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SNAPSHOT

OF CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS OF

MADAGASCAR



ECA

Program information

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Housed at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems is a global knowledge and resource hub that actively supports national efforts to develop, strengthen, and scale-up CRVS systems. It collaborates with organizations and experts to broker access to information and expertise, including global standards, tools, research evidence, and relevant good practice.

The Centre of Excellence was established with funding from Global Affairs Canada and IDRC and contributes directly to the work of the Global Financing Facility, a key financing platform of the UN Secretary General's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health.

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Published by the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). This publication was authored by Mia Harbitz, a consultant for the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems.

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The research presented in this publication was carried out with financial and technical assistance from the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems. Housed at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), it is jointly funded by Global Affairs Canada and IDRC. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of Global Affairs Canada, IDRC, or its Board of Governors.

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a brief overview of the civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system in Madagascar.

The information was collected by a desk review of publicly available documents pertaining to civil registration and vital statistics in Madagascar. Among other things, the report presents:

- Background information on the country;
- Selected indicators relevant for CRVS improvement processes;
- Stakeholders' activities; and
- Resources available to strengthen CRVS systems.

Brief country profile

Madagascar is situated in the Indian Ocean off the southeast coast of Africa and is the fourth largest island in the world. It shares a maritime border with **Comoros**, **France** (Mayotte island, **Reunion**), **Mozambique**, and **Seychelles**.

The administrative structure in Madagascar¹ consists of 22 regions, 119 districts, 1,579 *communes* (municipalities), and 17,465 *fokontany*. A *fokontany* is a political-administrative subdivision equivalent to a village or group of villages in Madagascar.

- Land area: 587,041 km²
- Population: 26.5 million (2020 estimated),² with an annual growth rate of 2.6 percent, according to the World Bank.³ As of 2018, 37.2 percent live in urban areas, while 62.8 percent live in rural areas. The population is made up of 49.9 percent males and 50.1 percent females.
- Capital city: Antananarivo

Madagascar



Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

- Official working languages: Malagasy and French
- Ministry responsible for civil registration: Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization (Ministère de l'Intérieur et de la Décentralisation) and the Ministry of Justice
- Civil registration agency: None
- National statistical office: National Institute of Statistics (Institut National de la Statistique, INSTAT)



CRVS dimensions

Births	
Completeness of birth registration	78% (2018) ⁴
Children under 5 years of age whose births were reported as registered	80% (2018) ⁵
Births attended by skilled health personnel	46% (2018) ⁶
Women aged 15–49 who received antenatal care from a skilled provider	87% (2018) ⁷
DPT1 immunization coverage among 1-year-olds	25% (2018) ⁸
Crude birth rate (per 1,000 population)	32.6 (2018) ⁹
Total fertility rate (live births per woman)	3.95 (2018) ¹⁰
Institutional deliveries – percentage of deliveries in a health facility	38.7% ¹¹
Adolescent fertility rate (per 1,000 girls aged 15–19)	107.74 (2018) ¹²
Population under age 15	39.55% (2018) ¹³
Deaths	
Completeness of death registration	Not available
Crude death rate (per 1,000 population)	6.06 (2018) ¹⁴
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	40 (2018) ¹⁵
Under 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	59 (2016) ¹⁶
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	335 (2017) ¹⁷
Marriages and divorces	
Marriage registration rate	Not available
Women aged 20–24 first married or in union before age 15	13% (2018) ¹⁸
Women aged 20–24 first married or in union before age 18	40% (2018) ¹⁹
Divorce registration rate	Not available
Vital statistics including causes-of-death data	
Compilation and dissemination of civil registration-based statistics	Not available
Medically certified causes of death	Limited information ²⁰

Civil registration system

Legislative framework

In 2018, the law that governs civil registration was updated and upgraded. At the same time, a comprehensive review of the relevant Malagasy laws and regulations was undertaken to ensure coherence with the legal framework for civil registration and compliance with good international practices. Madagascar has a decentralized civil registration system, with no central depository of records. One key element of the new law is the creation of a National Civil Registration and Identification Center.

Management, organization, and operations

National CRVS coordination mechanisms

Madagascar has a national CRVS coordination committee (Secrétariat Permanent du CNC-CRVS), which is managed by the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization.

The committee members are in Table 1.

Table 1: Members of the national CRVS coordination committee.

