



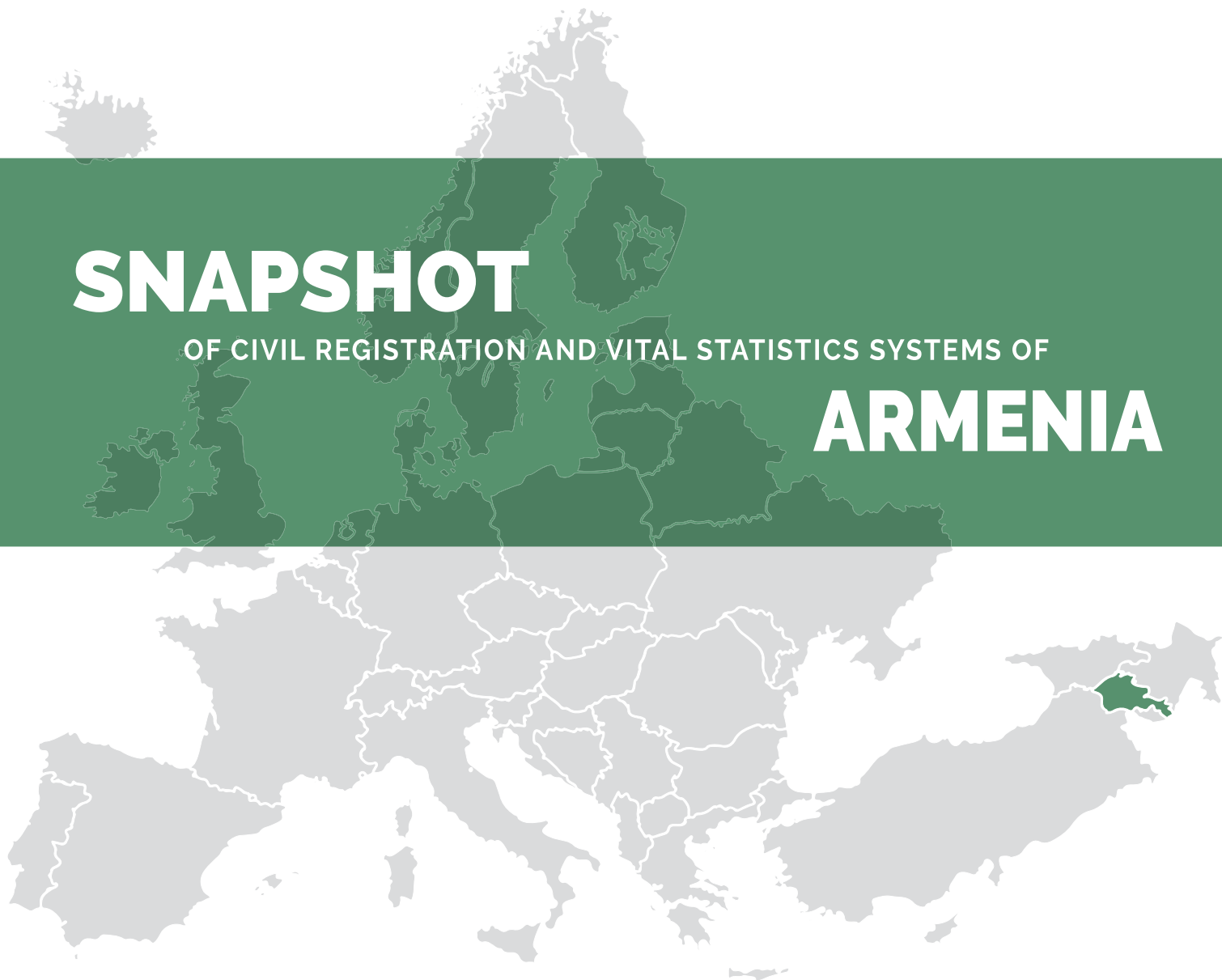
**CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE**  
for CRVS Systems

**LE CENTRE D'EXCELLENCE**  
sur les systèmes ESEC

# SNAPSHOT

OF CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS OF

# ARMENIA



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## 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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## Introduction

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

The information is based on a case study of Armenia's CRVS and identity management systems that was published in the *Compendium of Good Practices in Linking Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) and Identity Management Systems*. It is further supplemented by a desk review of available documents. Among other things, this report presents:

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

## Brief country profile

The Republic of Armenia is found in the South Caucasus region of Asia. This landlocked country is located between the Black and Caspian seas, bordered on the north and east by Georgia and Azerbaijan, and on the south and west by Iran and Turkey.

