THE STATE OF FINANCING FOR CRVS SYSTEMS

Discussion Paper for CRVS Partner Roundtable
Fourth Global CRVS and Gender Symposium

September 2025

Prepared by Open Data Watch

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems are foundational data systems essential for sustainable development, legal identity and access to services. Despite their critical importance for achieving Sustainable Development Goal targets 16.9 and 17.19, current financing falls dramatically short of needs. This analysis of official development assistance (ODA) grants and loans listed in the Creditor Reporting System of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reveals that total reported disbursements for CRVS-relevant projects reached approximately US$500 million between 2015 and 2023, or roughly $56 million annually, which is far below the estimated $252 million annual financing gap for CRVS system strengthening. With 150 million children under five lacking birth registration, and death registration systems incomplete in many low- and middle-income countries, urgent action is needed to address structural financing challenges to fill these gaps.

Key Findings by Financing Source

Bilateral Sources

2. Bilateral donors demonstrate sustained but highly concentrated commitment to CRVS financing. **Canada stands out as the most consistent bilateral supporter on CRVS system strengthening, showing significant increases in recent years compared to earlier periods.** Other notable contributors include Norway, Italy, Germany and the European Union.

3. Bilateral financing patterns reveal concerning vulnerabilities, however, due to heavy dependence on a small number of donors whose policy changes could dramatically impact global CRVS support. **Recent announcements of ODA cuts by traditional donors, such as the United States, France and the United Kingdom, pose significant risks to future financing stability.** Bilateral donors also frequently channel funding through multilateral agencies and trust funds, creating coordination benefits but also complicating financial tracking and potentially leading to double-counting challenges.

Multilateral Organizations

4. **Multilateral organizations represent the largest source of CRVS financing**, with organizations like the International Development Association and Inter-American Development Bank emerging as top contributors, often via specialized initiatives like the Global Financing Facility (GFF). These institutions demonstrate strong commitments, while also supporting global initiatives.

5. Multilateral financing is characterized by large-scale, multi-country initiatives that enable economies of scale, peer learning opportunities and coordination across national boundaries. The Identification for Development Initiative, GFF and the Global Fund represent major platforms for scaled CRVS investment, though their broad mandates mean that CRVS-specific allocations are often difficult to track within larger development programs. However, **the concentration of CRVS financing in a handful of initiatives creates systemic vulnerabilities**, as disruptions to major multilateral programs could significantly impact global CRVS capacity-building efforts.

Philanthropic Organizations

6. Philanthropic engagement in CRVS financing shows growing momentum and the potential for more stable financing amid global uncertainty about development financing. **The Data for Health Initiative of Bloomberg Philanthropies represents the most significant philanthropic commitment,** with substantial reinvestment efforts focused on improving public health data systems that include CRVS strengthening. The Gates Foundation has also demonstrated sustained interest through complementary investments in health data infrastructure.

7. Philanthropic organizations frequently support innovation and digital transformation initiatives that complement traditional donor investments, particularly in areas like technology development and awareness campaigns. **They face similar challenges in applying systematic documentation and reporting standards to ODA**, making comprehensive analysis challenging and potentially leading to underestimation of total sector support.

Private Sector Engagement

8. Private sector involvement in CRVS financing represents the most significant untapped opportunity identified in this analysis. **Current engagement is minimal, with private development finance accounting for only a small fraction of total financing** and then mostly through the technology vendor perspective.

9. Notable examples of emerging private sector engagement include public-private partnerships for digital CRVS system development in countries like Nigeria[1] and telecommunications partnerships that leverage mobile technology for service delivery in Mozambique and Tanzania.[2] Technology companies provide eCRVS software solutions,

---

[1] https://www.biometricupdate.com/202311/nigeria-launches-digital-crvs-platform-built-by-private-partner.

[2] https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/6571/file/Review%20of%20Civil%20Registration%20and%20Vital%20Statistics%20Innovations%20in%20Eastern%20and%20Southern%20Africa.pdf.

and major corporations have demonstrated potential for broader engagement through digital identity initiatives. However, **systematic strategies for private sector engagement remain underdeveloped across the sector.** Yet public-private partnerships offer promising mechanisms for sustainable CRVS financing, particularly when supported by catalytic funding mechanisms and tapping into innovation in areas such as digital public infrastructure, service delivery and financial sustainability.

Critical Challenges and Structural Issues

10. The analysis reveals significant structural vulnerabilities in CRVS financing architecture. **Five projects accounted for nearly half (47 percent) of all estimated CRVS financing between 2015 and 2023, creating a dangerous dependency on a handful of large initiatives.** This concentration extends to development partner relationships, with the top two partners in any given period consistently accounting for approximately half of all disbursements. Several of these donors also prefer different funding modalities that may work better in different contexts. Although grants account for 94 percent of individual disbursements, ODA loans account for close to 30 percent of total disbursements, signifying the importance of large loan projects that finance systems improvements, including for CRVS.

11. Geographic distribution shows concerning patterns, with **a small number of countries receiving sustained support while many nations with significant CRVS needs receive minimal external assistance.** A sectoral focus also reveals problematic imbalances, with **birth registration receiving disproportionate attention compared to death registration**. This limits countries' ability to develop comprehensive vital statistics systems essential for public health monitoring and emergency response.

12. This finding reveals the projectization tendency to focus on specific components rather than holistic, life-course approaches to legal identity. **Current investments often target isolated vital events, particularly birth registration and death registration digitalization, rather than developing integrated systems** that can serve individuals throughout their entire lives and coordinate effectively with digital public infrastructure and other government services. This fragmentation undermines the development of sustainable, nationally owned systems.

13. Data tracking and coordination challenges further compound these structural issues. **Existing financial tracking mechanisms exhibit substantial gaps in capturing financing flows**, inconsistent reporting standards create comparability problems, and the channeling of funds through multiple intermediaries complicates accurate assessment of total resources and their deployment effectiveness.

Recommendations and Future Directions

14. **The international development community must fundamentally reimagine its approach to CRVS financing through several critical interventions**. Developing innovative blended finance mechanisms that align diverse financing sources with comprehensive technical assistance will be essential for sustainable system development. Strategic exploration of private sector engagement through partnership models, catalytic funding approaches and enabling policy frameworks could significantly expand available resources and bring technological innovation to the sector.

15. **Enhanced coordination mechanisms are needed** to prevent duplication; ensure complementary investments across CRVS systems, legal identity management and digital public infrastructure; and reduce dependencies on single large initiatives. This includes developing standardized reporting frameworks and improving data collection systems to enable better tracking of all financing sources, including domestic government contributions that are currently inadequately documented.

16. **Systematic integration of gender-responsive and intersectional approaches into CRVS financing strategies will be crucial** for ensuring that these foundational systems serve all populations effectively. Additionally, moving beyond projectized approaches toward holistic, long-term system strengthening will require new financing modalities that support sustained institutional development rather than discrete interventions.

17. Only through coordinated action across all financing sources can the international community hope to achieve universal civil registration coverage essential for sustainable development and effective governance in an era of mounting fiscal constraints and competing global priorities.