National members	Development partner as observer only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization • Ministry of Public Health • National Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) • Ministry of Justice • Ministry of the Population, Social Protection, and the Promotion of Women • Ministry of National Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Madagascar is part of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS). In 2017, an APAI-CRVS assessment was completed and contributed to the development of a national strategy to improve civil registration and vital statistics. This strategy, along with the World Bank's ID4D Country Diagnostic report on Madagascar from the same year, contributed to the national civil registration reform the country is currently undertaking.

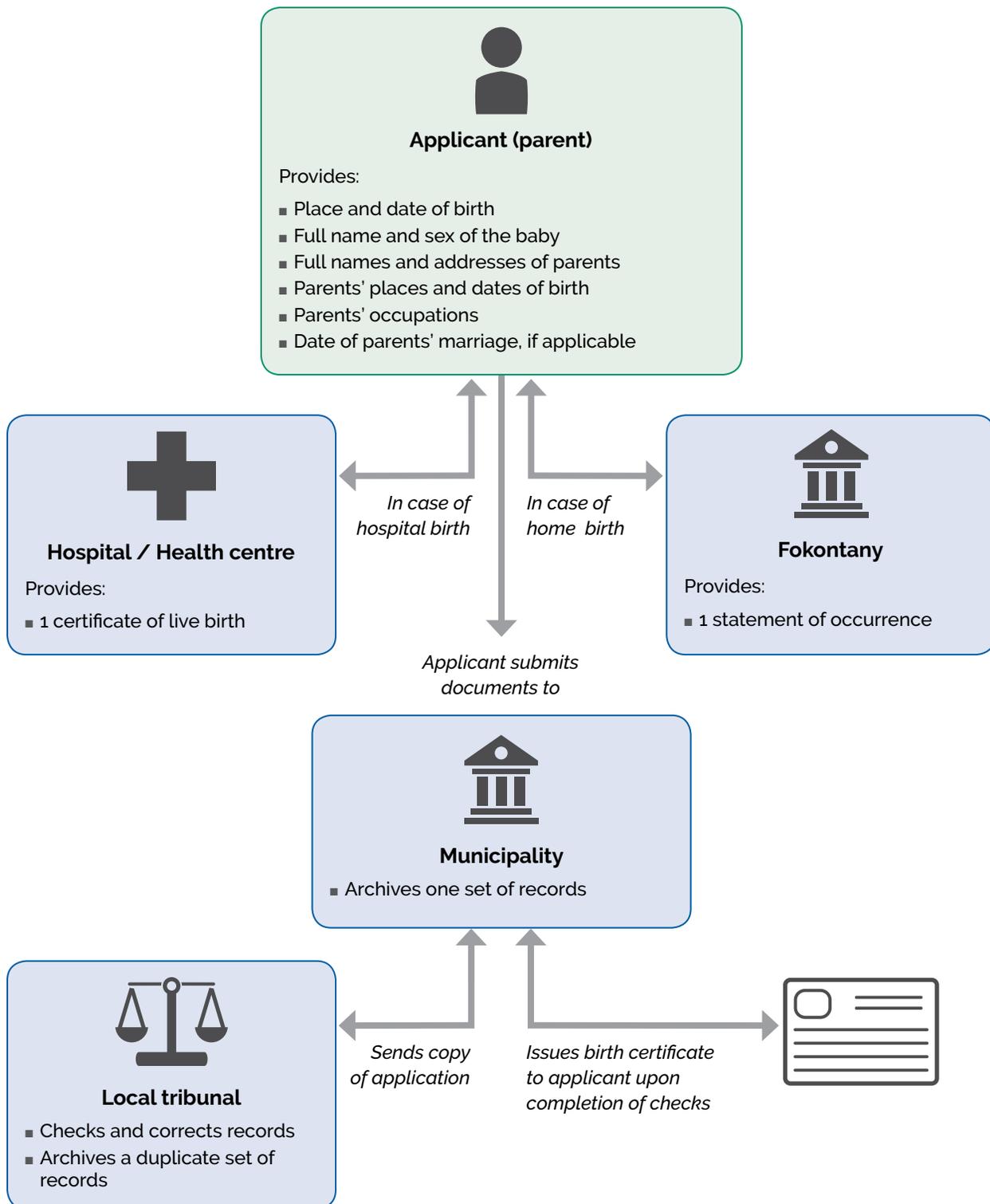
Administrative-level registration centres

Registration of vital events is decentralized and carried out at the municipal level, with health clinics and *fokontany* providing notifications, as illustrated in Figure 1 for birth registration. In certain cases, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of National Defence may also provide notification of a vital event.