- Land area: 29,743 km<sup>2</sup>
- Population: 2,951,776,<sup>1</sup> with an estimated annual growth rate of 0.2 percent.<sup>2</sup> The urban population was estimated at 63 percent in 2018;<sup>3</sup> the remaining 37 percent live in rural areas.
- Capital city: Yerevan



*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 language: Armenian
- Ministry responsible for civil registration: Ministry of Justice
- Civil registration agency: Civil Status Acts Registration Agency (CSARA)
- National statistical office: Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia



## CRVS dimensions

Births	
Completeness of birth registration	98.7% (2018) <sup>4</sup>
Children under 5 years of age whose births were reported as registered	99.3% (2015) <sup>5</sup>
Births attended by skilled health personnel	99.8% (2016) <sup>6</sup>
Women aged 15–49 who received antenatal care from a skilled provider	99.6% (2016) <sup>7</sup>
DPT1 immunization coverage among 1-year-olds	97% (2016) <sup>8</sup>
Crude birth rate (per 1,000 population)	14 (2017) <sup>9</sup>
Total fertility rate (live births per woman)	1.8 (2017) <sup>10</sup>
Adolescent fertility rate (per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 years)	21 (2017) <sup>11</sup>
Population under age 15	20% (2012) <sup>12</sup>
Deaths	
Completeness of death registration	99.2% (2011) <sup>13</sup>
Crude death rate (per 1,000 population)	10 (2017) <sup>14</sup>
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	11 (2018) <sup>15</sup>
Under 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	12.4 (2018) <sup>16</sup>
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	26 (2017) <sup>17</sup>
Marriages and divorces	
Marriage registration rate	Not available
Women aged 20–24 first married or in union before age 15	0 (2016) <sup>18</sup>
Women aged 20–24 first married or in union before age 18	5 (2016) <sup>19</sup>
Divorce registration rate	Not available
Vital statistics including causes of death data	
Compilation and dissemination of civil registration-based statistics	Available
Medically certified causes of death data	Available

## Civil registration system

### Legislative framework

Armenian legislation governing civil registration, vital statistics, and identity management has been upgraded to reflect the digital processing of identity data. The legislation has built on the basic principles of the legacy regulatory framework that governs the registering of vital life events and the issuing of national identity cards and travel documents. A rigid system of residence permits has been abolished, restoring the full right to freedom of movement. The internal passport has ceased to function as a resident permit; while it was still in use, it mainly served as an identification document.

Various laws govern civil registration and identity management.

- Civil registration is regulated by the *Law on Acts of Civil Status* (2004).<sup>20</sup>
- The *Law on State Register of the Population* (2002)<sup>21</sup> regulates how the population register is to be used. The law states that "Authorized state bodies of the relevant fields are obliged to provide the bodies conducting register with personal registration data of the population" (Article 6). This was used as the legal basis for making the population and civil registers interoperative, both administratively and technologically. This was done to make sure that information defined under Article 6, which CSARA is responsible for registering, is included. The law notes that "The main principles of the creation and conduct of the register are ... [among others] [t]he availability of personal registration data to the bodies (persons) only having relevant powers defined by the law" (Article 4). This defines the responsibility and legal grounds to provide identity data, including by having electronic interoperability with CSARA and other government systems.
- Identity management is also regulated by the *Law on Identification Cards* (2011).<sup>22</sup>
- The electronic processing of personal information is regulated by the *Law on Protection of Personal Data* (2015).<sup>23</sup>

### Management, organization, and operations

Since Armenia declared independence and set up its own institutions, responsibilities for civil registration and identity management have not changed much. The Ministry of Justice is still responsible for civil registration, which is done by CSARA. The police are responsible for identity management and for operating the population register. They issue national identity cards, travel documents, and driver's licences — documents that are officially recognized as identification credentials and proof of identity. The population register was designed to store identity and other data for all members of the population who have established residency in the territory of Armenia.

