional Action Framework, but they are more generally fundamental to the organization of national CRVS systems. They support the coordination, assessment, organization and monitoring of CRVS systems. They also aim to ensure inclusive and sustainable process and outcomes. Using information on the completion of implementation steps submitted by 50 countries as part of midterm or baseline reporting, this chapter shows how the

Figure XIV: Status of implementation steps



implementation steps have translated into more collaboration for action and enhanced the understanding of CRVS systems, thus facilitating the planning of improvements and the monitoring of progress.

Is collaboration increasing to support CRVS improvements and breaking silos?

CRVS is a cross-cutting issue by nature, involving a wide variety of ministries and agencies at the national, provincial and municipal levels. This diversity of institutions requires a clear division of responsibilities and effective coordination to ensure a cohesive system. Coordination and alignment of activities is needed across local, national, subregional or regional levels as well as among development partners. The Regional Action Framework is serving this purpose as it is a platform to facilitate harmonization and avoid duplication at all levels.

Breaking silos

The agencies working on CRVS are diverse and located in different ministries. This may result in a tendency to act in silos without considering the implications on the work of other stakeholders. The establishment of a national coordination mechanism will help share information more effectively and facilitate the implementation of improvements benefiting the entire system. It is essential for a successful national assessment and the subsequent development of a national comprehensive multisectoral strategy. Therefore, it is often the priority of countries trying to improve their system.¹⁶ Moreover, some countries with well-functioning systems still have working groups to ensure ongoing discussion on data discrepancies, changing policies, etc. This can be part of ongoing quality control.

¹⁶ The information note on national multi-sectoral CRVS coordination mechanisms is available at <https://getinthepicture.org/resource/information-note-national-multi-sectoral-crvs-coordination-mechanisms>

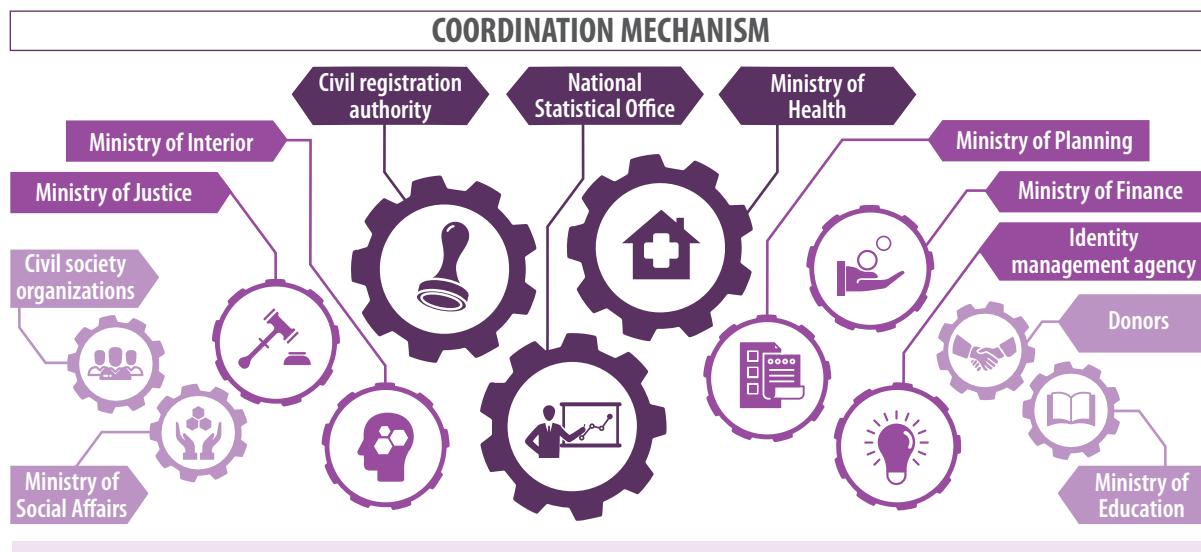
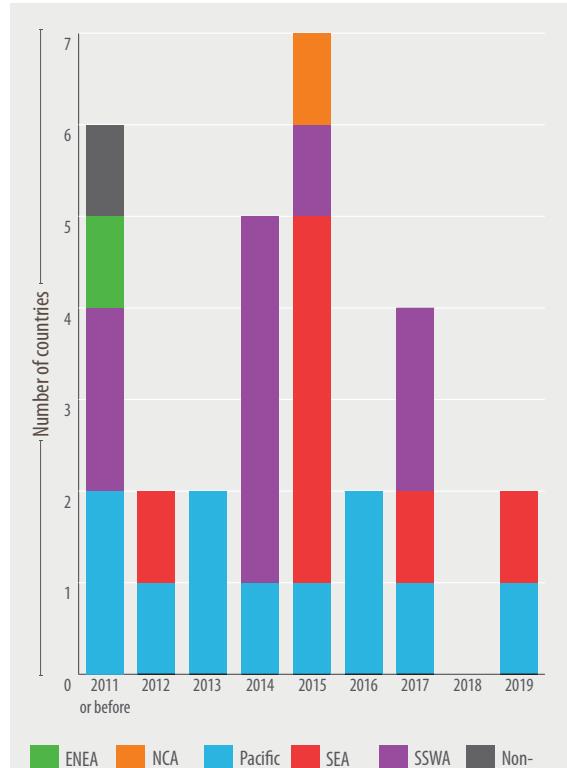


