# OPENCRVS

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**Overview:** OpenCRVS responds to a challenging truth about CRVS systems - the fact that many of them are not delivering on their promise to extend coverage, automate processes and share data. Existing systems often suffer from vendor lock-in, where proprietary software solutions involve long-term support contracts and spiralling costs. Otherwise, countries choose to build systems from scratch, despite the fact that the core of CRVS processes are the same across countries. Civil registration systems are typically designed in isolation from other government systems which means that it is difficult to share data, for example between the civil registry, health systems and National ID.

Ineffective CRVS systems result in poor registration completeness rates, particularly in the poorest and most remote locations where the negative impacts of being unregistered are felt the most. In addition, governments are left without a continuous source of population data to inform policy decisions and planning. As such, there is an urgent need for a new approach to how we conceive of and implement CRVS systems.

OpenCRVS is a standards-based, freely available open-source CRVS software solution that responds to the needs of its users both in its functionality and in the way it is being architected and designed. Building on the success of the CRVS Digitization Guidebook[1], Plan International and Jembi Health Systems are working with a number of CRVS partners and Civil Registrars in support of the regional CRVS strengthening groups[2] to create a simple and accessible registration experience with the necessary flexibility to be adaptable to different country contexts.

As a global good, OpenCRVS provides a game-changing opportunity for countries to develop foundational registry systems to support human rights, policy planning and good governance:

- No license fees and no ties to specific software vendors
- Easy to configure to meet country specific needs
- Simple and accessible registration processes for citizens
- Data-driven performance management dashboard
- Interoperable with health systems and national ID for end-to-end service delivery and integrity
- Embeds UN standards and reporting
- Best-practice security for data protection and confidentiality

**Prototyping:** During the course of 2017 an OpenCRVS prototype was built to gather feedback from stakeholders and to test technical assumptions, such as health interoperability standards. The prototype was built based on an understanding of CRVS processes and actors in Ghana.

[1] www.crvs-dgb.org
[2] African Programme for the Accelerated Improvement in CRVS (http://apai-crvs.org/) and the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific (http://getinthepicture.org/regional-steering-group-crvs-asia-and-pacific)


*Figure 1: OpenCRVS screenshot from the operations manager view*

This initial OpenCRVS prototype was demonstrated to country experts at both the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia Pacific (Bangkok, Oct 2017) and the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration (Nouakchott, Dec 2017). Initial feedback on the prototype has been positive and at the Conference of African Ministers the CRVS experts recommended to "create an expert review group to ensure that OpenCRVS is developed to fit the CRVS needs of all African countries[3]".

OpenCRVS is being developed using an agile development methodology, meaning that the early prototypes are used to gather continuous feedback and learnings from citizens and civil registration staff. This approach means that software later deployed in-country will better respond to the needs of users and will be more readily adopted. In recognition of its potential impact, OpenCRVS has been recognised as one of 11 Bold Ideas for Philanthropists to Drive Social Change[4].

In December 2017, a workshop was held at Plan International HQ to focus on the needs of end users in order to understand how OpenCRVS would be implemented in a country context, with experts from Bangladesh and Kenya guiding the discussion towards the underlying needs of a range of potential future users of the system. The workshop also brought in new partners, with the Bloomberg Data for Health team bringing deep CRVS knowledge and Futurice providing service design and technology expertise.

**Next steps:** The priorities for OpenCRVS in 2018 are as follows:

1. Complete OpenCRVS end-user prototyping and field testing in Bangladesh.
2. Build out additional product features such that OpenCRVS can meet the needs of various country contexts. This will be achieved by conducting field research, analyzing the business process maps documented by the Bloomberg Data for Health Initiative and by creating an expert review group with members from countries across Africa and Asia Pacific.
3. Identify countries most likely to proceed to implementation.
4. Develop a sustainable business model for OpenCRVS to support multi-country implementation.

[3] Report of the Meeting of Experts, Fourth Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, Nouakchott, Dec 2017 (http://apai-crvs.org/CR4)
[4] Center for High Impact Philanthropy, University of Pennsylvania (https://goo.gl/LjFqex)