### National CRVS systems coordination mechanisms

On 24 December 2015, an interagency working group — the national coordination mechanism — was established by order of the Minister of Justice. The group is made up of representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Regional Government and Local Self-Governing Bodies, State Statistics Committee, and Passport Department. The group was operational until 2017. Since then, the Ministry of Justice has been leading CRVS mechanisms through the Office of the Prime Minister.

The Ministry of Justice recommended the following entities as members of the national CRVS coordination working group:

- Ministry of Justice;
- Ministry of Health;
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; and
- Ministry of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations, including the Police and Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia.

### *Administrative-level registration centres*

Vital events are registered in the 53 territorial offices that CSARA oversees. The local administration appoints registration officials. As part of registering births and deaths, the agency works with 350 hospitals. Since 2017, they have completed and processed birth and death notifications digitally as part of the civil registration platform. The e-health part of the electronic civil register operating in hospitals is linked with the National Statistics Committee.

### *Registration of vital events*

- **Birth registration** should be done by one or both parents within one day following birth, based on a document issued by a medical institution or a doctor. If the birth occurred outside of a medical institution and without the presence of a doctor, registration is based on a statement by persons present at the birth and a document in a legally prescribed format stating the health of the child. If neither of these two conditions is met, a birth can be registered based on a court decision that confirms the fact of birth.
- **Death registration** can be done at the deceased's last place of residence, at the place of death, at the place of discovery of the body of the deceased, or at the CSARA office of the organization that issued the death document. A death registration requires a death certificate issued by a medical institution or a doctor. If this is not possible, a decision of the court can confirm the fact of a person's death or declare a person dead. The statement of death must be submitted no later than three days after the death or three days after the body of the deceased is found. However, a statement of death that is submitted after this time will still result in the registration of a death.
- **Marriage registration** is completed based on a joint statement of the spouses. It is registered at the place of residence of one of the spouses or in the Matrimonial Palace (the spouses can choose). Application for marriage must be submitted no later than 10 days before (but no earlier than three months before) the wedding. An application for marriage can be completed by only one of the persons planning to marry. Two witnesses must attend the marriage registration.
- **Divorce registration** can be completed based on a joint statement of the spouses or on the application of one spouse, if a court decision recognizes the other spouse as missing or incapacitated or sentenced to prison for at least three years. Divorce can also be registered based on a court decision.
- **Adoption** is completed based on a court decision. The adoptive parents or the person they have authorized submits the application for adoption to the CSARA office of the adoptive parents' place of residence or to the court that made the decision.

## Sample registration forms

Birth certificate – [documents.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Svidetelistvo-o-rojdenii-Armenia.jpg](https://documents.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Svidetelistvo-o-rojdenii-Armenia.jpg)

Design samples and procedures for filling out of registration certificates for civil acts – [moj.am/en/page/registration\\_of\\_civil\\_status\\_acts\\_templates](https://moj.am/en/page/registration_of_civil_status_acts_templates)  
[arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=13659](https://arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=13659)

## Registration fees

- No fee is charged for registering a birth, including the issuing of a certificate.
- No fee is charged for registering a death.
- A fee of \$2.80 (1 000 AMD) is charged to register a marriage. A fee of \$28 (10 000 AMD) is charged for marriage registration outside of CSARA premises. To register a marriage by CSARA's Chamber of Marriage of Registration of Civil Status Acts, a fee of \$140 (50 000 AMD) is charged.
- A fee of \$28 (10 000 AMD) is charged for state registration of a divorce, including the issuing of a certificate.
- A fee of \$14 (5 000 AMD) is charged if a person wants to return to their premarital surname when registering a divorce.