Figure XV: Establishment of national coordination mechanisms



Note: Eight more countries have reported the establishment of a coordination mechanism, but with no establishment date. They are not represented in this graph.

The subregional designations are as follows: East and North East Asia (ENEA); North and Central Asia (NCA); the Pacific, South-East Asia (SEA); and South and South-West Asia (SSWA). For more information on the subregional groupings, please refer to Annex III.

A national coordination mechanism can coordinate the entire system and facilitate the provision of technical assistance by national stakeholders or development partners. It can guide them towards areas needing the most support and secure the participation of all relevant stakeholders, while ensuring activities do not overlap to maximize their impact.

Thirty-eight countries in the region reported having a national coordination mechanism, showing its importance for the functioning of CRVS systems. More importantly, 15 countries have established a coordination mechanism since the beginning of the Decade, and as recently as 2019 for Indonesia and Nauru. The improvement of national coordination is therefore one of the main successes of the regional initiative.

There are usually at least three main stakeholders involved in CRVS, namely the Civil Registration Office or the ministry under which it is operating, the Ministry of Health and the National Statistical Office. This is reflected in the membership of national coordination mechanisms, which usually include these three stakeholders. However, depending on the country and the roles of its different agencies, the membership is extended to the Ministry of Planning or Cabinet Secretariat, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education and other governmental or international agencies. Due

Box 12**Political commitment for a better governance of CRVS activities: the example of the Technical Support Unit of the Government of Pakistan**

With its multiple provinces, its decentralized system and its large population, Pakistan is facing unique challenges on its journey towards universal civil registration. With this in mind and the low levels of civil registration completeness in the country, the Government of Pakistan launched several initiatives for institutional strengthening of the CRVS system in a bid to solve the “scandal of invisibility”. One of the first initiatives was the completion of a CRVS comprehensive assessment in 2013, followed in 2014–2015 by the establishment of national and provincial CRVS steering committees to ensure a clear division of responsibilities.

At the end of 2017, the establishment of a Technical Support Unit dedicated to CRVS under the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives was a crucial step toward better governance of the CRVS system. Its work is guided by an ambitious six-year plan reflecting the priority accorded to CRVS by the Government.

Since its inception, the Technical Support Unit has helped in a wide range of activities, with a focus on the coordination of the CRVS system through the organization of provincial summits and the first international CRVS summit in Pakistan. The unit has supported thematic area studies and provincial assessments, which fed into consultations for a uniform national CRVS law and policy. The National Policy for CRVS Reforms was approved by the National Steering Committee under the chair of Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives. Using its central role in the CRVS system of Pakistan and in response to gaps and challenges revealed by the studies it conducted, the Technical Support Unit organized capacity-building projects for various CRVS stakeholders with the support of multiple development partners. Furthermore, the unit is playing a critical role in building strong coordination and liaison with different stakeholders to gear up CRVS implementation. All these efforts have contributed to the increased completeness of both birth and death registration in Pakistan. But the road to universal registration is still very long, and data often remain too scarce to provide reliable estimates. These challenges highlight the need for sustained political commitment to ensure all CRVS stakeholders continue to work together in the right direction.

to their central role in CRVS systems, Civil Registration Offices or the ministries under which they are operating chair or co-chair most national coordination mechanisms. Notable exceptions are Bangladesh (Cabinet Secretariat), Bhutan (Ministry of Health), Hong Kong, China (Census and Statistics Department), Indonesia (Ministry of National Development Planning), Pakistan (Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives) and Turkey (Turkish Statistical Institute).

Engaging with development partners

Due to the large number of development partners that can potentially support CRVS activities, it is critical that countries

coordinate with them to maximize the impact of their activities. A national CRVS focal point can provide a link between national CRVS systems and development partners, and facilitate coordination and reporting at the regional level.

Fifty-three countries have nominated a national focal point (see Annex I). They usually work in civil registration or statistics. With the exception of Bangladesh, Cambodia and the United States of America, all national focal points are members of the national coordination mechanism. National focal points have been key for development partners to engage in countries and they benefited from multiple activities to support

their work, such as selected training activities and a series of workshops to complete the midterm questionnaire.

