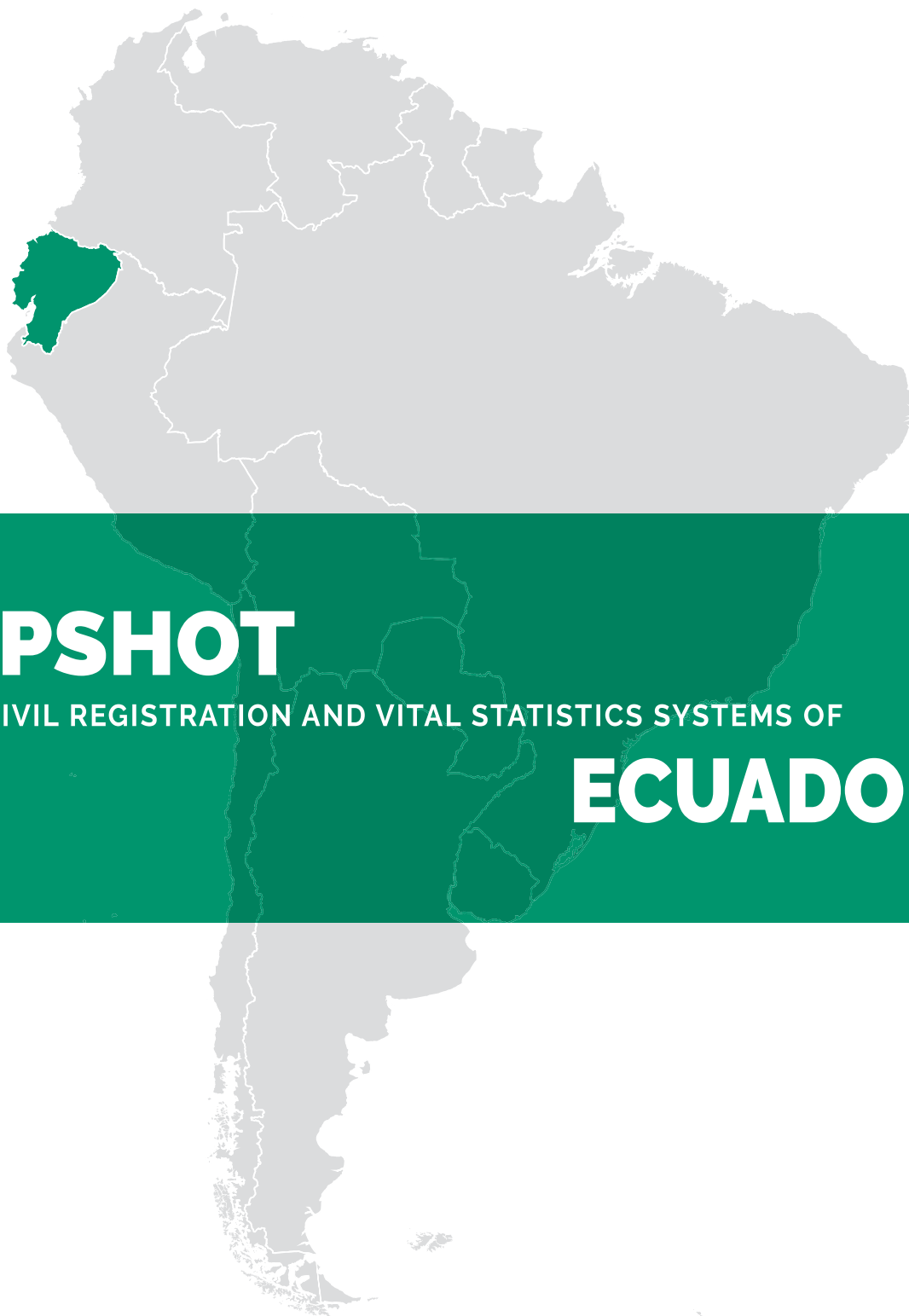




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SNAPSHOT

OF CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS OF

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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 Ecuador.