INTRODUCTION

18. Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) are foundational data systems that are universal, country-led and country-owned. Better CRVS systems are needed for a world that counts everyone so that legal identity can be protected and services can be accessed. **The global commitment to providing legal identity for all by strengthening CRVS systems is recognized by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets 16.9 and 17.19, which call for universal birth and death registration. These systems must be financed and recognized for their contribution to sustainable development.** In this paper, we define financing for CRVS systems as official development assistance (ODA) grants and loans for building CRVS system capacity in low- and middle-income

countries, in addition to considering domestic government outlays for CRVS where available. This includes individual project funding by bilateral, multilateral and philanthropic donors.

19. **These sources of financing for foundational systems like CRVS and other parts of statistical systems are currently under threat.** While financing for statistics has rebounded since the outbreak of COVID-19, the year-on-year increase through 2023 declined, and financing "falls short of needs."[3] This situation will worsen as traditional donors, such as the United States, France and the United Kingdom, reduce ODA commitments,[4] including to programs that collect information on births, deaths and marital status. The Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) Program has been halted by the United States, and other data collection programs like Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and population censuses may face data gaps and analysis issues.

20. Despite the global landscape for financing for development, administrative systems such as CRVS are a powerful, country-led way to collect the data needed to ensure that everyone is included. **Yet these systems are struggling to achieve universal coverage and deliver on the promise to "leave no one behind":** births of 1 in 5 children under five are not registered, shutting out 150 million children from the benefits of a legal identity, such as access to education and social protection.[5] Death registration systems, key to effective public health efforts, such as those implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, are far from complete in many low- and middle-income countries.[6] The state of CRVS systems reflects a world falling short of its goals but unable to measure where progress is needed.

21. To ensure that CRVS systems are universal, permanent and continuous will require improved technical capacity, better governance and increased financing. Yet resources for low- and middle-income countries are severely constrained. In addition to long-term constraints on country budgets and revenue generation and increased costs from disasters due to climate change, over 40 percent of the world's population lives in countries that spend more on public debt interest payments than on essential services like health or education.[7] **Even when resources are available, improvements to CRVS systems are not always given priority.** National strategies for the development of

---

[3] https://www.paris21.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2024-12/paris21-press-2024.pdf.
[4] https://www.cgdev.org/blog/charting-fallout-aid-cuts.
[5] https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/birth-registration/. This datapoint itself is possible to compute thanks to survey systems such as the MICS.
[6] As of 2020, only 63 percent of countries had death registration data that was at least 75 percent complete (SDG 17.19.2).
[7] https://unctad.org/publication/world-of-debt.

statistics (NSDS) show domestic government sources accounting for 0 to 100 percent of CRVS improvements.[8]

22. For many low- and middle-income countries, ODA remains crucial to financing all functions of government. But in 2024, ODA decreased by 7.1 percent from the previous year,[9] and the outlook for 2025 is for further declines as large as 17 percent.[10] These severe local and global budget constraints necessitate a switch from purely funding projects to financing development,[11] including CRVS systems, in a way that supports country ownership and leverages diverse sources of financing.

23. In the changing global environment of financing for development, **this brief seeks to answer two questions: What is the state of financing for CRVS systems? And how are traditional and new development partners coordinating their support?** By investigating these questions, the brief aims to stimulate discussion around how to better coordinate global efforts to strengthen CRVS systems and their links to legal identity and digital public infrastructure.

THE CRVS ECOSYSTEM

What is the profile of CRVS financing actors?

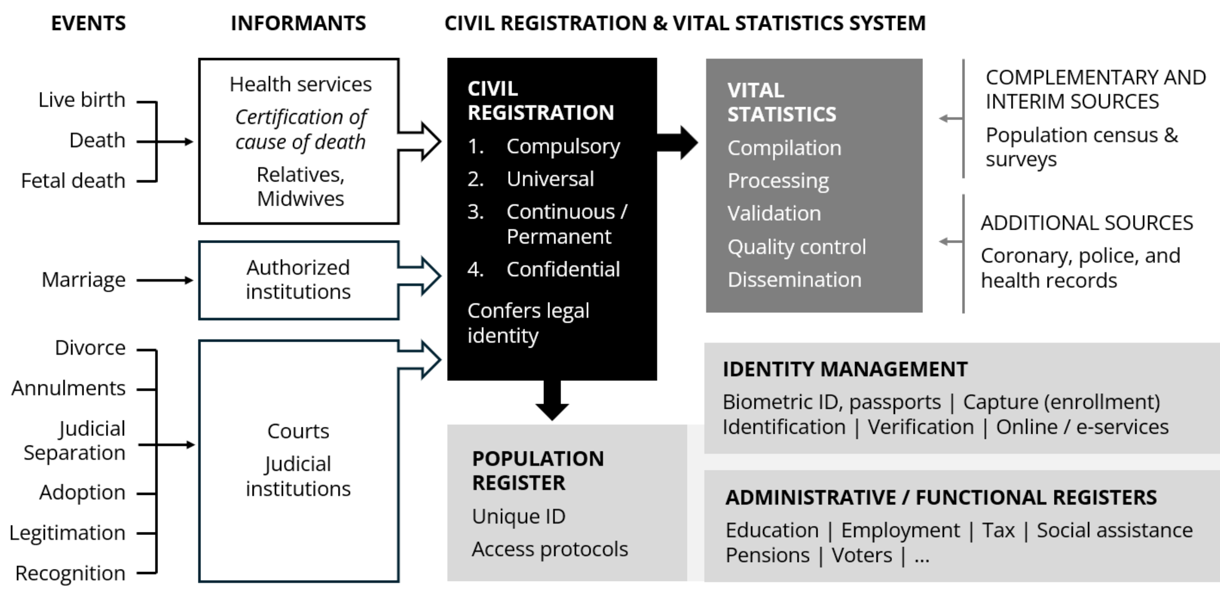
24. Civil registrars are the front-line officials who maintain records of vital events and are the intended partners for many of the financing arrangements for CRVS systems. They work at various levels of government and are primarily responsible for registering births and deaths. For example, in Kenya, the Civil Registration Services is a department under the Ministry of Interior & Coordination of National Government.[12] The Civil Registration Services Department operates through local registrars who handle birth and death registration at the community level.

25. However, **a full CRVS system is inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial, typically involving several ministries and institutions in addition to a civil registry function, including health institutions that notify the occurrence of births and deaths; the judicial system that records the occurrence of marriages, divorces and adoptions; and the national statistics office that produces vital statistics reports**. For example, in

[8] See NSDS of Cabo Verde and Maldives.
[9] https://www.oecd.org/en/about/news/press-releases/2025/04/official-development-assistance-2024-figures.html.
[10] https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/06/cuts-in-official-development-assistance_e161f0c5/full-report.html.
[11] https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-5-Funding-To-Financing.pdf.
[12] https://crs.ecitizen.go.ke/.

Kenya, the Registrar General office under the Office of the Attorney General handles different registration functions, including marriage and divorce records and registering adoptions.[13] See Figure 1 for a diagram of the flow of information between CRVS systems and other parts of the national statistical system, as well as a link to the Legal Identity Agenda.

Figure 1 Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identity Management System



Source: ODW adaptation of [United Nations Legal Identity Agenda]

26. **CRVS projects financed from external sources address many aspects of the CRVS ecosystem**. For example, they focus on registering events throughout a person's life by strengthening the collection and digitization of records at birth or death. Other projects offer ways for unregistered citizens to register later in life. Still others promote using data from CRVS systems, such as through awareness campaigns about the importance of these documents and the vital rights and protections they provide to their holders.