Regional collaboration

Regional collaboration has multiple benefits. It helps countries share experiences and learn from each other. This is particularly relevant when countries need to address new issues, such as the link between civil registration and legal identity. Regional collaboration also facilitates raising awareness of CRVS among national decision-makers. Finally, regional collaboration is needed for development partners to avoid duplication of work.

Regional collaboration in Asia and the Pacific is primarily achieved via multiple mechanisms, including through the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, which acts as the custodian of the Decade. The Regional Steering Group is responsible for providing regional oversight and guidance for the implementation of the Regional Action Framework. It is composed of a geographically balanced combination of representatives from both member States

and development partners, totalling 30 members, and it is serviced by ESCAP. Similar to the composition of national coordination mechanisms, it includes representatives from civil registration, statistics, justice, health and planning. The Regional Steering Group also facilitates coordination between the Regional Action Framework and various global, subregional or national initiatives.

Established in 2015, the Regional Steering Group meets annually and reports to ESCAP. Its members support the implementation of CRVS-strengthening activities and ensure countries adhere to the principles articulated in the Regional Action Framework, for example through the development of guidelines and information briefs and advocacy activities. Recently, the Regional Steering Group provided guidance on the substantive preparations for the Ministerial Conference to be convened in November 2021.¹⁷

¹⁷ For more information on the work of the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, see www.getinthepicture.org/sites/default/files/resources/RSG%20History%20Information%20Note_0.pdf.



REGIONAL STEERING GROUP FOR CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS

Established by the 71st session of the Economic and Social Commission in Asia and the Pacific in 2015 and meeting annually since then.

Roles

Oversight

and strategic guidance for the implementation of the Regional Action Framework, including by providing support for carrying out regional reviews and requests for status reports from Governments.

Advise

Governments on implementation of the Regional Action Framework, including developing and making available relevant definitions and guidelines for the collection and processing of monitoring information.



Structure

30 members

representing the diversity of the five subregions of Asia and the Pacific as well as that of the different sectors of CRVS (civil registration, statistics, justice, health and planning). Also includes international partners and is serviced by ESCAP.



Foster

coordination and integration of the Regional Action Framework with other global, regional and subregional initiatives.

Support

countries in implementation of CRVS strengthening activities, while ensuring they take the lead in improving CRVS systems by adopting flexible and responsive, stepwise approaches which build on local expertise and coincide with international legal and human rights instruments.

For more information, please visit <https://getinthepicture.org/crvs-decade/regional-steering-group-crvs-asia-and-pacific>

**Box
13****International coordination in the Pacific: the Brisbane Accord Group and Pacific Civil Registrars Network**

Improving CRVS in the Pacific subregion, with its remote island countries and States and high migration rates between them, requires intraregional knowledge sharing and collaboration. These efforts have been supported by the Pacific Civil Registrars Network, which comprises leading civil registrars from across the region, and the Brisbane Accord Group, which gathers technical partners operating in the region.

The Brisbane Accord Group was formed in 2010 to help the Pacific countries and territories improve their CRVS systems and maximize the investment outcomes from the technical partners through effective coordination and collaboration. To achieve these, the members agreed on a set of principles to guide their actions, which include country-led assistance only, and consistency and coordination among members of their group. Activities of the group centre on cooperating with countries to realize a comprehensive assessment of their CRVS system, which can then inform an adapted improvement plan. The Brisbane Accord Group also provides more general capacity-building on the analysis and interpretation of civil registration data and on medical certification and ICD coding of causes of death.

The Pacific Civil Registrars Network is a member of the Brisbane Accord Group. While the Brisbane Accord Group is mainly for development partners, the members of the Pacific Civil Registration Network are civil registrars from 36 countries or States, 21 agencies and 12 businesses. The Network was established in 2014 to respond to the needs of Pacific islanders, who are very mobile, migrating for jobs, health care and so on. They frequently have to register different vital events in different countries. This can be a problem for those migrating as well as for the Governments, which obtain incomplete or inaccurate data sets. To tackle this problem, the Network facilitates registration data sharing agreements and offers a platform for mutual learning. Registration data sharing agreements, in particular between New Zealand and Niue, Cook Islands, and the State of New South Wales, Australia enable countries to complete their mortality data and retire personal identities following the death of an individual.

The collaboration in the Pacific is a prime example of how joint efforts between countries and their partners can accelerate the improvement of CRVS systems.



Pacific CRVS
supported by Brisbane Accord Group

Another important platform is the CRVS Partnership for Asia and the Pacific, which consists of development partners presently engaged in helping Asia-Pacific countries improve their CRVS systems. It provides a platform to coordinate and collaborate on activities. Members of the partnership are also actively engaged in the organization of the Ministerial Conference to take place in November 2021.