The information was based on a case study of Ecuador's CRVS and identity management system, 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, the report presents:

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

Brief country profile

The Republic of Ecuador is located in the Andean region of South America. It borders Colombia to the north, Peru to the south and east, and the Pacific Ocean to the west.

Ecuador's territory is divided into 22 provinces. According to the 2008 Constitution, these provinces may unite to create an autonomous region with geographical significance only. Ecuador's provinces are made up of 221 municipalities called *cantones* or *municipios*. These municipalities are further subdivided into around 1,500 parishes, which can be urban or rural.¹

- Land area: 283,560 km²
- Population: 17,084,357 (estimated),² with an estimated annual growth rate of 1.8 percent.³ In 2018, 64 percent of the population resided in urban areas, while the remaining 36 percent resided in rural areas.⁴

Ecuador



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

- Capital city: Quito
- Official working language: Spanish. Kichwa and Shuar are official languages in intercultural relations.
- Ministry responsible for civil registration: None. Ecuador's registration agency is constitutionally autonomous.
- Civil registration agency: Dirección General de Registro Civil Identificación Cedulación (DIGERCIC), or National Agency for Civil Registration, Identification, and National ID Issuance
- National statistical office: Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INEC), or National Institute of Statistics and Census



CRVS dimensions

Births	
Completeness of birth registration	82% (2016) ⁵
Children under 5 years of age whose births were reported as registered	94% (2013) ⁶
Births attended by skilled health personnel	97% (2016) ⁷
Women aged 15–49 who received antenatal care from a skilled provider	Not available
DPT1 immunization coverage among 1-year-olds	86% (2018) ⁸
Crude birth rate (per 1,000 population)	20 (2017) ⁹
Total fertility rate (live births per woman)	2.5 (2017) ¹⁰
Adolescent fertility rate (per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 years)	79 (2017) ¹¹
Population under age 15	30% (2012) ¹²
Deaths	
Completeness of death registration	80% (2011) ¹³
Crude death rate (per 1,000 population)	5 (2017) ¹⁴
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	12.3 (2018) ¹⁵
Under 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	14.2 (2018) ¹⁶
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	59 (2017) ¹⁷
Marriages and divorces	
Marriage registration rate	Not available
Women aged 20–24 first married or in union before age 15	4 (2017) ¹⁸
Women aged 20–24 first married or in union before age 18	22 (2017) ¹⁹
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	Available

Civil registration system

Legislative framework

Ecuador approved a new constitution in 2008. It sets out

- the right of every child and adolescent to an identity, a name, and a nationality (Article 45); and
- the right to both personal and collective identity, including a name freely chosen and duly registered (Article 66).

Ecuador's Constitution states that an identity and a name, which must be duly registered, are fundamental rights. This makes civil registration a key part of guaranteeing fundamental rights. The Constitution also states that the central government has sole authority for registration, nationalization, and control of migration. Congress passed the new *Organic Law for Civil Identity and Civil Data Management* in 2016. This was followed by the regulation of the law in 2018. By using an organic law, which has more authority than ordinary laws, legislators gave the agency more stability. DIGERCIC's organic law gives it administrative, operational, and financial independence, plus sole authority over services related to identity, registration, and certification of vital events. Article 73 of the organic law also defines the *Registro Personal Único*, or Unique Personal Register. This register contains information on vital events and unique identity features, including address and cultural identification of citizens, if they offer this information.

A 2010 law also created the Dirección Nacional de Registro de Datos Públicos (DINARDAP), or National Agency for Public Data Registration, which oversees the work of DIGERCIC.

Although Ecuador does not yet have a data protection law, in January 2019 Congress started discussing a bill proposed by DINARDAP.