Madagascar has a decentralized civil registration system. As described in a World Bank report:

"The responsibility for civil registration in Madagascar is divided between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice. Registration tasks are generally carried out by the municipalities [communes], who have designated staff working in their registration offices to deliver the service to the citizens. Madagascar uses a two-book system for any registration of a vital event; i.e. each type of event has a separate book. Local trial courts (Tribunaux de Première Instance) receive a copy of all registry records from within their jurisdiction. In addition, if a child's birth is not registered within the legally mandated 12 [increased to 30 in the new law] days, the registration must be processed through the trial courts, which adds costs and incurs further delays. The acts of birth and death registration, as well as the original copy of the respective certificates, are supposed to be free of charge."²¹

Figure 1: Birth registration process in Madagascar.



Source: Harbitz, M. and Witt, M. 2017. Madagascar Country Diagnostic. World Bank.

Accessibility of civil registration services

Many households are located less than 1 km from the nearest *fokontany* office, where parents may provide notification of a birth if it has occurred at home. However, there are no data readily available on how near or far people live from municipal registration offices.

Backlog of unregistered births

The backlog of unregistered births is 22 percent. Birth registration is 78 percent, according to Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey-6. Of these, 63 percent have collected the birth certificate for the child.

Sample registration forms

The notification and registration of vital events is carried out manually or, in a few cases, by computer. However, these are not connected to any network beyond the office.

Sample registration forms are not available to include in this report. As part of the new civil registration law and sector reform, new notification and registration forms will be used. The forms can be used for on-site electronic recording, or in places that are not connected, the forms can be filled out manually and the data entered into the database at a central office.

Registration fee

Registration of vital events and the first copy of the certificate for birth, marriage, and death registration are free, according to the law. However, in practice, some civil registration offices charge even for the first certificate (Table 2). Penalties are charged for late registration of births and deaths.

Table 2: Fees for registration and certification of vital events.

Vital event	Fee for registration	
	Yes	No
Birth		X
Death		X
Marriage		X
Divorce		X

Vital event	Fee for certificates*	
	Yes	No
Birth	X	
Death	X	
Marriage	X	
Divorce	X	

*There is no uniform fee amount

Vital statistics system

Vital statistics

INSTAT, the National Institute of Statistics, was created in 1947. The most recent update of its legal framework was in 2018 (*Loi n° 2018-004 du 18 avril 2018 Relative à l'organisation et à la réglementation des activités statistiques*).

Vital statistics are not produced with input from the civil registration processes, so they are collected, compiled, and disseminated from surveys. The latest Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), the MICS-6, was carried out in 2018. As part of the civil registration reform, vital statistics will be collected and compiled automatically.

Causes of death

Deaths must be notified to the commune, which then issues a burial permit, but does not inform INSTAT. The commune issues a death certificate without cause of death. Health facilities lack standardized death notification forms and do not systematically use the World Health Organization International Form of Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. About 40 percent of deaths occur in hospitals, according to a 2019 study.²²

Deaths that occur at home are reported to the *fokontany* and family members provide information about cause of death.

Digitization

When the National Civil Registration and Identification Centre is established, a central database for civil registration records will be set up. The decentralized registration offices will be linked to this database to simultaneously carry registration and insert a unique identity number from birth and issue a corresponding certificate.

Computerization

The registration of births, marriages, and deaths in Madagascar continues to be paper-based, but there are plans for digitizing records, creating a centralized database, and making broader use of computers and networking.

Online registration services

Madagascar does not currently offer online registration services.

Mobile technology application

There are no mobile technology applications in place for notification or registration of vital events. However, there are plans to use mobile technology in the future.

Unique identification number

As outlined in the new law and as part of the planned modernization of the civil registration system, Madagascar will introduce a unique identification number. It is one of the activities in the planned modernization project financed by the World Bank.

Digitization of historical registration records

Upon the planned modernization of the civil registration system, Madagascar will create a database for civil register records once the format of the unique identification number (UIN) has been determined. Existing civil registration records will be retrofitted with a UIN and digitized. The extent of the digitization of historical records (i.e., how far back they will go) has yet to be determined.

Link with identification system

At this point, civil registration and civil identification are not linked, but there are concrete plans to do so under the planned modernization project financed by the World Bank.