27. Investments in CRVS systems are not limited to the registration of births, deaths or marriages, but they are often linked closely to investments in strengthening health information systems, both in general and specifically for reproductive and maternal and child health, social protection, financial inclusion and vital statistics. Birth registration at health facilities enables timely vaccination enrollment and child health tracking, while death registration feeds disease surveillance systems for public health monitoring and informs pandemic preparedness efforts. The civil registration database serves as a master registry for verifying social protection beneficiaries and preventing fraud, while

[13] https://www.statelaw.go.ke/departments/registrar-general-division/.

CRVS-issued identity documents provide access to banking and formal employment. Many countries operate integrated “life event” service centers at which citizens can simultaneously register vital events, obtain documents and access health insurance or social benefits, creating cost efficiencies and ensuring that civil registration becomes embedded within broader public service delivery rather than functioning in isolation. Close coordination between civil registrars and health ministries, especially at the local level, is often a key facilitator of these initiatives.

28. International and domestic investment plans for digital public infrastructure (DPI) represent a significant opportunity for building robust foundations for CRVS systems. **The integration of CRVS, ID management and DPI is important for digital transformation**, as these systems form the backbone of legal identity and population health data that are essential for effective governance and service delivery. These efforts typically require partnerships between civil registration authorities and digital transformation agencies.

29. The link between CRVS and legal identity connects investments in CRVS systems with many government agencies that directly work on legal identity, such as migration authorities, indigenous affairs departments and national service authorities. Migration authorities rely on CRVS data to verify citizenship status and process applications for passports, visas and residency permits, while indigenous affairs departments often work to ensure that traditional communities have access to birth registration and official documentation that recognizes their cultural identity. National service authorities depend on accurate birth and citizenship records to determine eligibility for military service, voting rights and access to government benefits programs. Social security administrations similarly require reliable vital statistics to process pension claims, disability benefits and survivor payments and to compute actuarial liabilities. **This interconnected web of government agencies and departments creates overlapping dependencies on CRVS systems, legal ID management and DPI systems, highlighting the critical need for coordination across all these actors to ensure that legal identity systems function effectively, serve all citizens comprehensively and are sustainably financed**.

Who are the major stakeholders of financing for CRVS systems?

30. The major sources of external financing for CRVS systems are from bilateral, multilateral and philanthropic sources. Table 1 summarizes these sources and provides examples of key actors and their recent commitments or pledges relevant to CRVS.

Table 1 Types of major sources of external financing for CRVS systems

Type	Description	Examples
Bilateral	Development Assistance Committee members, other individual countries or regional blocs that provide financing to CRVS systems via their aid agencies or in partnership with non-governmental organizations and private sector entities	• Canada: Support for multilateral agencies like GFF ($475 million)[14] and Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems[15]
Multilateral	International institutions that pool funds from multiple sources, such as member countries and foundations, to support CRVS through large-scale, often multi-country initiatives	• GFF: Has supported 22 countries in including CRVS in their national health plans,[16] with total pledges of $2.6 billion as of 2024[17] • Identification for Development: Helps countries realize the transformational potential of identification systems, leveraging $2 billion in World Bank financing across 47 countries[18] • The Global Fund: Focuses on health systems, including vital statistics, with $3 billion invested in 2023[19] • United Nations system: United Nations Population Fund,[20] United Nations Children's Fund,[21] United Nations Development

[14] https://www.globalfinancingfacility.org/sites/default/files/GFF-annual-report-2023-2024-final-digital.pdf.
[15] https://idrc-crdi.ca/en/initiative/centre-excellence-civil-registration-and-vital-statistics-systems.
[16] https://www.globalfinancingfacility.org/focus-areas/crvs/.
[17] https://www.globalfinancingfacility.org/sites/default/files/GFF-annual-report-2023-2024-final-digital.pdf.
[18] https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099437402012317995/pdf/IDU00fd54093061a70475b0a3b50dd7e6cdfe147.pdf.
[19] https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/results/.
[20] https://www.unfpa.org/centre-excellence-civil-registration-and-vital-statistics-systems.
[21] https://www.unicef.org/protection/birth-registration#what-we-do.

		Programme,[22] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees[23] • European Union: Partnerships with agencies such as UNDP to strengthen CRVS systems. For example, in 2024 the EU funded a peer-learning visit for a delegation from Tajikistan to Moldova to digitize CRVS systems[24] and participated in the European Union-Latin America & the Caribbean Digital Alliance Policy Dialogue that included digital ID strengthening[25]
Philanthropic	Private organizations that fund CRVS efforts through initiatives that aim to improve public health data systems, including DPI	• Data for Health Initiative: Focused on improving the availability, quality and use of public health data, and includes strengthening CRVS systems,[26] with 2024 reinvestment efforts that include $150 million from Bloomberg Philanthropies and $40 million from the Gates Foundation[27]

31. Though not part of the formal set of sources of financing above, regional networks such as the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics[28] and the "Get Every One in the Picture" initiative[29] of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific address key CRVS

[22] https://www.undp.org/digital/blog/civil-registration-and-vital-statistics-crvs-and-digital-public-infrastructure-dpi-why-their-integration-important-digital.
[23] https://www.unhcr.org/registration-guidance/.
[24] https://www.undp.org/european-union/stories/building-citizen-centered-civil-registration-tajikistan.
[25] https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-lac-digital-alliance-brings-egovernance-citizens-and-business_en.
[26] https://www.bloomberg.org/public-health/strengthening-health-data/.
[27] https://web.archive.org/web/20250725075952/https://www.bloomberg.org/press/bloomberg-philanthropies-data-for-health-initiative-collects-more-than-28-million-new-or-improved-birth-and-death-records-since-2015/.
[28] https://apai-crvs.uneca.org/
[29] https://crvs.unescap.org/crvs-decade/regional-action-framework

coordination challenges by enabling multiple stakeholders to align and prioritize their efforts under agreed-upon goals and targets. These networks enhance technical capacity through capacity-building initiatives, digital transformation support and knowledge sharing, while promoting coordinated support by development partners to member states through convening regional partnerships that help channel financing more effectively. By providing standardized frameworks and disseminating relevant knowledge products and tools, these **regional networks create economies of scale and prevent duplication of efforts across countries**.

32. **The three types of stakeholders in Table 1 represent the largest sources of financing for CRVS, as many of these stakeholders finance dedicated CRVS programs**. However, the recent pledges and levels of funds available do not tell us where efforts at CRVS system improvements are taking place in low- and middle-income countries and who is the proximate source of financing. The following section will describe this landscape in greater detail based on available data from the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) Partner Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

ANALYSIS OF FINANCING FOR CRVS SYSTEMS

Volumes of Financing

33. Bilateral, multilateral and philanthropic sources for CRVS financing have undergone significant changes over time and face different challenges in the global financial landscape. Furthermore, many actors in the CRVS ecosystem commit pledges to multilateral agencies and trust funds, but this does not necessarily reveal what financing for CRVS is spent on. The following section will therefore investigate trends in disbursements of ODA grants and loans to country or regional projects to examine the total financing available to build CRVS systems in low- and middle-income countries. Since comparable data on domestic financing for CRVS systems are not available, this section will focus on analyzing external financing available through the PARIS21 PRESS[30] and the OECD CRS.[31] Domestic resources for CRVS systems will be discussed in national contexts in which data are available.