Management, organization, and operations

Ecuador's National Agency for Civil Registration, Identification, and National ID Issuance, DIGERCIC, is a decentralized entity under public law, attached to the Ministry of Telecommunications and the Information Society, with its own legal personality, vested with administrative and operational autonomy. Per Article 10 of the *Law for Civil Identity and Civil Data Management*, DIGERCIC is responsible for registering the following, among others:

- Birth;
- Change in name and surname;
- Gender change;
- Adoption;
- Recognition;
- Marriage;
- Divorce;
- Civil unions and their termination;
- Death;
- Degree of disability;
- Decision to donate organs;
- Naturalization; and
- Legal residence of migrants.

National CRVS systems coordination mechanisms

DINARDAP is charged with organizing, regulating, and interfacing with government-operated information and communications technology systems that process public data. It also oversees system management, data security and publicity, transparency, and new technology. The system includes data from various sources, such as:

- Civil register;
- Property register;
- Commercial register;
- Vehicle, ship, and aircraft registers; and
- Patents and intellectual property registers.

Both DIGERCIC and DINARDAP operate under the supervision of the Ministerio de Telecomunicaciones y Sociedad de la Información, or Ministry of Telecommunications and the Information Society (Figure 1). The Ministry has overseen the reform and modernizing of the civil registration and identity agency. DIGERCIC's technical management is overseen by DINARDAP, as part of the National Public Data Registration System. DINARDAP is responsible for standardizing and managing the consolidated Public Registers Database, for which all members of the system are legally obliged to provide continuous digitized and updated information.

Administrative-level registration centres

Today, DIGERCIC provides civil registration services in 221 offices in the country, covering all provinces. In 174 of those offices, identification services are also provided. These include Agencias de Registro Civil en Establecimientos de Salud, or civil registration agencies in health establishments, offices in public hospitals and maternity wards (30), and funeral homes (1). Offices located in hospitals complete birth, death, and certificate records. Funeral homes complete only death records. The agency also has 15 mobile units, which are temporarily set in one location to provide services two days a week.

Accessibility of civil registration services

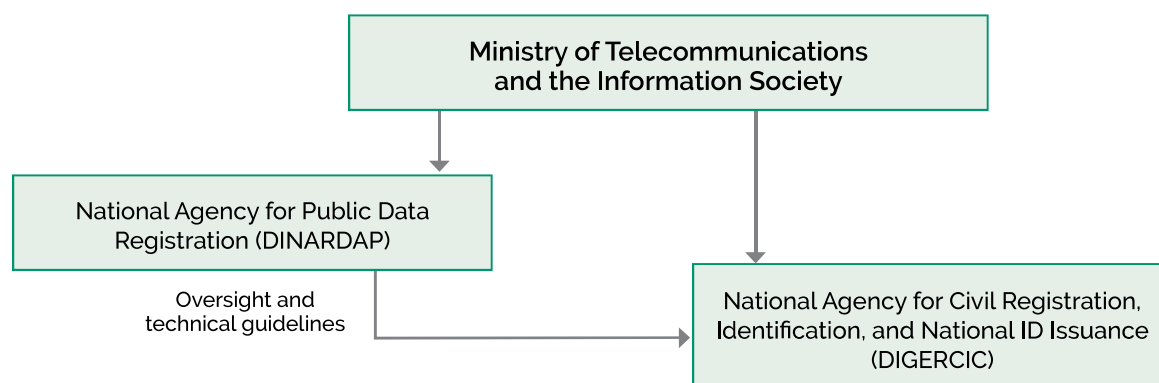
No precise data available

Registration of vital events

All vital events are registered electronically. Registrars use an online platform to enter information and sign records using an electronic signature. The information entered is automatically added to the civil registration digital database.

Birth registration is considered timely if completed within 90 days following birth. For births taking place at health facilities, registration is free. It can be completed by presenting a certificate of live birth issued by a health facility and a national ID card, passport, or refugee card for the declarant(s). If parents are married or in a civil union, one of them must be present. Otherwise, both parents must be present to recognize paternity. For births occurring outside of health facilities, the certificate of live birth is replaced by a sworn statement by the declarant and two witnesses. Minors must also be present at registration. Birth registrations for adults must follow a judicial process and are subject to a fee of US\$5.

