

WORKSHOP 3 AFTERNOON

DEVELOPING THE AFRICAN eCRVS SHARED ASSET (ACSA)



CHAIRING PARTNERS



DEVELOPING THE AFRICAN eCRVS SHARED ASSET (ACSA) – AN ASSET OWNED AND MANAGED BY AFRICANS

WORKSHOP 3 CONCEPT NOTE

25 MAY 2023: 14:00 – 18:00

BACKGROUND

Despite progress in increasing birth registration coverage in Africa over the past decade, the continent still has 91 million unregistered children under five, accounting for more than half of the global total. Additionally, 25 million children are listed as registered but lack birth certificates. Almost 27 million infants in Africa are not registered, and another 6 million do not have birth certificates. A substantial number of newborns are registered after the legal deadline, resulting in fines and complicated processes, including judicial resolutions.

The progress among African countries has been uneven. While 20 African countries are on track to achieve universal birth registration by 2030, others need to improve their efforts. With current trends, Africa will have 38 million fewer unregistered children in 2030 and 58 million fewer with accelerated progress.

The success of global efforts depends on Africa's progress.

NEED

The APAI-CRVS has long stressed the importance of digitalizing CRVS systems in Africa to enhance system functionality and improve service delivery, especially in remote areas. The African Union and UNECA have called for a uniform, standard approach to digitalization to allow African countries to benefit from each other's efforts and create a cost-effective, integrated CRVS system. Despite these efforts, the digital landscape in African nations remains fragmented and costly, with most governments investing in proprietary, country-specific solutions that are expensive to customize, lacking in functional requirements, and not integrated with health and national ID systems.

Additionally, these solutions are prone to malfunction and data breaches due to inadequate security features and a lack of third-party audits. Efforts to scale up are inconsistent, leading to a widening digital divide and high attrition rates of digital solutions in some countries, causing cumulative losses from switching from one solution to another. In a few countries, multiple digital solutions are being implemented simultaneously, creating confusion about the way forward. The insistence of partner agencies and donors on specific solutions or vendors exacerbates these challenges.

Digitalization through the innovative and safe use of technology featured as a thematic area during ID4Africa supported Workshop 3: Mission 100: Towards achieving 100% legal identity by 2030 in Marrakesh in 2022 where more than 30 participants, including representatives from 20 African countries shared their experiences and learnings.

The issue of accelerating efforts to set up safe, innovative, and cost-effective digitalized CRVS systems in Africa took center stage during the Expert Segment of the 6th conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration. It was, inter-alia, recommended that African States should actively drive the digital transformation of civil registration and vital statistics systems to increase coverage and accessibility while prioritizing data safety, security, system integrity, clear data ownership, and availability. This includes considering the national legal and regulatory frameworks and existing information technology and infrastructure. The available technical and resource capabilities should also be considered during planning, procurement, and implementation, including the development of effective business processes. Additionally, the technical expertise of essential personnel should be developed to reduce dependence on solution providers and the risk of vendor lock-in while ensuring the security and safety of data sharing and system interoperability.

AFRICAN eCRVS SHARED ASSET

To help African countries benefit fully from digitalization, ID4Africa, UNICEF, UNECA, and OpenCRVS jointly propose to develop an African eCRVS Shared Asset (ACSA) for scale. ACSA will consist of three key elements: design principles, a digital CRVS solution, and a governance body.

The **design principles** will encompass both technology and non-technology-focused principles. The technology-focused principles will inter-alia include interoperability; design for modularity; design for scale; open APIs, standards, and data; data protection and privacy by design and other safeguards to ensure inclusion and trust; and prioritize security. Non-technology-focused principles will involve consultation with stakeholders; taking a Pan-African approach; robust governance for implementation; and other enablers.

The **digital CRVS solution** will meet necessary functional and non-functional requirements and allow for interoperability with health and national ID systems. It will be easy to customize and deploy with a minimal learning curve across various settings. The solution will be made available freely to countries with some initial funding support for deployment and a joint mechanism for sustained technical support.

The **governance body** will be led by representatives from African countries and the entire governance process, including technical vetting of the solution and oversight support will be managed by them. The African Union, UNECA, UNICEF, ID4Africa, OpenCRVS and other partners will support the governance body in a non-voting capacity.

For the successful development of the ACSA, it is essential to establish a well-coordinated effort and a strong commitment towards meeting the needs of the local population while supporting the country's development. As we move forward, we plan to engage in a constructive dialogue with African countries and other stakeholders, including donors, to gather their input and feedback on the proposal, and jointly agree on a roadmap that aligns with the project's objectives.

To facilitate this process, UNICEF and OpenCRVS, in collaboration with UNECA and ID4Africa, will co-chair a workshop (W3) on Developing the African eCRVS Shared Asset (ACSA) during the third day of the 2023 ID4Africa Augmented General Meeting in Nairobi, scheduled for May 25th. This workshop aims to bring together key stakeholders to discuss and share their experiences on the challenges and opportunities in the development of ACSA, as well as identify potential solutions and strategies to ensure its successful implementation.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The workshop aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Reach a consensus on the necessity of ACSA and endorse design principles, digital solutions, and governance structures, composition, and modalities.
- Transform the discussions and recommendations into an ACSA roadmap document and finalize it by collaborating with African Member States and other key partners (by July 2023).
- Establish an interim governance body to initiate the work, including the development of the roadmap document and follow-up activities.
- Determine a tentative release date for ACSA.

The ultimate objective is to ensure that the ACSA implementation process is inclusive, effective, and transparent. In addition, it would be desirable if it leverages existing assets as much as possible and in its modularity provides choice for adopting organizations to implement the interoperable modules that are best suited to complement their existing assets and that respond to their business needs.

By fostering an inclusive and collaborative approach, we can build a system that is not only efficient and sustainable but also responsive to the diverse needs of the local population. This will require the participation of all stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, and private sector actors, to work towards a shared vision and drive the development of ACSA in Africa.