Interface with other sectors and operations

There is no electronic interface between the civil registration sector and other sectors. Such interfaces depend on digitization of vital events records in a centralized civil registration database, which is currently under consideration as part of a planned World Bank financed project.

Improvement initiatives and external support

Improvement plan and budget

Budget allocations and requirements

Madagascar has had a strategic plan to improve CRVS systems since 2017, and has already implemented some of the activities, such as revising and upgrading the legal framework for civil registration and vital statistics. The budgetary needs for this plan have not been detailed.

Activities identified as high priorities

The prioritized activities identified in the current national CRVS improvement plan are the following:

- Upgrade legal frameworks and revise implications for other relevant laws and regulations;

- Improve and harmonize the instruments for civil registration;
- Build capacity for human resources and the upgrading of infrastructure; and
- Improve statistical capacity and the production and quality of vital statistics.

Support from development partners

The development partners that provided support to the civil registration and vital statistics systems improvement initiative in Madagascar are listed in Table 3. The development partners meet with some frequency to ensure ongoing communication about current and planned activities. UNICEF acts as the secretariat for this group.

Table 3: Organizations that provided support to the CRVS systems improvement initiative.

Organizations	Type of support
European Union	Support for civil registration in selected communities to ensure land registration rights
UNICEF	Support for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing and implementing the national program to improve civil registration and vital statistics • birth registration in selected parts of the country • the national CRVS committee's operations
GIZ (German Corporation for International Cooperation)	Support for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training of civil registry staff • a sensitization campaign on birth registry in select municipalities • digitization in select municipalities
USAID	Support for health information systems through projects to reduce maternal and child mortality
World Bank	Financial and technical assistance for the planned overall consolidation and modernization of Madagascar's civil registration and identity management system



Conclusion

Madagascar has had an organized civil registration system since the 1890s, and has a 78 percent birth registration rate. Madagascar ranks 162 out of 189 countries on the UN's 2019 Human Development Index, and has an estimated poverty rate of 74.1 percent (2019), with difficult living conditions for the vast majority of the population. The government recognizes the importance of the civil registration and vital statistics systems among many other governance priorities.

The motivation for the ongoing and planned improvements to the civil registration and vital statistics systems is to improve access to and delivery of basic services as part of the effort to reduce poverty and strengthen development potential.

Madagascar has recently made significant progress in revising and updating the legal framework for civil registration. The country has made a political commitment to modernize the civil registry and is currently planning a major reform project with funding from the World Bank.



Resources

Websites

Our World in Data: ourworldindata.org/grapher/completeness-of-birth-registration?tab=chart&country=MDG

Droit Afrique: droit-afrique.com/pays/madagascar/

UNICEF: unicef.org/madagascar/
and data.unicef.org/country/mdg/

Institut National de la Statistique (INSTAT):
unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/print.aspx?docID=617

World Bank: worldbank.org/en/country/madagascar/overview

Additional materials

Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX).
data.humdata.org/showcase?q=Madagascar&ext_search_source=main-nav&page=1

