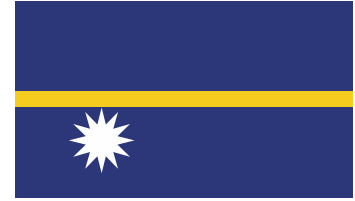




Assessment, Analysis, and Redesign of Birth and Death Registration Business Processes



Nauru (2023)

CRVS Business Process Improvement (BPI) Brief

Nauru stakeholders from the Civil Registration Office (Nauru Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages [BDM]), Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Bureau of Statistics collaborated to examine current birth, death, marriage and divorce registration processes, to identify gaps and determine areas for improvement, using Stage 1 of the [CRVS Systems Improvement Framework](#) as the methodological guide. The findings of this assessment will inform plans to digitize the current civil registration system, improving efficiency, accuracy and storage of registration data. This brief describes the key results, while the full report can be found [here](#).

As an implementing partner of Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative and in support of the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has been providing support to countries to assess, analyse and redesign selected CRVS processes.

Nauru's CRVS system

The Civil Registration Office (Nauru Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM)) is the primary agency responsible for managing civil registration. This includes the recording and registration of all births and deaths (including events occurring

overseas). The legal framework for the registration of births and deaths is established by the Nauruan Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act of 2017. To streamline and improve the CRVS system, Nauru established a CRVS Committee in August 2020. The CRVS Committee is composed of representatives from BDM, MoH, and the Bureau of Statistics. Their role is to oversee the CRVS system and ensure its effectiveness and efficiency.

Nauru has a high completeness rate for birth and death registration, largely because most domestic events occur in the main island's hospital (Republic of Nauru Hospital), rather than at home. A significant number of births and deaths also occur overseas, mostly in Australia and Fiji. Various challenges remain to ensure that overseas vital events are registered appropriately overseas, and that BDM in Nauru are also notified.

Methodology

Using the methodology and tools defined by the [CRVS Systems Improvement Framework](#), the national CRVS Stakeholders (supported by a Country Coordinator and a Senior Advisor) gathered information about the birth, death, marriage and divorce registration process. They identified weaknesses and proposed solutions to address performance issues with current civil registration processes through a series of online consultations and in-person workshops. The [CRVS Systems Improvement Framework](#) introduces systems thinking tools such as process mapping, to engage stakeholders and improve understanding of the functioning of the CRVS system.



Key processes identified for improvement

The key performance issues identified by the Core Team of Stakeholders included the following:

Birth registration

- In-person visits to a BDM office are required to register a vital event, creating a barrier for registration of vital events occurring overseas.
- Lack of awareness among parents residing overseas of the need for a Nauru birth certificate to apply for a Nauru passport (and other legal rights).
- The verification process is not rigorous enough, sometimes resulting in discrepancies between a child's birth notification documents and their mother's or father's documentation. Reports of fraudulent records have sometimes been associated with informal adoptions (prohibited by law).
- In some cases of informal adoption, children do not have a birth certificate.
- Inefficient administrative systems mean that notification of births and deaths are not reported promptly to BDM offices. Inefficiencies include outdated ICT hardware, regular changes in the software and unsystematic storage of paper records at the hospital.

Death registration

- Overseas deaths are not always reported to MoH and BDM due to a lack of awareness and challenges obtaining evidence of a death occurring overseas.

Marriage and divorce registration

- The process is complex, involving five steps, including approval from the President of Nauru.
- Divorces are usually not recorded in the BDM system, preventing any linkage to marriage records to record which marriages have been dissolved.
- If the person solemnizing the marriage changes, this is likely to cause delays beyond the 3-month grace period.

Client-centric issues

- Multiple trips are required for registering a vital event, including verifying identity, making payments, obtaining certificates and returning receipts. This makes the registration process time-consuming and cumbersome for the individual (between 1 week and 1 month).

Priority recommendations

Digitization of the registration system

- **Digitization of the current paper-based system for births, deaths, marriage and divorce** to simplify the registration process, enabling interoperability between hospitals, BDM offices, overseas consulates and the Court.
- **Upgrading outdated software and hardware** to improve technological capacity, including use of card machines and digital signatures. Staff should be trained to efficiently use and maintain the new software.

Birth and death registration (occurring domestically)

- **Establish a BDM office at the hospital** to facilitate immediate registration of vital events.
- **Implementing a two-stage identity verification process (for births)**. First, parents should show a photo ID, then an additional individual should verify their identity.
- **Birth registration** should be made a **pre-requisite for legal adoption**.

Birth and death registration (occurring overseas)

- **Financial incentives for overseas registration** to encourage registration.
- **Awareness campaigns**, conducted through social media platforms (e.g. Facebook), educating people on the importance of registration and the required process, particularly overseas.
- **Developing a website** for individuals overseas to access registration forms and information about the process.

Marriage registration:

- If a marriage cannot be solemnized within 3 months, the **registrar should be granted the authority to approve a different date** instead of restarting the registration process.