Figure 1: Registration agencies under the Ministry of Telecommunications and the Information Society.



Death registration must be completed within 48 hours following a death or knowledge of death. To register a death, the declarant must present a certificate of death signed by a health professional. When health professionals are not available, death certificates are completed with a sworn declaration by two witnesses. Declarants must present a national ID card and, in some cases, judicial resolution. Health professionals must notify DIGERCIC within three days of a death.

There is no legally set deadline for **marriage registration**. Marriages can only be registered at DIGERCIC offices. The authority that certifies a civil union or its termination must notify DIGERCIC within 30 days. Civil unions can be concluded by a judicial ruling or a certified notary. Declarants must also present their national ID and proof of payment.

To register a **divorce**, the judicial authority that certified the divorce must notify DIGERCIC within 30 days. In addition, the declarant must present a national ID card or passport and proof of payment.

Sample registration forms

The DIGERCIC web portal (in Spanish – registrocivil.gob.ec/manual-registro-civil-en-linea/) is a public portal where verified and registered users can

- verify identity information;
- verify the authenticity of issued birth, marriage, and common-law marriage certificates; and
- order paper copies of birth, marriage, and common-law marriage certificates.

The portal also features samples of:

- Birth certificates – registrocivil.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/17.jpg
- Common-law marriage certificates – registrocivil.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/m5.jpg

Registration fee

There is no charge for birth and death registration. Marriage celebrations cost US\$50, while registering a common-law marriage costs US\$50. Divorce registration costs US\$12.

Vital statistics system

Vital statistics

DIGERCIC is part of the Inter-Institutional Committee for Health Statistics, together with the Secretariat for Planning and Development, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry for Coordination of Social Development, and the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC). This Committee is responsible for coordinating and standardizing concepts and methodologies involved in producing information. In 2016, the Committee issued two resolutions to standardize the estimation of under-registration of births and deaths using information from DIGERCIC and population projections by INEC. While information on births comes almost exclusively from health facilities (Ministry of Health) through online certification of live births, information on deaths is supplemented by other sources, such as legal medicine and forensic services, the Attorney General's Office, National Transit Authority, and DIGERCIC.

Government services are improved over time in line with strategic national development plans periodically adopted by the government. One of the National Development Plan's goals for the period 2017–2021 is to modernize the national statistics system by identifying administrative records and using them intensively. INEC is working with several agencies, including DIGERCIC, to ensure high-quality data so the country can complete its census using administrative records. DIGERCIC is one of the institutions providing official information for the National Statistics Plan, one of the sections of the National Development Plan.



DIGERCIC provides information on births, deaths, and marriages. It also tracks the number of people who have a national ID card and a passport.

INEC produces annual reports of births, deaths, and fetal deaths.

Causes of death

The Statistics on General Deaths is the result of joint work carried out among INEC, DIGERCIC, Ministry of Public Health, Service of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences, Public Prosecutor's Office General of the State, National Transit Commission, and other private and public establishments that provide the basic information required for INEC to carry out the statistical production processes of this register.

Starting in 2017, INEC updated information on general deaths registered since 2013 using information reported in statistical reports of general deaths by DIGERCIC. This represents important advances in terms of the completeness of the statistical record of general deaths.

In 2017, ischemic heart disease was the leading cause of death in men and women, with a total of 7,404 deaths, followed by diabetes mellitus, vascular brain diseases such as strokes, influenza, and pneumonia (Table 1).

Table 1: Top 7 registered causes of death in Ecuador in 2017.

Cause	Number of deaths
Ischemic heart diseases	7,862
Diabetes mellitus	4,693
Strokes	4,450
Influenza and pneumonia	4,104
Hypertensive diseases	3,307
Land transport accidents	3,142
Cirrhosis and other liver diseases	2,359

Source: Ecuador, historical vital statistics datasets

Digitization

All vital events are registered electronically. Registrars use an online platform to enter information and sign records using an electronic signature. The information entered is automatically added to the civil registration digital database. DIGERCIC designed an online platform, REVIT-Births, to certify live births in health facilities. (Note: 96 percent of births in Ecuador happen at health facilities.) Since 2015, an agreement between the Agency, the Ministry of Health, and INEC has allowed health personnel to access an online tool to certify live births as they occur.