## Vital statistics system

### Vital statistics

The National Statistics Committee is the main producer of official statistics in the Republic of Armenia. The Committee coordinates all activities related to developing, producing, and disseminating official statistics through the system of national statistics, except for the Central Bank. To produce vital statistics, the Committee relies on two resources that are linked with the civil registration system.

- To produce medical certificates linked with birth or death registration, all medical data needed to produce vital statistics is extracted and sent automatically to the Committee. The e-health system automates this part of the process. This allows codes to be entered describing the cause of death, for instance, only as defined in the international classification system.
- The Committee gets other data linked to the registration of vital events directly from CSARA. This access is not automated. Data is shared as a report that CSARA produces.

The annual data are published each May for the previous year. The data from the tabulations are presented in table format and published in statistical yearbooks. The Ministry of Health is provided with detailed electronic tabulations.

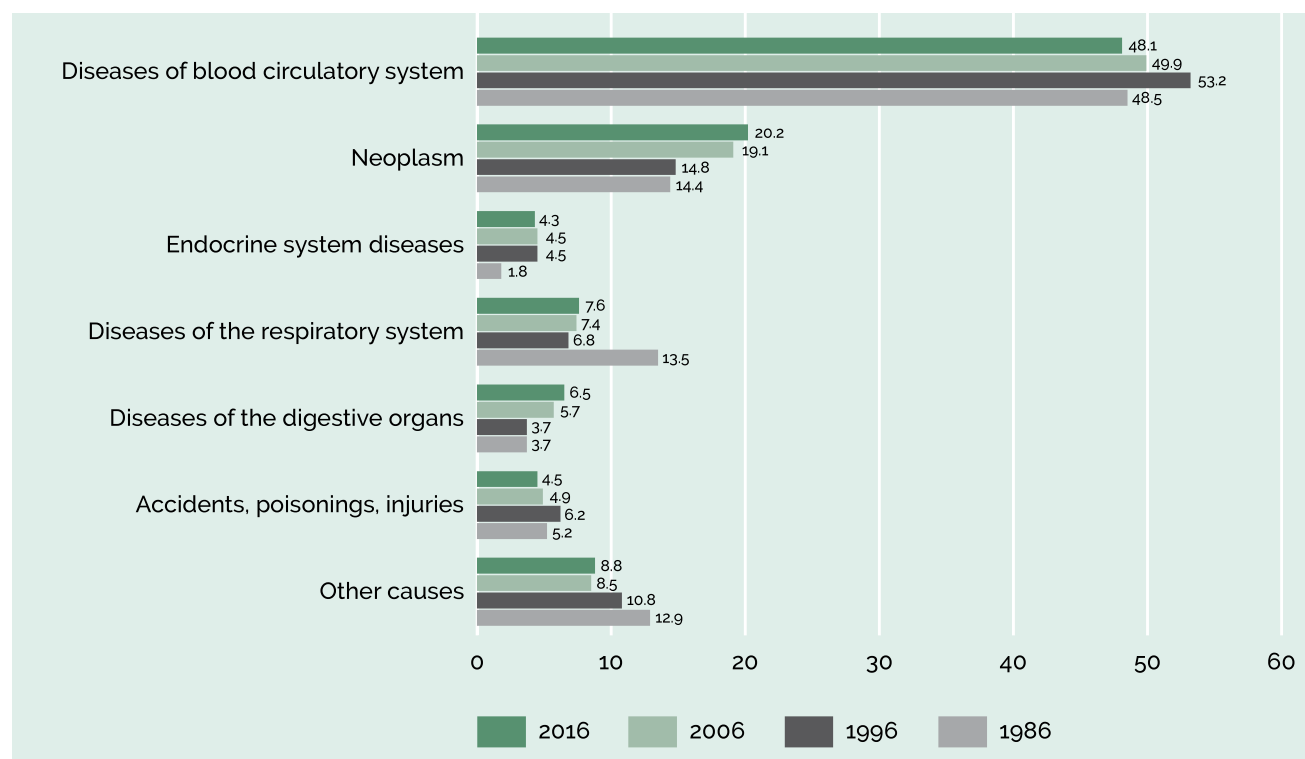
## Causes of death

Generally, all deaths in Armenia are medically certified as part of death registration. The registration authorities anticipate that by 2024, the proportion of deaths certified with poorly defined codes will be reduced by 1 percent each year. The authorities are expanding the scope of electronic data processing to include the digital entry of causes of death codes in line with the ICD-10 standard. To that end, an e-health platform was developed that is linked with the main civil registration platform. The e-health software allows medical professionals to select types of cause of death in line with the ICD-10 standard. They received training in the electronic system when it was introduced. The authorities expect to arrange more training sessions with support from the World Health Organization.