Subregional collaboration

Beyond collaboration at the Asia-Pacific level, cooperation between smaller groups of countries facing a similar set of issues also plays a crucial role in improving CRVS systems. Subregional groups, such as the Brisbane Accord Group, the Asia eHealth Information Network, the Pacific Civil Registrars Network, the Civil Registration Professionals of South Asia, and the cooperative project between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and UNHCR on Legal Identity of All

Women and Children in ASEAN, are critical platforms where countries with common CRVS history, similar legal frameworks or shared geography can discuss challenges and find solutions together. The activities of these subregional groups strengthen the implementation of the Regional Action Framework.

Is there a push for better understanding of CRVS systems and who is left behind?

Due to the complexity of CRVS systems and their large number of stakeholders, obtaining a clear and comprehensive understanding of the situation and gaps to be addressed is imperative for the development of a comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy to improve the overall system. The way in which different subgroups of the population experience CRVS can vary. Implementation of the Regional Action Framework therefore includes two implementation steps on conducting a standards-based comprehensive assessment of CRVS and assessing inequalities related to CRVS experienced by subgroups of the population, including hard-to-reach and marginalized populations.

Identifying gaps and issues in national systems

Conducting a standards-based comprehensive assessment enables the identification of gaps and issues. The assessment usually covers the legal framework of the system, the completeness and coverage of civil registration, registration practices, practices for coding causes of death and the quality of data produced. It is therefore a crucial step in the development of a strategy and should involve all relevant stakeholders through the national coordination mechanism. Fifteen countries in Asia and the Pacific reported having used their coordination mechanisms for conducting a comprehensive assessment.

As shown in Figure XIV, 31 countries reported having conducted at least one comprehensive assessment, while 17 confirmed not having conducted any. Although most countries

completed this implementation step before the Decade, 11 did so after its inception. Nine more countries plan to conduct one before 2025. In addition, other countries plan to undertake a second assessment in the coming years, which only Fiji has done so far. Many of the countries which have not conducted any comprehensive assessment are high-income countries that reported high civil registration completeness and the use of registration records for vital statistics. A comprehensive assessment might therefore not be necessary for them. Nevertheless, they may wish to assess quality issues and experiences related to CRVS by specific subgroups of the population.

Development partners have supported the completion of 26 comprehensive assessments. They have also been instrumental in the development of tools to conduct these assessments. Indeed, many countries have used a tool developed in 2010 by WHO and the University of Queensland to review CRVS practices.¹⁸ More recently, a group of countries and development partners working under the auspices of the Africa Programme for Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics developed the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems Improvement Framework,¹⁹ a tool that builds upon the results of a comprehensive assessment and focuses on the assessment of business processes.