Computerization

As part of the modernization process, DIGERCIC digitized its civil registration records. All information has now been entered into the agency's digital database and can be accessed at any DIGERCIC office. However, this digitization process does not include the full scanning of these records into digital images. DIGERCIC started this work in 2010 and has invested almost US\$7 million into the digitization of documents.²⁰ By 2019, more than 74 million civil registration records (57 percent)²¹ had been added to the agency's electronic database. Physical copies of the records are kept in a central archive.

DIGERCIC recently digitized 2.7 million death registration records from 1966 to 2013 to help update the electoral register. The agency is doing something similar with marriage records and expects to reach a similar figure. It also digitizes documents every day for citizens who need certified copies of original paper records.

Since civil registration information is available in electronic format, DIGERCIC can issue digital certificates of vital events. These certificates have a bar code that any institution can use to check against DIGERCIC's database. The law on civil registration and identification explicitly says that electronic documents have the same legal validity

as original paper versions. That means they are valid at public and private institutions. In 2014, the agency started issuing digital identity certificates, which are often used as proof of identity when people have documents notarized. Digital certificates of birth, marriage, civil union, and death became available in 2017.

Online registration services at health facilities

Health personnel can access REVIT-Births to certify live births as they occur. Since the platform is connected to DIGERCIC's database, health professionals and mothers are identified using their unique identification number. The database also links information for the mother and the newborn. Health professionals sign a certificate of live birth using an electronic signature and immediately issue a copy for the mother.

Parents can also finalize the birth registration process in one of DIGERCIC's 31 civil registration offices found in public health facilities in Ecuador. If a birth is recorded in the platform, mothers can register their children without having to show a certificate of live birth, since DIGERCIC can retrieve the information using her unique identification number. Because the platform was created with the Ministry of Health and INEC, the certificate contains all the information needed to generate vital statistics. By April 2019, the platform was available in 95 percent of the country's health facilities. Based on data for 2015 to 2019, 95 percent of births in REVIT-Births have a birth certificate.

A similar platform, REVIT-Deaths, was set up in July 2017. Health professionals can electronically enter death information at health facilities, get technical support for death classification using the ICD-10 code, and electronically sign the death certificate. This tool, developed by INEC, is now part of DIGERCIC's platform and is connected to the population register. In April 2019, REVIT-Deaths was available in 25 percent of the country's health facilities.

Mobile technology application

Mobile technology is not used for civil registration processes.

Unique identification number

A unique identification number (UIN) is assigned at birth to all newborns. This UIN later becomes a person's national ID number. The UIN must appear in all public documents and credentials, such as on passports, and in tax and property registers. This helps public institutions exchange information.

The UIN has 10 digits:

- The first two digits represent the province where the person's birth was registered or where they obtained their first ID card.
- The next seven digits are a serial number.
- The last digit is a verification digit.