**Table 1: Information collected on causes of death.**

Causes-of-death information	Information collected	
	Yes	No
For deaths occurring in health facilities	X	
For natural deaths occurring in the community	X	
For non-natural deaths occurring in the community	X	

**Figure 1: Armenia – Leading causes of death: 2016, 2006, 1996, and 1986**



Source: Armstat<sup>24</sup>

## Digitization

### Computerization

The civil register is a fully digitized system: business processes are built on traditional paper-based processes for registering vital life events. The electronic civil register is a central database that all CSARA territorial offices can access using a dedicated web application. Births, deaths, marriages, divorces, paternity, and changes of name are registered directly into the system. As part of this process, registration officials can look up and copy the identity data of informants or applicants from the population register. The identity data of a parent(s) registering a birth are entered directly from the population register once their unique identification number (UIN) has been entered. The identity data of informants (parents) in the population register can be found by typing the person's name and date of birth. When registering a death, an informant's identity data, and those of the person whose death is being registered, are copied directly from the population register.

**Table 2: Computer use in CRVS.**

Computers used in	Yes	No	Remarks
All CSARA offices	X		
Health facilities	X		
Other, please specify		X	Diplomatic offices abroad

### *Mobile technology application*

Armenia does not use mobile technology to notify or register births or deaths. Stationary computers are set up in all hospital and civil registration facilities.

### *Online registration services at health facilities*

To further automate birth and death registration, the digital civil registration platform has been expanded to include the e-health component as a web application on authorized computers at hospitals. Using the e-health application, medical workers can insert all information required to produce a medical certificate and any other information needed to register a birth or a death. As part of civil registration, this medical certificate represents a notification of vital events.

A medical certificate is given to the applicants and is then used to complete the registration of the vital event at the CSARA office. Registration officials use this document only to ensure access to the same medical certificate data in the e-health system. To help them look up the data in the e-health system, each medical certificate contains a special 12-character code (letters and numbers). The information is also given as a QR code — another way to look up the data in the source database.

## Unique identification number

A unique identification number (UIN) — branded in Armenia as a public service number — is the key to the interoperability of the two systems. This 10-digit code contains personal information, such as date of birth and sex. The UIN concept is not new to the Armenian identity system. Before the UIN was introduced, a social service number was widely used in Armenia as identification to link various types of personal information in different information and communications technology (ICT) systems.

The UIN has been assigned to most of the population who request a national identity card. If a person has obtained residence status or has not yet been assigned the number, it is assigned when they submit a request to the police. For all newborns, because the civil and population registers are linked, the population register assigns the UIN during birth registration.

## Population register

The register was created in 2002, after the *Law of State Population Register* was adopted. The law defines all state authorities that are responsible for registering personal information in the register. The law further states that one purpose of keeping the population register is to make sure that personal registration data is available to the bodies (persons) that need it. This way, the government can deliver services and ensure that people's rights are respected as defined by the law. These two provisions were the basis for introducing interoperability with other government ICT systems that process personal information.

The population register stores the following types of personal data:

- Public service number (UIN);
- First name, last name, and patronymic name;
- Status (resident or refugee);
- Citizenship;
- Date, month, year, and place of birth;
- Sex;
- Home address;
- Data certifying the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia and/or of a foreign country and the right of residence in the Republic of Armenia (type, number, date of issue, validity period, issuing body);
- Date, month, year, and place of death; and
- Biometric data.