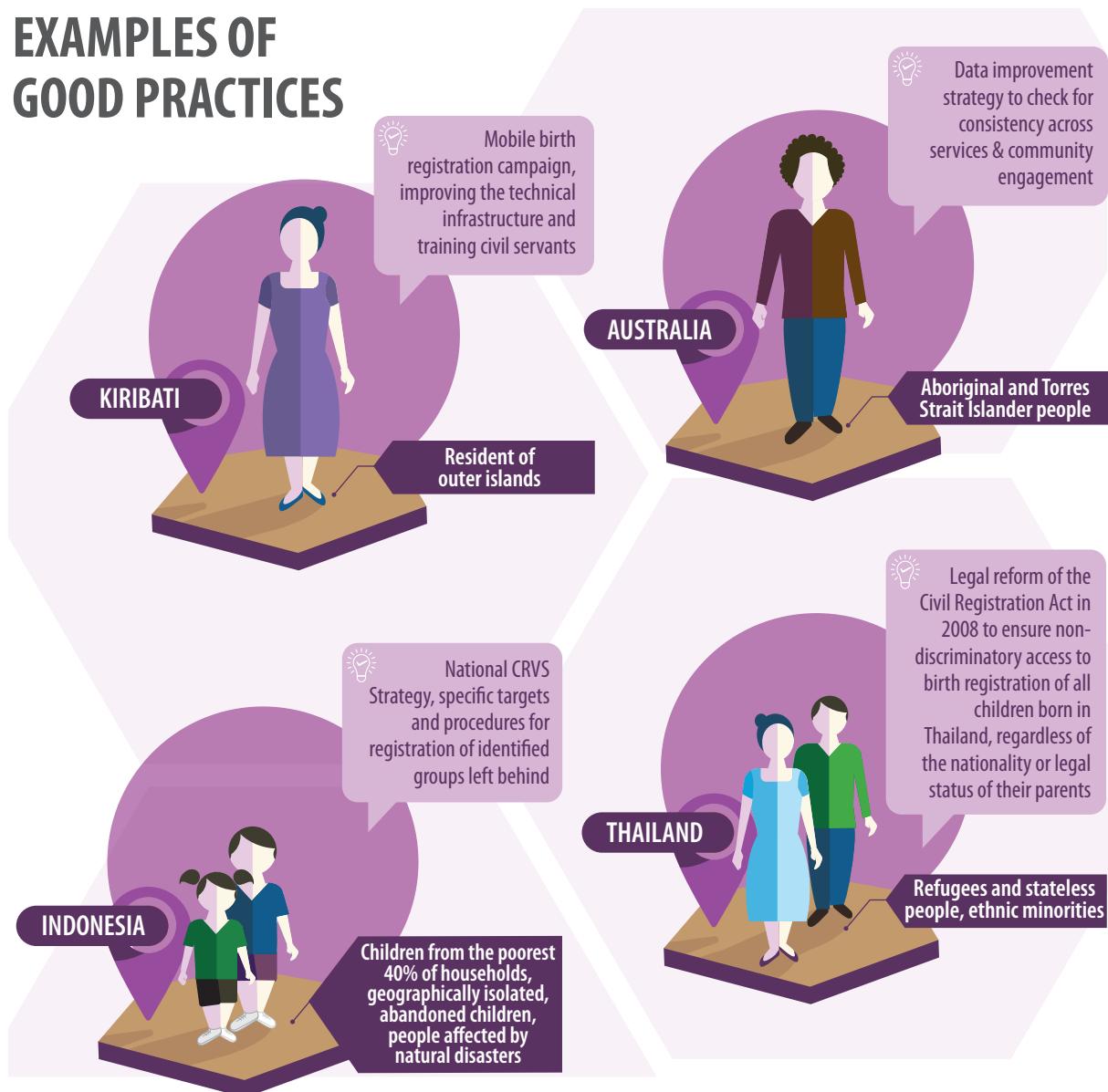
Assessing who is left behind

While the percentage of registered births and deaths in the region is rising year after year, most countries have yet to reach universal civil registration. One obstacle is the lack of information about the experience of the most marginalized and hard to reach members of society vis-à-vis CRVS. Assessing inequalities related to CRVS

¹⁸ University of Queensland, WHO (2010). *Improving the quality and use of birth, death and cause-of-death information: guidance for a standards-based review of country practices*. Available at www.who.int/healthinfo/tool_cod_2010.pdf.

¹⁹ CRVS Systems Improvement Framework (2021). Available at <https://getinthepicture.org/resource/crvs-systems-improvement-framework>

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES



experienced by subgroups of the population, including among people living in rural, remote, isolated or border areas, minorities, indigenous people, migrants, non-citizens, asylum-seekers, refugees, stateless people and people without documentation, is therefore a key step to understand barriers to registration and develop a plan to overcome them. It is also necessary to understand and address gender specific issues such as difficulties for single women to register their children.

Several countries are targeting specific subgroups of populations either as part of their comprehensive strategies or with a specific strategy. For example, Kiribati is conducting a mobile birth registration

campaign targeting outer islands as well as improving the technical infrastructure and training civil servants responsible for civil registration. Indonesia has set a specific target for birth certificate ownership of children from the poorest 40 per cent of households. It has also approved a regulation that stipulates special procedures to assist subgroups of the population experiencing difficulties in accessing identity cards and civil registration documents, which includes populations affected by natural hazards, populations living in remote areas or along international borders, and abandoned children/foundlings. Australia has an active data improvement strategy for the registration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, focusing on the consistency

Box
14**The inclusion of marginalized groups in the civil registration system in Thailand**

Thailand is home to around 570,000 refugees and stateless persons. These populations were in a legal limbo until 2008 when the Civil Registration Act was reformed and the Thai civil registration system aligned with international standards, most notably the Convention on the Rights of the Child, by extending birth registration to all births in Thailand. The reform made it possible to retroactively register births that occurred before 2008.

Registering births of all children is the first step towards solving statelessness. Although some children cannot apply for Thai nationality, birth registration still provides them with a proof of legal identity and is key in the protection of their rights. The Bureau of Registration Administration set up a specific identification number format for non-Thai citizens in parallel to the citizen identification number.

These reforms were necessary to create an inclusive framework, but they are not sufficient to make sure that everyone registers vital events. Indeed, many barriers can remain, especially for people living in remote areas, far from registration offices, who do not speak Thai. Hilltribes and other groups may have limited interactions with the Government, and there may be mistrust or misunderstandings, such as mistaking a birth notification given by a health facility for a birth certificate. Local registrars may be unaware that these populations should be registered. Other groups, such as migrant workers, may face the same barriers.

The Government collaborated with several United Nations agencies, in particular with UNHCR, to improve birth registration. Improvements include the development of an online registration programme that connects hospitals and district registration offices, capacity-building for local civil registration officials, and awareness initiatives, including establishing community networks and launching a dedicated Government website on nationality matters. In hospitals at the border with Myanmar where there are many births to non-Thai nationals, the Bureau of Registration Administration, the Ministry of Public Health, the International Organization for Migration and civil society organizations work together to provide legal advice and translation to make sure families are informed of their rights. Collaboration with the Ministry of Education has also allowed the retroactive integration of non-Thai nationals in the national civil registration system.