[30] ODW analysis of Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data (2024). Project-level Dataset on Support to Statistics (PRESS Dataset) 2024, https://smartdatafinance.org/download-data.
[31] ODW analysis of OECD (2024). Creditor Reporting System database. Accessed July 2025.

34. The PARIS21 PRESS dataset provides information on financing for data and statistics for 2015–2022, and CRS datasets were added for 2023 to increase the coverage of this paper to 2015–2023.[32] There are limitations to these datasets as domestic financing is not captured. For example, due to its scope, CRS only recorded just over $100 million for the World Bank Strengthening Systems for Social Protection and Civil Registration Project in Nepal, despite the overall project costing over $200 million, as a result of domestic contributions from Nepal to this project.

35. The methodology used focuses on keyword matches in project titles and descriptions, after which additional filters were applied to ensure relevance. The full methodology and link to the dataset can be found in Annex 1: Methodology Used for Extracting CRVS Disbursements. **The total disbursements for projects identified as CRVS-relevant** were about **$500 million between 2015 and 2023[33] or about $56 million per year**. This amount falls well short of the $252 million per year financing gap for CRVS systems.[34] Whether these estimates are strictly comparable, given the low levels of birth and death registrations in many countries, it is likely that, as with other areas of data for development, the existing levels of financing fall short of the level needed to build robust CRVS and related administrative data systems.

36. An analysis of the disbursements of CRVS-relevant projects reveals that, as shown in Figure 2, **the annual disbursements from 2015 to 2023 show an average increase of $9.5 million a year for CRVS-relevant projects. Recent funding cuts of development programs such as support for the health data sector, however, call future progress into question**. The spike in 2021 was driven by the World Bank social protection project in Nepal. As the following analysis shows, very few stakeholders and projects are responsible for this growth in financing, which makes the sector vulnerable to disruption.

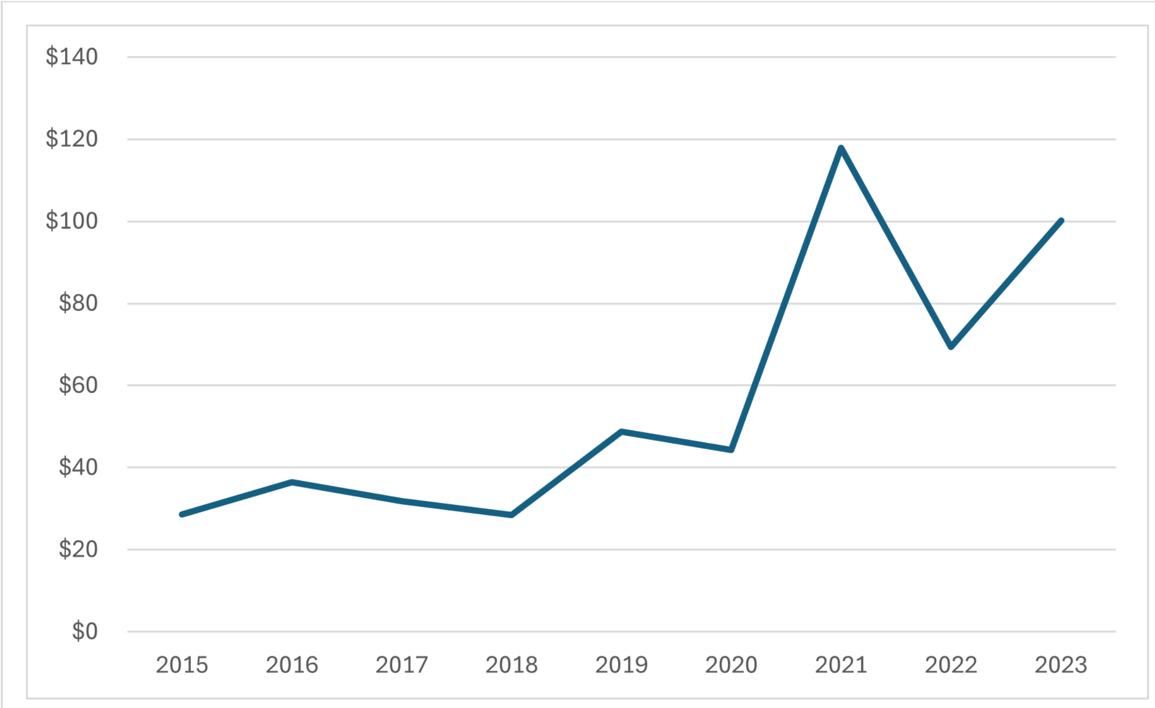
---

[32] The PRESS dataset is itself a filtered version of the CRS dataset.

[33] CRVS-related financing totaled $405,449,113 for the period from 2015 to 2022, using PRESS data, with an additional $91,912,043 in 2023, using CRS data.

[34] Annex 8 of the [World Bank CRVS Scaling-up Investment Plan 2015-2024] estimates an average of $199 million financing gap per year for 73 countries. This estimate in 2014 dollars is converted to 2023 dollars (the currency unit used throughout this brief) using the World Development Indicators series NY.GDP.DEFL.KD.ZG for the United States.

Figure 2 ODA disbursements to CRVS systems (in $ millions)



Source: ODW analysis of PRESS dataset and CRS dataset

37. Including CRVS-adjacent activities (projects related to migration, refugees, censuses, population registers and DHS) nearly doubles the estimate for total financing over the period to $1 billion. These two methodologies present a range between $500 million and $1 billion spent on CRVS-related activities between 2015 and 2023.[35] Even with this expanded set of projects with CRVS relevance, however, the volume of financing available to fill the gap for CRVS systems remains too low.

38. The PRESS and CRS datasets are limited in their temporal coverage by the quality assurance system of the OECD system, but this can impede analyses like the current effort. The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is a potential source of additional information to analyze more recent flows. Queries to the IATI datastore[36] using the same keywords in project descriptions and titles when querying PRESS and CRS for transactions posted from 2021 to July 31 2025 reveal that **financing is continuing to increase in 2024 and the year to date 2025 relative to 2022 and 2023, with each year registering new highs compared to the previous year**.[37] The similarity of

[35] This is still much less than what was estimated in the PRESS2021 report (US$ 2.4 billion per year over the 10 years 2011–2020), yet this estimate was likely a very liberal estimate of the CRVS relevance of the selected projects.
[36] https://datastore.iatistandard.org/.
[37] The totals of the year sums for the transactions for nominal US$-denominated projects for 2021–2023 match the time trend of the PRESS and CRS analysis, although the levels cannot be compared.

the time series may suggest cautious optimism about recent trends, but future trends are uncertain in light of the recently announced cuts in ODA and decreased support for multilateralism.

39. Other financing opportunities in 2025 include the 8th replenishment cycle of the Global Fund.[38] Furthermore, Bloomberg Philanthropies has announced a renewed collaboration with the Pan American Health Organizations to enhance CRVS systems in the Americas. Ongoing work includes the collaboration of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) with Paraguay on best practices in the use of CRVS systems to support the population register.[39] GFF is also convening to decide on its next five-year strategy later in 2025.[40] These financing mechanisms and strategic planning processes will be critical in determining whether the momentum in financing for CRVS systems can be sustained, despite current uncertainties.

Who are the main sources of financing for CRVS systems?