The population register was created using the database of national identity cards issued in Armenia that replaced Soviet internal passports between 1992 and 1995. All vital events registered in the civil register are automatically communicated to the population register and used to update personal records in the population register. The system is set up as a central population register: it is linked electronically with the registers that local branches of the Passport and Visa Department maintain. Each local population register keeps records of residents in a specific municipality.



### *Link with the identification system*

Business processes for issuing national biometric identity cards and travel documents are designed with the assumption that the population register should contain up-to-date identity data. This data is updated directly from the civil register for all changes in the data that occurred after 2014, when digitized civil registration processes were introduced.

This means that for persons who contact the Passport and Visa Department to replace an expired identity card or to replace a passport issued after 2014, in their new document, all new information affecting their identity data will be reflected electronically in the population register.

Persons requesting an expired document issued before 2014 who have married, divorced, or changed their name need to present the certificate from the civil register if the records have not been digitized in the meantime.

Persons who have reached the legally defined age when an identity card becomes mandatory or, in the case of passports, underage persons – must present a birth certificate, as long as the birth was registered before 2014.

Once an identity is marked as deceased in the population register, after receipt of the electronic notification of death registration, the population register system will block any attempts to issue an identification credential linked to that identity.

### **Interface with other sectors and operations**

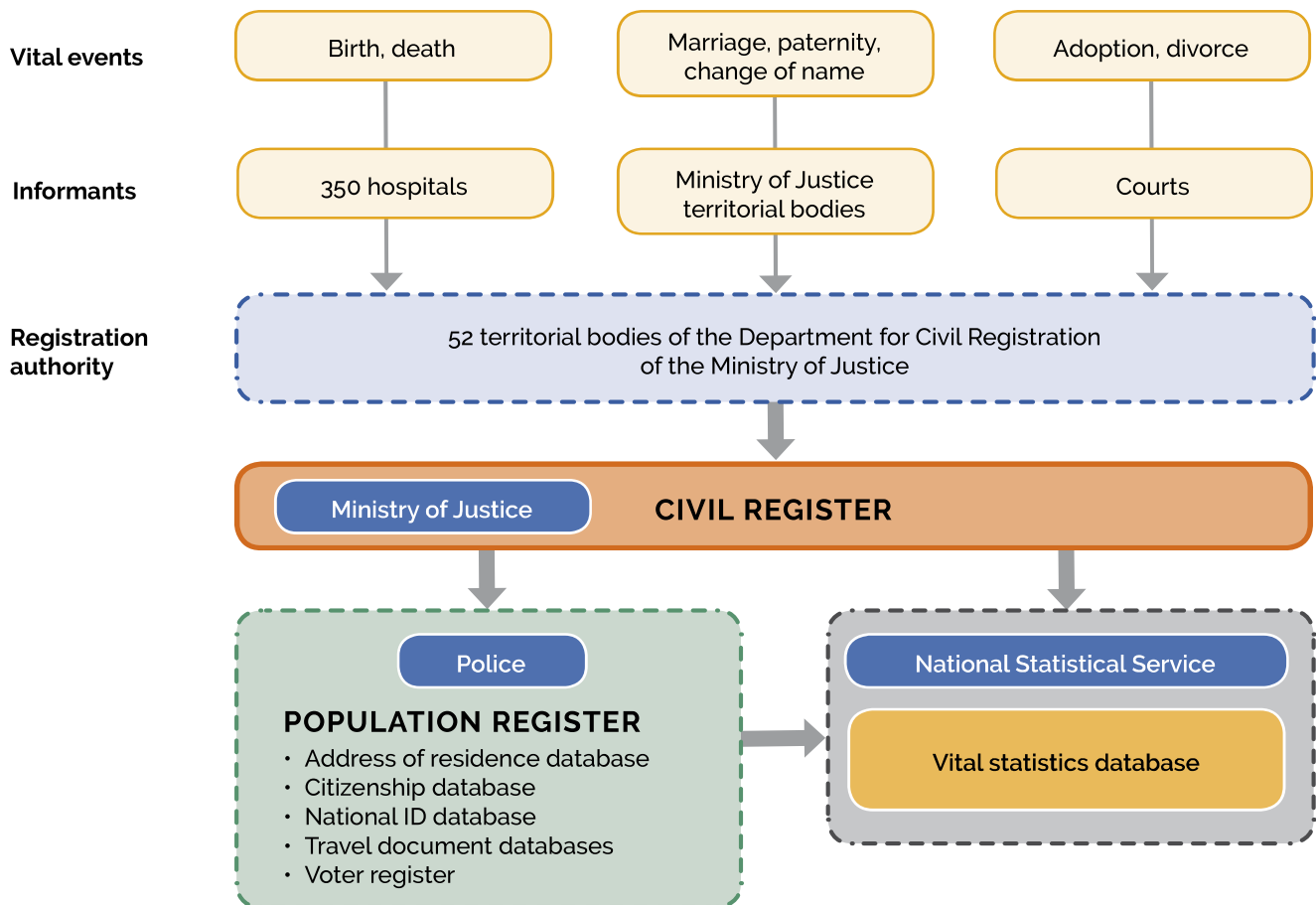
Identity data in the electronic civil register that is shared directly or through the population register is a key source of identity data for other government registers: the business register, cadastre (property register), and vehicle register.