The project provided nationality or residency status to more than 14,000 people in 2020, surpassing the objectives that had been set.

For 2021, even more ambitious targets were set, supporting the realization of rights for these populations while also providing authorities with essential information on populations that had been invisible.

Going forward, Thai authorities will need to continue their efforts to include marginalized groups in civil registration to achieve the ambitious pledge taken in 2016 as part of UNHCR's "IBelong" campaign to end statelessness in the country by 2024.

and quality of indigenous identification across jurisdictions and the sharing of strategies relating to engagement with those communities. To overcome significant gaps in civil registration completeness of various subgroups of its population, Thailand reformed its Civil Registration Act in 2008 to ensure non-discriminatory access to birth registration of all children born in Thailand, regardless of the nationality or legal status of their parents (see Box 14).

Nonetheless there is still a lack of information on inequalities experienced by some populations in the region. Few countries have conducted an inequality assessment, yet it is an agreed step in the implementation of the Regional Action Framework. Moreover, as shown in the previous sections, many countries are close to – but have not fully achieved – universal civil registration. Through an inequality assessment, these countries can ensure they are truly getting

everyone in the picture to achieve universal civil registration. To provide practical guidance to countries on how to better assess completeness and coverage to inform inequality assessments, ESCAP and other partners organized a series of Expert Group Meetings on the topic.²⁰ Moreover, the Bali Process Civil Registration Assessment Toolkit provides a basis for conducting a qualitative assessment of inequalities experienced by specific subgroups of the population, and it has been piloted in three countries in the region.²¹

20 For more information on the Expert Group Meetings see www.unescap.org/announcement/cvrs-ap.

21 Developed in cooperation between Bali Process Member States, the Bali Process Regional Support Office and UNHCR, and piloted in Pakistan, Thailand and Viet Nam. See Regional Support Office of the Bali Process (2018). *Bali Process Civil Registration Assessment Toolkit*. Available at <https://getinthepicture.org/resource/bali-process-civil-registration-assessment-toolkit>

Box 15

Innovations to serve the public and create revenue streams in New Zealand

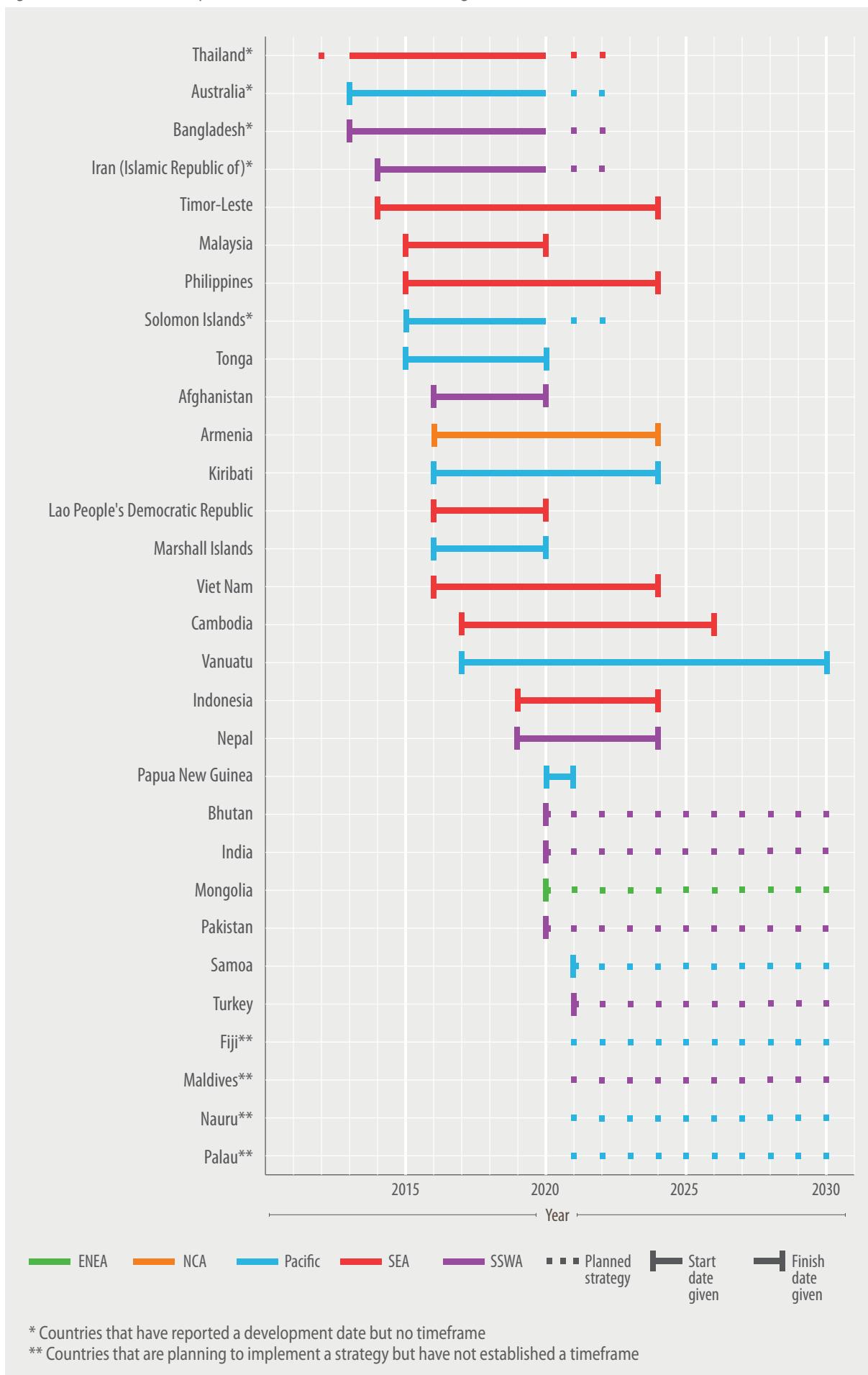
New Zealand is continuously making civil registration more accessible to its population. One of the key aspects of this increased accessibility is the provision of registration services online, allowing easy and fast delivery to the population and quick access to data for statistical purposes. The provision of registration services online must take into account inequalities in access to the Internet to ensure it does not create new barriers in access to registration. Accessibility is supported by free registration, in line with international standards and the Regional Action Framework.