40. Several key donors have demonstrated sustained commitment to CRVS financing since 2015, as shown in Table 2. **The International Development Association (IDA) was the top or near the top source of financing for CRVS systems, along with IDB. Canada is the highest-ranking bilateral donor.** A comparison with the immediate post-SDG period shows that there is a core set of donors that view CRVS as a long-term development priority requiring continuous investment rather than short-term project financing.

Table 2 Top CRVS sources of financing 2020–2023

CRVS financing sources	Current disbursements (in $ millions) (% of total recorded amounts)	Comparison to 2015–2019	
		Rank	Disbursements (in $ millions)
1. IDA	103.9 (31%)	5th (↑)	13.7
2. IDB	77.9 (23%)	6th (↑)	8.5
3. Canada	37.6 (11%)	1st (↓)	58.1

[38] https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/replenishment/.
[39] https://www.iadb.org/en/project/PR-T1376.
[40] https://www.globalfinancingfacility.org/news/newsletter/june-highlights-latest-gffs-next-strategy-gff-ffd4-and-updates-cso-engagement-and.

4. European Union	18.2 (5%)	no change	14.1
5. United Nations Children's Fund	17.3 (5%)	2nd (↓)	30.1
6. Norway	13.0 (4%)	14th (↑)	1.2
7. Australia	12.1 (4%)	3rd (↓)	23.0
8. Italy	11.3 (3%)	7th (↓)	6.8
9. Germany	9.5 (3%)	no change	3.5
10. United Nations Development Programme	4.9 (1%)	12th (↑)	1.6
Total	***331.7***		**174.0**

41. Beyond the consistency of the top 10 donors, the increase in financing from the IDA and IDB stands out. These donors disbursed large sums in single projects that build capacity for CRVS systems to support social protection (IDA) and legal identity systems (IDB). Even though the development partners at the top of the list have changed, **the top two partners in each period accounted for around half of all disbursements to CRVS systems** in both time periods, which leaves the support for CRVS systems vulnerable to disruptions in either of these important partners.

Box 1 The Private Sector and CRVS Financing

The role of the private sector in financing CRVS systems represents an emerging opportunity for scaling up investments. Tech firms contribute with information and communications technology innovations; for example, Global System for Mobile Association,[41] EveLiN from DIGITECH, HERA from WCC[42] and CRVS© from NRD Companies[43] all provide eCRVS software, including documentation management, digitization of records and digital ID.

[41] https://www.gsma.com/solutions-and-impact/connectivity-for-good/mobile-for-development/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Reimagining-identity-ecosystems-in-Sub-Saharan-Africa-with-mobile.pdf.
[42] https://unstats.un.org/legal-identity-agenda/documents/Paper/CRVS_Key%20Findings_for_Practitioners.pdf, p. 25.

[43] https://www.nrdcompanies.com/products-solutions/crvs/.

Yet the opportunity for private sector engagement goes beyond software development or simple vendor-client relationships. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have been utilized globally for strengthening CRVS systems as they allow for financial sustainability, technical expertise and flexibility, especially in limited government capacity contexts.[44] Mechanisms such as GFF catalytic funding incentivize private sector participation in PPPs to decrease risk to investors.[45] In the Philippines, service delivery digitalization of CRVS documents is among items funded by a PPP.[46] In 2023, in Nigeria, the National Population Commission and Barnksforte Technologies Limited began their PPP to create a digital CRVS system, leveraging $11.5 million in private sector financing.[47] Additionally, several telecommunications companies have partnered with governments to provide CRVS services. For example, in Mozambique, Mcel, Vodacom and Movite allowed reduced rates for government messaging about CRVS and free SMS notifications to parents when birth certificates were ready for pickup. The mobile operator TIGO created a PPP with Tanzania that included the development of a mobile app for digitization, distributed smart phones to registry centers and implemented an awareness-raising campaign.[48]

Private sector involvement with CRVS systems can be facilitated in the tech hubs throughout the world. SafariCom, a large telecommunications company, and the MasterCard Foundation Kenya are headquartered in Nairobi. Both have already been involved in CRVS strengthening and provide key opportunities to further this work. In 2022, SafariCom Ethiopia signed a memorandum of understanding with the National ID Card Program to design a pilot project for increasing access to digital IDs. In 2021, MasterCard partnered with Paycode, an African financial institution, to create a platform for biometric identity and digital bank account access throughout Africa.[49] Involvement of these private sector actors not only increases access to CRVS services directly but can further connect tech firms and financial institutions to leverage financing for CRVS system improvements.

[44] https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/15701/file/UNICEF-Birth-Registration-Program-Framework-ESA-2025.pdf.

[45] https://www.globalfinancingfacility.org/sites/gff_new/files/documents/Private%20Sector%20Engagement%20Strategy.pdf.

[46] https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e632a373-d3e4-4a01-a2b5-a9d8ad226b94/content.

[47] https://www.biometricupdate.com/202305/nigeria-to-set-up-digital-crvs-system-with-11m-private-sector-funding.

[48] https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/6571/file/Review%20of%20Civil%20Registration%20and%20Vital%20Statistics%20Innovations%20in%20Eastern%20and%20Southern%20Africa.pdf.

[49] https://www.mastercard.com/news/eemea/en/newsroom/press-releases/en/2021/september/mastercard-and-paycode-partner-to-increase-access-to-financial-services-and-government-assistance-for-remote-communities-across-africa/.

Who are the main recipients of financing for CRVS systems?

42. As shown in Table 3, Nepal and Jamaica emerge as the most consistent major recipients of financing for CRVS systems across all time periods, ranking in the top 10 positions throughout 2015–2023. Their continued prominence indicates that CRVS development is a long-term process requiring multi-year financing commitments.

43. Several large countries that are important partner countries for many of the initiatives discussed in this paper are not found on this top financing recipient list, such as India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Brazil and Mexico. With the exception of Brazil, all of these countries receive some financing for CRVS based on the database analyzed in this report, but additional financing may be provided to these countries for social protection or health system improvement projects that are not described as CRVS projects as part of the database, further underlining the need for more complete project information to be reported.

Table 3 Top recipients of disbursements for CRVS-relevant projects 2020–2023

CRVS financing recipients	Current disbursement (in $ millions) (% of total recorded amounts)	Comparison to 2015–2019	
		Rank	Disbursements (in $ millions)
1. Nepal	93.7 (28%)	4th (↑)	13.8
2. Jamaica	31.4 (9%)	6th (↑)	8.0
3. Peru	24.6 (7%)	- (↑)	0
4. Bilateral, unspecified	24.0 (7%)	30th (↑)	.5
5. Nicaragua	21.5 (6%)	61st (↑)	.01
6. Africa, regional	17.3 (5%)	14th (↑)	3.5
7. Cameroon	11.6 (3%)	11th (↑)	5.2
8. Tanzania	10.7 (3%)	3rd (↓)	17.1
9. Lao PDR	10.6 (3%)	- (↑)	0
10. Sierra Leone	8.8 (3%)	13th (↑)	3.6

Total	***331.7***		**174.0**

44. Table 3 shows a significant increase in the size of disbursements that are being directed to “Bilateral, unspecified,” the database’s label for multi-country projects that are not captured under a regional umbrella, such as “Africa, regional.” This evolution may indicate that **more money is channeled through multilateral donors such as GFF that start multi-year, multi-country projects**. This may lead to efficiencies in building CRVS systems and enable peer learning. It also makes capacity-building efforts in multiple countries vulnerable to disruptions in any one of the few major donors.