The population register

- is the sole source of identity information used to compile the voter register;
- doubles as a resident register, reflecting the information on the address of the individual's residence; and
- is the main legal source of identity data for issuing national identity cards and travel documents.



Figure 2: Overview of the civil registration, vital statistics, and identity management system of Armenia.



Source: Author

## Improvement initiatives and external support

### Improvement plan and budget

#### *Strategic plan*

The National Strategy Program on the Development of Civil Status Acts Registration and Vital Statistics of the Republic of Armenia for 2016–2020 (the Program) is a comprehensive bank of targeted development objectives and milestones. The Program was developed in response to the Prime Minister's Decrees No. 02/16.9/18602-15 (2015) and No. 02/16.9/21761-15 (2015). These decrees related to the creation of the National Program of the Republic of Armenia by an Inter-Agency Working Group. This was based on the Regional Action Framework for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. Legislative proposals were developed, providing a legal basis for implementing the Program.

#### *Budgetary allocations and requirements*

The Ministry of Justice defines CSARA's annual budget. The budget is generally deemed sufficient to ensure efficient operation of registration services. Large modernization projects focused on digitizing registration services were implemented with financial support provided by the European Union. This funding will continue for the next stages of modernization, with a focus on enabling interoperability between government database architectures.

#### *Monitoring and evaluation*

Daily coordination and monitoring are ongoing between the National Statistics Committee, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Justice. Results of these coordination and monitoring activities are published quarterly on the National Statistical Committee's website.

### *Activities identified as high priorities*

CSARA is prioritizing the completion of the digitizing of civil registration record archives and training in using the e-health digital platform, including use of the ICD-10 standard. With a large diaspora that exceeds the number of Armenian nationals residing in country, the verifying of marriage records is one of the most frequently sought services. To facilitate this process, CSARA is developing special software to enable online access to civil registration records from diplomatic representations abroad. The Ministry of Justice is also preparing legislative proposals that will legalize civil register database entries as legally valid records. Paper vital event certificates will remain legally valid, but optional.

### Support from development partners

The modernization of the civil registration system in Armenia and the interoperability of the civil registration system with identity management and vital statistics systems has been done through public-private partnerships that relay the know-how of the national private sector. Financing of the modernization projects was secured from European Union special funds in addition to existing budget funds. Also, CSARA benefits from ongoing policy guidance support from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. In the area of processing vital statistics and causes of death statistics, CSARA receives support from the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund.



## Conclusion

Armenia has successfully completed the transition from paper-based to digital registration business processes. Building on a solid tradition of high rates of registration coverage and making registered data available in digital format, Armenia's civil registration authority has become an indispensable source of identity data for other government state-oriented services. Digitizing civil registration processes and keeping registered data in digital form has made it possible to introduce many innovations. Civil registration records can now be verified by directly accessing information in the civil register. Now that a dedicated e-health platform has been developed, the process for notification of birth and death is improved, and medical workers are more involved in it.



## Resources

### Websites

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