While registration is free for individuals, the Office of the Registrar General is almost entirely self-dependent for its funding, through value added services and data sales. This includes the sale of special birth certificates, with an added value for decorative or multiple certificates. An example is the “All Blacks” certificate which features the country’s famous rugby team. Other services include the translation of official documents or apostilles.

The Registrar-General also sells registration data to other government agencies and to select private sector entities. The accuracy, completeness and timeliness of the registration data makes it extremely valuable to many other service providers. The Office of the Registrar General has developed partnerships with other government services or banks to provide them with secure and up-to-date data, while also ensuring that the privacy of everyone is respected. Another innovation is the establishment of contacts with ancestry websites. Patrons of ancestry websites may be interested in the services offered by the Office of the Registrar General, resulting in more certificates sales that generate revenue.

By leveraging the high completeness and accuracy of their registration data, New Zealand has been able to continually invest in their civil registration.

Figure XVI: Timeframe of comprehensive multisectoral national strategies



Are improvements to CRVS systems done in a planned approach with clear objectives?

CRVS systems involve multiple stakeholders, each having an impact on the overall system. Achieving and maintaining universal and responsive CRVS systems requires a coordinated approach to CRVS improvements with clear goals and targets. A national strategy outlining how a country aims to reach its goals means going from ad hoc activities to prioritized and systematized actions with a larger impact. Such a strategy and targets also allow development partners

to identify support activities relevant to the country and assess whether it is contributing to the country's objectives.

Developing a comprehensive multisectoral national strategy

A comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy with an articulated plan of work with clear delineation of responsibilities and backed by a detailed budget with adequate resources is paramount to address the gaps identified by the comprehensive assessment. The strategy should also reflect the principle of a stepwise approach, focusing on feasible and sustainable improvements.

**Box
16**

Planning the way to universal registration: Indonesia's National CRVS Strategy

Since 2011, the Government of Indonesia has strengthened its CRVS system through progressive steps. A standard-based CRVS assessment in 2011–2012 mapped the challenges, and these were addressed in the Medium-Term Development Plan in 2015, which included legal identity as one of five basic services to alleviate poverty. The plan also set specific targets for subgroups of the population most at risk of exclusion. Finally, a comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy was endorsed through Presidential Regulation No. 62/2019. The strategy contains clear targets to be achieved by 2024, partly aligned with the three goals and targets of the Regional Action Framework.

The strategy pinpoints supply side and demand side action to achieve universal registration. On the supply side, the number of registration points and their geographical coverage will be increased. The human resources attributed to civil registration and the simplification of the procedures through innovative approaches are other critical points in making sure every Indonesian has a real opportunity to register. On the demand side, enhancing awareness is another pillar of the strategy, with special attention to the different sociocultural practices present in the country.

Regular surveys have shown that children in the poorest households, or in remote provinces and rural areas are more likely to lack identification documents. This problem had already been partly addressed when charges for legal identity documents were suppressed in 2013 or targeted campaigns were carried out in some provinces. Gaps remain, and proof of identity is critical for marginalized groups to assert their rights, thus the strategy has pledged to uphold these efforts so no one is left behind in the access to a legal identity.