What parts of CRVS systems receive financing?

45. This vulnerability of CRVS capacity-building efforts to disruptions in large projects is shown clearly by the finding in Table 4 that **only five projects made up nearly half (46 percent) of the estimated CRVS financing between 2015 and 2023**.

Table 4 Top CRVS-relevant projects 2015–2023

Project title	Amount disbursed (2023 $ millions)	Source	Recipient	Brief project description	Type of financing
Strengthening Systems for Social Protection and Civil Registration Project	107.2	IDA	Nepal	Improving the coverage and delivery of social security and civil registration	ODA loan
Improving Access to Civil Registry Services and Quality Identification at the National Level	46.1	IDB	Peru, Nicaragua	Improving access to civil registration and ID documents for vulnerable and remote populations	Peru: Other official flows (non-export credit) Nicaragua: ODA loan
Implementation of the National Identification System (NIDS) for Economic Growth	39.5	IDB	Jamaica	Establishing universal identification system and reducing barriers to acquiring birth certificates	Other official flows (non-export credit)
Scaling-up Birth Registration Using Innovative Technology	23.9	Canada	Tanzania	Implementing new technology for service delivery and training facilitators to increase birth registration	ODA grant
Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF) 2021-25	18.5	Canada	Africa, America, Asia	Supporting multi-year efforts of building CRVS systems and health information systems.	ODA grant

46. The concentration of CRVS financing means that **the success or failure of a handful of major initiatives could dramatically impact global progress on birth and death registration capabilities. This concentration also suggests that smaller, more targeted interventions or innovative approaches may struggle to secure adequate financing, potentially limiting the diversity of solutions being tested and implemented**. This pattern indicates a need for more distributed financing strategies that could include a broader portfolio of projects across different scales, approaches and geographic regions to build more resilient CRVS systems while reducing dependency on a few large initiatives that could become single points of failure for CRVS infrastructure development.

47. Birth and death registration are the two most essential anchors of a CRVS system and are traditionally the most visible elements of a CRVS system. To determine how these two activities have continued to receive financial support, project titles and long descriptions were manually reviewed for classification in all available languages.[50] As shown in Table 5, birth registration received the largest share of CRVS financing in the early SDG period (2015–2019), accounting for nearly half of total disbursements. In contrast, **death registration as a stand-alone project received significantly less attention and resources than birth registration, never exceeding 1 percent across all years**.

Table 5 Birth registration and death registration as a share of total CRVS disbursements 2015–2023

Time period	Birth registration only (%)	Death registration only (%)	Birth and death registration (%)	Neither[51] (%)
2015–2019	45	0.9	29	26
2020–2023	12	0.4	9	78
2015–2023	23	0.6	16	60

48. The analysis also shows that combined birth and death registration disbursements accounted for a substantial portion of financing, particularly in the earlier period (2015–2019) when they made up just under a third of CRVS disbursements. However, this share declined to 9 percent in the most recent period (2020–2023). These shifts suggest that **while the earlier period (2015–2019) was marked by direct investment in birth and death registration, the most recent period (2020–2023) was marked by larger unspecified investments in CRVS systems.**

[50] Marriage and divorce were not included in this due to the relatively low frequency of their mention. Almost every time marriage and divorce are mentioned, it is part of a description listing all CRVS elements.

[51] Projects tagged as "neither" in this analysis include CRVS projects that do not specify whether they support birth or death registration but instead may support marriage and divorce registration or CRVS systems generally.

Although these projects may still support birth or death registration efforts, they are not described as such in the CRS, pointing to the difficulty of analyzing CRVS flows in the absence of standardized descriptions or markers for investments in these systems.

49. Furthermore, other than an increase in investments in general CRVS systems, **there has been a persistent imbalance favoring birth registration over death registration**. This may reflect the allocation of limited resources to systems that deliver the most services to the most people through the linking of birth records to legal identity and connecting people to education and social services. However, this imbalance could also limit countries' ability to develop comprehensive vital statistics systems needed for effective public health monitoring and mortality surveillance.

50. **Of the over 1,100 disbursements[52] identified as relevant to CRVS, 94 percent are funded through ODA grants,** totaling just under $300 million (about 59 percent of the total funds). **Although only 4 percent of the disbursements are funded through ODA loans, these loans make up a disproportionate amount of CRVS financing at $140 million (around 28 percent of funds)**. The remaining disbursements are funded through other official flows (2 percent of entries and 13 percent of funds) and private development finance (0.5 percent of entries and 0.5 percent of funds). The disproportionate weight of ODA loans is due to the sizable project in Nepal by IDA to build a social protection system including a civil registration system, costing over $100 million.

51. **No matter how CRVS projects are financed, local implementation is crucial to the goal of improving CRVS systems.** Best practices for all CRVS development efforts include close collaboration with key local ministries and coordination with implementing stakeholders. According to Vital Strategies in a review of projects with the Global Fund in Tanzania, Rwanda and Ethiopia,[53] this also requires raising awareness about the importance of CRVS with sources of financing and local governments, in addition to linking CRVS improvements to the core support areas of each relevant financing source, whether bilateral, multilateral, philanthropic or private.

Example of Domestic Sourcing of CRVS Financing

52. The main analysis of this paper has focused on flows by external financing partners to domestic governments. However, domestic governments play a

[52] The unit of analysis in this database is the disbursement, a single transaction by a development partner entity, which may identify the annual disbursement of a multi-year disbursement, the total disbursement for a project or one of several disbursements in a year to separate parts of a larger project, depending on the reporting practices of the development partner.
[53] Vital Strategies, "Catalyzing support for CRVS improvement: Examples from the Data for Health Initiative", February 2025.

significant role in financing CRVS system improvements, as seen in the example of the World Bank project in Nepal.[54] In addition, the Philippines has been championed as an example of a strong, robust CRVS system that is also largely self-financed. While it does receive funding and technical assistance from development partners such as the Data for Health Initiative of Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Identification for Development Initiative of the World Bank, the work of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) and domestic resource mobilization have enabled success in financing the country's CRVS system.

53. The CRVS system of the Philippines is funded by a combination of public and private funds. The PSA oversees civil registration and identity management, and the national government funds personnel, information technology, physical infrastructure and other overhead costs. The establishment of partnerships between the PSA and other government ministries, such as the Department of Health and the Department of Interior and Local Government, means that the national resources for CRVS come from diverse sources.[55] Additionally, the decentralization of the CRVS system means that local government funds pay the salaries of the local civil registrars.[56] Other resources come from the Civil Registry System Information Technology Public-Private Partnership Project Phase II that specifically funds things such as the digitalization of CRVS documents, maintaining the CRVS database and delivering front-line services [57]

54. Beyond the Philippines, the commitment of Rwanda to strengthening its CRVS system is reflected in the prioritization of CRVS funds and domestic resource mobilization. GFF provided a grant of $3 million in catalytic funding for CRVS strengthening, leading to a contribution of $6.5 million from the Rwandan government.[58] Similar to the Philippines, Rwanda has implemented a decentralized CRVS system that leaves birth and death registration to the local level for efficient and accessible registration.[59] Additionally, a PPP funded an e-government platform for service delivery, including CRVS-related services. [60]

---

[54] https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P154548?lang=en&tab=overview.