Institut National de la Statistique (INSTAT). 2018.
Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey-6. Madagascar.
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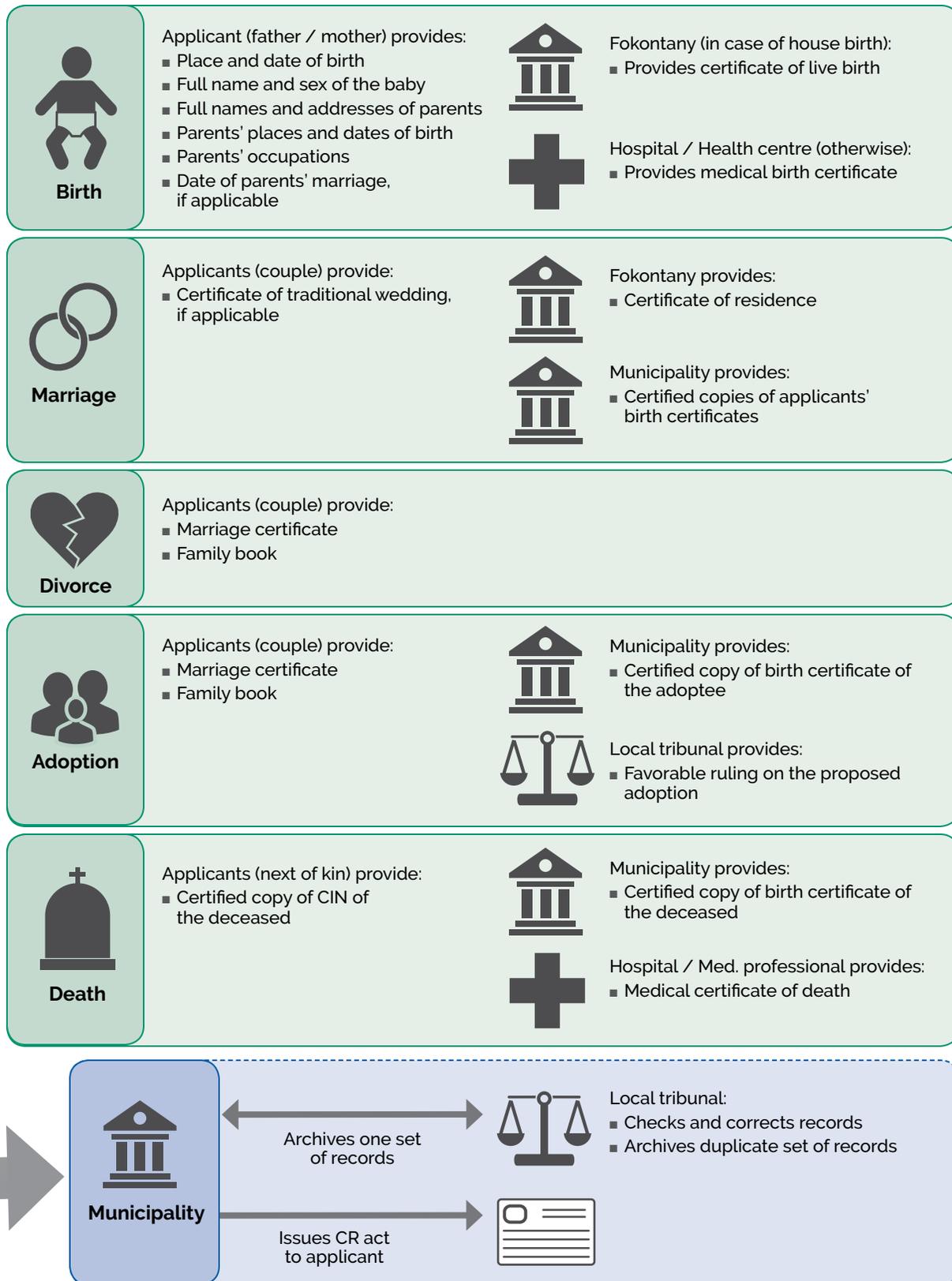
Masquelier, B. et al. 2019. Estimating cause-specific mortality in Madagascar: an evaluation of death notification data from the capital city. *BioMed Central (BMC)*. pophealthmetrics.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12963-019-0190-z

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World Bank Group. 2017. ID4D Country Diagnostic: Madagascar. documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/809191510763351833/ID4D-Country-Diagnostic-Madagascar.pdf

Annex 1: Current process for civil registration services in Madagascar



Endnotes

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- 2 Institut National de la Statistique (INSTAT). Madagascar en chiffre. 2020. instat.mg/accueil/madagascar-en-chiffre/
- 3 World Bank. 2019. Population growth (annual %) – Madagascar. data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW?locations=MG
- 4 Institut National de la Statistique (INSTAT). 2018. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey-6 (MICS-6). Madagascar. instat.mg/accueil/mics-2018/
- 5 Ibid.
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- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 World Bank. 2018. Birth rate, crude (per 1,000 people). data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.CBRT.IN?locations=MG
- 10 Index Mundi. 2018. Madagascar Demographics Profile 2019. indexmundi.com/madagascar/demographics_profile.html
- 11 UNICEF. 2018. data.unicef.org/country/mdg/
- 12 World Bank. 2018. Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15–19) – Madagascar. data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT?locations=BW-CD-AO-LS-MG-MW-MU-NA-MZ-ZA-SC-SZ-TZ-KM-ZM-ZW
- 13 Index Mundi. 2018.
- 14 World Bank. 2018. Death rate, crude (per 1,000 people). worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.CDRT.IN?locations=MG
- 15 Institut National de la Statistique (INSTAT). 2018.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Index Mundi. 2017.
- 18 Institut National de la Statistique (INSTAT). 2018.
- 19 Ibid.
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- 21 World Bank. 2017. ID4D Country Diagnostic: Madagascar, Washington, DC, page 9.
- 22 Masquelier, B. et al. 2019.



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