To develop and improve the vital statistics system the strategy aims for collaboration among stakeholders to address technical difficulties, and integrate and link different data sources, including civil registration and census.

Finally, to strengthen coordination between the different entities of the CRVS system, a National Team was established in 2019, with the Ministry of Planning as secretariat. The Team includes different ministries and as well as local stakeholders involved in the provision of civil registration services and the production of vital statistics.

Asia and the Pacific has seen an increase in the development of multisectoral CRVS strategies. In all, 19 countries have developed one since 2013, of which 15 countries developed one since the beginning of the Decade (see Figure XVI). The duration of these strategies varies from one country to another, with seven aligned with the Decade, finishing in 2024.



Through a common strategy, improvements to the CRVS system are done collaboratively, ultimately benefiting all stakeholders.²²

Asia and the Pacific has seen an increase in the development of multisectoral CRVS strategies. In all, 19 countries have developed one since 2013, of which 15 countries developed one since the beginning of the Decade (see Figure XVI). The duration of these strategies varies from one country to another, with seven aligned with the Decade, finishing in 2024.

The Civil Registration Offices or the ministries under which they operate are responsible for coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the strategy in most countries. This responsibility is often aligned with chairing the national coordination mechanism. In 17 countries, the other stakeholders were involved in the development of the strategy through the national coordination mechanism.

There is no recommended template for these strategies in the Regional Action Framework, although its action areas can provide a basis for governments to focus and organize efforts towards developing and implementing comprehensive multisectoral national strategies. Nevertheless, they all cover similar areas of interventions, such as improving operational procedures and practices of civil registration offices, strengthening the knowledge or number of staff, and raising awareness of the importance of civil registration. Most also allocate earmarked government funding for the maintenance of CRVS systems. In the spirit of the Regional Action Framework, 16 countries have strategies that include specific and measurable targets for the CRVS systems, 12 of which, including Cambodia and Papua New Guinea, use targets of the Regional Action Framework. Box 16 gives an overview of Indonesia's National CRVS Strategy.

Development partners have also played a key role in assisting countries in designing

²² See the information note on comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategies, available at <https://getinthepicture.org/resource/information-note-comprehensive-multisectoral-national-crvs-strategies>.

the strategies, supporting 15 countries. With 12 additional countries planning to develop a comprehensive multisectoral strategy before the end of the Decade and six countries having strategies that end before then (see Figure XVI), the collaboration between governments and development partners on the development of comprehensive multisectoral strategies will most likely continue in the second half of the Decade.

Setting national target values for 2024

Associated with each of the three goals of the Decade is a series of specific targets that countries are expected to set and achieve by 2024 (see Box 1 on the Regional Action Framework). The targets are designed to enable monitoring and evaluation in ways that are objective, efficient, technically sound and time bound during the Decade. National targets should respond to the national situation, ambition and capacity, including the resources dedicated to improving CRVS systems. Ideally, they should reflect the consensus in the country with regards to its objectives for 2024 and be approved by all national stakeholders, therefore, national coordination mechanisms have an important role to play in setting the targets.

Forty-one countries set their targets at the beginning of the Decade and reported them to the secretariat with their baseline or midterm report. However, due to the lack of data and the difficulty of measuring some of the targets, a few countries set targets without providing a baseline. Moreover, as the relevance of the targets depends on the national situation, 28 countries set a national value for some targets only.

Countries were asked to monitor progress towards their targets and adapt their targets in response to the monitoring data. Many countries have modified some of their targets following the review process, taking their experiences of the first half of the Decade into account to adjust their objectives for the second half of the Decade to be both ambitious and achievable. However, Northern Mariana Islands is the only country that had not set targets at the beginning of

the Decade and has done so since then, reflecting the complexity of the process and the need for strong political momentum.

How is progress being monitored?

Plan for monitoring and reporting on achievement of the targets

Achieving a well-functioning CRVS system requires ongoing monitoring of the system and progress towards the targets and the action plan to implement the national strategy. Monitoring and reporting provide information that national leaders and those responsible for improving CRVS systems need to inform decisions. Eleven countries reported having monitoring and reporting plans, while eight are considering developing one.

Reporting progress to ESCAP secretariat or subregional body

To monitor the implementation of the Regional Action Framework, ESCAP member States and associate members, have agreed to provide reports on progress towards achieving each of the 15 targets at the beginning, midpoint, and end of the Decade. In addition to informing on national progress, these reports enhanced knowledge-sharing, regional cooperation and learning, and they helped to identify opportunities for collaboration.

Forty-five countries provided information on the implementation of the Regional Action Framework in response to the midterm questionnaire, which serves as the basis for the midterm report. The response rate is particularly high in South and South-West Asia, where all 10 countries responded to the midterm questionnaire, showing the importance accorded to improving CRVS systems in the subregion. Other countries can still submit their midterm report to facilitate the evaluation of progress.