[55] https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Handbooks/crvs/crvs-Idm-E.pdf, p. 30.

[56] https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/kmcd/files/Philippine-CRVS-Strategic-Plan-2023-2028.pdf, pp.10–41.

[57] https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e632a373-d3e4-4a01-a2b5-a9d8ad226b94/content, pp. 4–5.

[58] https://www.globalfinancingfacility.org/sites/gff_new/files/documents/GFF-IG10-5-CRVS.pdf, p. 9.

[59] https://unstats.un.org/legal-identity-agenda/documents/Paper/2023/CRVSID-Rwanda.pdf, p. 7.

[60] https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c3cd4fe5-5874-42de-a07c-cd4e7ccf1c9c/content, p. 2.

55. The Rwandan CRVS system is self-sustaining, operating at a break-even level. The budget is paid for in full by the fees paid for the services offered, such as providing registration documents. Different types of documents have different prices, with the cost of more premium IDs, such as driver's licenses or travel documents, incurring a higher fee. This means that the government can still offer subsidized identity card prices to those who cannot afford the full price.[61] However, these fees still hinder access to CRVS documents, particularly for those in poverty. For example, while registration for vital events is free, a copy of the certificate costs a fee.[62]

56. These two countries provide examples of how domestic resource mobilization can improve CRVS systems, **but further study is needed into countries' domestic financing of CRVS systems, as these modalities are not one size fits all**. Attention is often given to how donors are shaping and implementing CRVS systems in recipient countries, but not to the domestic financing, actions and efforts that these countries are implementing on their own.

CHALLENGES OF TRACKING CRVS FINANCING

57. The assessment of development partner reports and financing of CRVS projects in the CRS and PRESS databases has revealed problems with reporting on the financing for CRVS systems and documentation of good practices and lessons from monitoring and evaluation of countries' CRVS renewal practices. This hides trends in financing and should motivate actions to improve the reporting around financing for CRVS by development partners. This section describes the three main challenges in tracking CRVS financing. Lack of descriptive information, different accounting mechanisms and possible double-counting hinder transparency and accurate analysis of funding disbursements.

Lack of Descriptive Information on Financing Streams from Development Partners in International Databases

58. International databases such as the CRS often contain insufficient detail about the nature, scope and specific objectives of CRVS financing. **Project descriptions may be generic or focus on broader sectoral goals rather than providing granular information about CRVS-specific activities, target populations or expected outcomes**. For example, project descriptions may not capture the investments in statistical infrastructure that the project makes, and instead describe the development outcome and interventions. This is the case with several GFF projects

[61] https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c3cd4fe5-5874-42de-a07c-cd4e7ccf1c9c/content, p. 15.
[62] https://unstats.un.org/legal-identity-agenda/documents/Paper/2023/CRVSID-Rwanda.pdf, p. 9.

reviewed by the authors. Many of these projects feature clear investments in CRVS systems but are not captured in PRESS due to descriptions that would not tag the project for statistical capacity building.

59. Another example is marriage and divorce registration, which are also key parts of civil registration systems. Because projects that focus solely on these aspects are rare, they are almost always lumped in with projects that describe CRVS as a whole. Of the 188 entries that mention “marriage,” only 4 do not explicitly mention birth and death registration as well. This lack of descriptive information makes it challenging to understand the strategic focus of different development partners, identify potential synergies or gaps in programming and assess the alignment of financing with national CRVS priorities. Without detailed project descriptions, stakeholders cannot effectively coordinate their efforts or learn from successful approaches implemented by other partners.

Different Accounting Mechanisms Used by Development Partners

60. Development partners employ diverse financial reporting standards, accounting periods and classification systems that create inconsistencies in how CRVS financing is recorded and reported. Some organizations report commitments, while others report on disbursements; some use calendar years, while others follow different fiscal periods. Varying exchange rate conversion methods can further distort comparative analysis. **These methodological differences make it difficult to aggregate financing data across multiple partners or to establish reliable trend analyses over time, particularly outside a harmonized database like the CRS**.

Possible Double-Counting through Multilaterals

61. While channeling development assistance through multilateral organizations can enhance coordination and reduce transaction costs for recipient countries, this approach creates significant challenges for accurate financial tracking. **When bilateral donors provide funding to multilateral agencies that then support CRVS projects, the same financial resources may be counted multiple times by different reporting methods and in public statements**. This double-counting problem is exacerbated when multilateral organizations add their own co-financing to bilateral contributions, making it difficult to distinguish between new money and re-channeled funds.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW AND EXISTING FINANCING PARTNERS

62. In an era of mounting development finance constraints, in which traditional aid budgets face unprecedented pressure and competing global priorities, the case for strategic investment in locally owned CRVS systems becomes even more compelling. Well-functioning civil registration systems represent a foundational investment that generates dividends across multiple development sectors. They enable evidence-based policymaking, support effective service delivery, facilitate economic inclusion and strengthen governance systems. Yet current financing for CRVS systems does not meet this need. The following paragraphs summarize the substantive and methodological conclusions of this study.

Substantive Conclusions

63. **Significant structural challenges for financing CRVS systems:** The landscape of financing CRVS systems reveals significant structural challenges that demand urgent attention from the international development community. Our analysis exposes a fragmented ecosystem of stakeholders that operate in silos. Although a large variety of stakeholders finance CRVS, most investment comes from a small subset. The patterns of investments suggest that development partners prioritize disbursements over collaborating with other stakeholders to effectively address the long-standing underfunding of CRVS areas. ODA for statistics in general "tends to be aligned more closely with the measurement priorities of donors than those of recipients,"[63] further exacerbating the lack of coordination. The disjointed nature of financing and lack of alignment and coordination leave the system vulnerable to large shocks.

64. **CRVS systems as holistic investments:** The predominant project-based approach to CRVS financing fails to address the inherently systemic nature of civil registration challenges. CRVS systems must comprehensively capture and coordinate an individual's entire legal identity journey—from birth registration through marriage and divorce documentation to death certification—creating an integrated vital statistics framework that spans a person's complete lifecycle. This requires sustained investment in coordinated registration processes, interconnected data systems and unified legal frameworks that can seamlessly track and verify identity transitions across all life events. The current fragmented financing model, characterized by large projects, often aimed at specific registration functions,

[63] https://paris21.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/Financing%20challenges%20for%20developing%20statistical%20systems%20(DP14%29.pdf.

undermines the development of these holistic, nationally owned systems that can effectively coordinate across all vital events and function independently over time.

65. **The connection between CRVS and DPI investments:** International and domestic investment plans for DPI represent a significant opportunity for building robust foundations for CRVS systems and linking them with other systems. The integration of CRVS and DPI is vital for digital transformation, as these systems form the backbone of legal identity and population health data that are essential for effective governance and service delivery. For example, countries like those in the Pacific region plan to build digital civil registration systems and records that are sustainable and interoperable.[64] The Global Digital Compact further supports this integration by calling for increased investment in DPI and national statistical systems.[65] This is also echoed in the Compromiso de Sevilla at the recently concluded for Financing for Development Conference.[66] Both of these international agreements can directly benefit CRVS modernization efforts by striving to build enabling systems for financing for CRVS.

66. **Limited gender and intersectional approaches:** The evidence demonstrates significant gaps in gender-responsive and intersectional approaches to CRVS financing and programming. Current financing mechanisms rarely incorporate explicit strategies to address the unique barriers faced by women, marginalized communities and other vulnerable populations in accessing legal identity services. This represents a substantial missed opportunity to align legal identity investments with broader policy initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

67. **Insufficient evidence of impact:** Despite growing interest in results-based financing mechanisms for CRVS systems, there is a concerning lack of robust evidence demonstrating actual impact and cost-effectiveness of these approaches. Current monitoring and evaluation frameworks inadequately capture the broader developmental outcomes and societal inclusion benefits that well-functioning legal identity systems can provide. This evidence gap undermines the ability to make compelling cases for sustained investment and limits opportunities to optimize financing strategies based on demonstrated results.

Methodological Conclusions

68. **Significant data gaps:** Existing data tracking mechanisms, including databases to track ODA for statistical capacity, such as PRESS and CRS, exhibit substantial

[64] See Action Plan for Pacific Civil Registration & Vital Statistics (APPCRVS): 2023-2026.

[65] https://www.un.org/global-digital-compact/sites/default/files/2024-09/Global%20Digital%20Compact%20-%20English_0.pdf.

[66] https://financing.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/ffd4-documents/2025/Compromiso%20de%20Sevilla%20for%20action%2016%20June.pdf.

gaps in capturing comprehensive financing information across the CRVS ecosystem due to limited metadata and reporting. These platforms are not presently able to document national financing, fully tally international financing mechanisms and donor contributions from both ODA and philanthropic sources for CRVS, or identity management and digital public infrastructure initiatives. Better reporting by partners is needed by using common standard definitions and classifications systems, as is deeper study of how to analyze investments in CRVS systems in existing flows. Without reliable data on current investments, the international community cannot adequately assess whether resources are being deployed effectively and whether they match the scale of need across different countries and regions.

69. **Data comparability challenges:** The research reveals significant inconsistencies in how financing data are recorded and categorized across CRVS investments. These methodological differences in data collection and reporting standards create substantial challenges in understanding how various investments and initiatives complement each other or contribute to overarching system goals. The lack of standardized approaches to financial tracking undermines the ability to assess cumulative impact and identify potential overlaps or gaps in financing coverage.

70. **Need for systematic national documentation:** There is an urgent need for more systematic and standardized documentation of national investments in CRVS systems that enables meaningful comparisons both within individual countries over time and between different national contexts. Current documentation practices lack the consistency and rigor necessary to support evidence-based policy development and strategic planning at national and international levels. Establishing robust, comparable data collection frameworks would significantly enhance the sector's ability to track progress, identify best practices and optimize resource allocation strategies.

71. The international development community and domestic partners must fundamentally reimagine their approach to CRVS financing. Only through a holistic view on CRVS financing, better coordination and greater transparency can we hope to achieve the universal civil registration coverage that remains essential for sustainable development and effective governance in the 21st century.

Acknowledgments

72. This report was authored by a team at Open Data Watch (ODW), comprising Shaida Badiee, Lorenz Noe, Eric Swanson, Jaysen Ensor, Tawheeda Wahabzada, Mandy McCleary and Amelia Pittman. We would like to thank the entire United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) team for their support and partnership on better financing for CRVS systems and especially recognize the invaluable feedback on this draft from UNFPA staff members Romesh Silva, Tapiwa Jhamba and Priscilla Idele. In addition, we would like to thank Claudia Wells (Vital Strategies), Philip Setel (Vital Strategies), Jeanne Jadeau (PARIS21) and Johannes Abele (PARIS21) for providing insights on the implementation and monitoring of CRVS projects. Amelia Pittman (ODW) created infographics and design. Cindy Young-Turner provided copyediting.

Annex 1: Methodology Used for Extracting CRVS Projects and Link to Dataset

73. CRVS projects were identified in the PRESS dataset and the 2023 CRS dataset using the following key word filters:

Table 6 List of key words filtered for in Project Title and/or Long Description in the PRESS and CRS 2023 datasets to identify CRVS projects

birth regis	vital stat	registr
death regis	vital event	identit
civil regis	data for health	enregis
crvs	civil status	estadísticas vital
marriage	certif	statistiques de l'état civil
divorce	vital regis	identidad

Table 7 List of key words filtered out in the Project and/or Long Description in the PRESS dataset to exclude non-CRVS projects

land regis
agri

Table 8 List of key words filtered out in Sector Code in the CRS 2023 dataset to exclude non-CRVS projects

Sector name	
banking	business
forest	emergency
mining	industry
agri	tourism
energy	transport
fish	

Table 9 List of key words filtered out in Purpose Name and Purpose Code in the CRS 2023 dataset to exclude non-CRVS projects

Purpose Name	**Purpose Code**
employment	93010
trade	

Table 10 List of key words filtered out in Project Title and/or Long Description in the CRS 2023 dataset to exclude non-CRVS projects

Project Title/Long Description

land regis
real estate
cadast

74. After these filters were applied, the datasets were reviewed manually, and any remaining projects that were unrelated to any element of CRVS were removed. All values were converted to 2023 prices using the US dollar DAC deflator for resource flows from donors.[67] Purpose code 93010 (Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries) was excluded as this does not measure CRVS strengthening for low- and middle-income countries.

75. For the projects considered adjacent to CRVS, the following phrases were filtered out from the Project Title and Long Description from the PRESS dataset (see Table 11). This was done separately from the main key word search; i.e., projects that used these terms but also any of the key words listed in the previous tables were included in the main dataset.

Table 11 List of key words filtered for in Project Title and/or Long Description in the PRESS dataset to identify CRVS adjacent projects:

migran	census
migrat	DHS
refuge	demographic and health survey
asy	population regis

76. For determining which projects were "birth registration only," "death registration only" or "birth and death registration," project titles and/or long descriptions were manually reviewed for classification in all available languages.

77. The filtered dataset can be found on GitHub.[68]

Annex 2: Further Research

78. The findings of this paper have laid bare the difficulty of diagnosing financing for CRVS systems when these improvements are often folded into other projects and therefore may not be tagged as such in databases such as CRS or IATI. Further research may involve validating projects with their respective source to test for the presence of CRVS system improvements to manually tally the total flows for CRVS financing.

[67] https://webfs.oecd.org/oda/DataCollection/Resources/Deflators-base-2022.xls
[68] https://github.com/lnoe10/crvs_financing/blob/main/Financing for CRVS systems 2015-2023.xlsx

79. More information is needed regarding domestic financing for CRVS systems. While studies such as Espey (2019) compiled useful information,[69] and many CRVS projects studied in this paper see a role for co-financing with domestic governments, there is still no regularly updated and comprehensive dataset on how to capture domestic financing for CRVS. This would help complete the picture by showing how countries themselves contribute to, participate in and engage with CRVS financing, as well as provide information on the total amount of money available for CRVS system improvements.

80. The paper has made clear the linkages of CRVS systems with legal identity and DPI. In addition to overcoming the data limitations mentioned previously, combining estimates of CRVS financing with financing for legal identity and DPI will likely significantly increase the estimates of total financing.

81. Finally, more research is needed on how sources of financing like bilateral donors, multilateral organizations and private actors think about financing CRVS systems, either as stand-alone projects or as part of larger efforts to improve development outcomes. This would also connect to efforts to improve reporting on contributions to CRVS financing.

[69] https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/0383ee93-02e2-4165-9b46-7996653ece88/content.