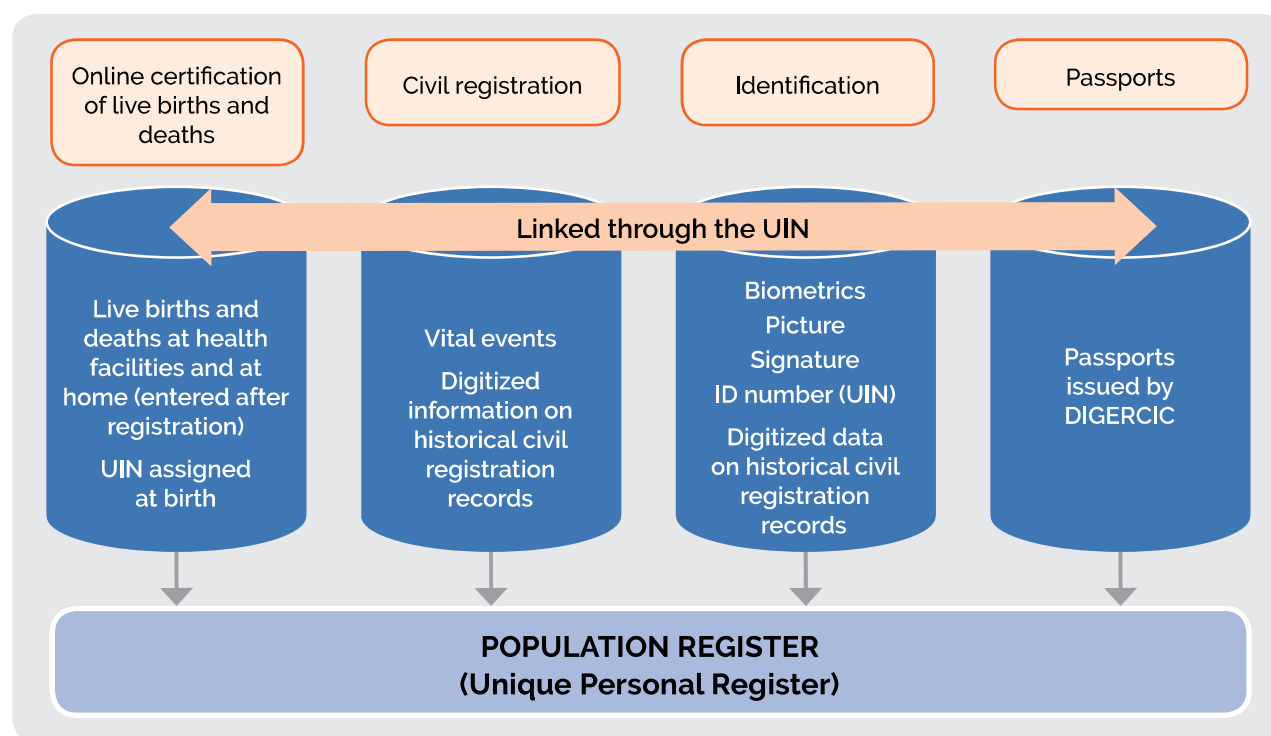
The UIN is one of a person's key identity features. It enables a connection between the civil registration and identification databases and makes it easier to retrieve information between registers.

Population register

DIGERCIC maintains the population register. This register links information on vital events from the civil registration database and the identification database. The agency also manages the platforms used to certify live births and deaths. These are connected to the population register, making identity information on health professionals and mothers available in live birth and death certificates.

These databases are connected through the UIN assigned at birth (Figure 2). This basic feature links information among databases to a person's information in the population register. The civil registration and identification law states that unless there is a legal purpose that requires access to personal data held by DIGERCIC, information will be released only with authorization from the affected person or by judicial order (Article 75).

Figure 2: DIGERCIC's databases are linked through the unique identification number.



Digitization of historical civil registration records

As part of the modernization process, DIGERCIC decided to digitize all information contained in its civil registry records. All information has been entered into the agency's digital database and is accessible at any DIGERCIC office. However, this digitization process has not included the full scanning of civil registry records into digital images. DIGERCIC started this process in 2010 and has invested almost US\$7 million into digitizing documents. As a result, over 74 million civil registry records were converted to digital images and incorporated into the agency's electronic database by 2019. The agency estimates that in 2019, 57 percent of civil registry records had been scanned. Physical copies of records are kept in a centralized archive.

DIGERCIC recently digitized 2.7 million death registration records from the period 1966 to 2013 to help update the electoral register. The agency is

doing something similar with marriage records and expects to reach a similar figure. It also digitizes documents every day for citizens who need certified copies of original paper records.

Link with identification system

In Ecuador, all adults must have a national ID card. These cards can also be issued for minors, but this is optional. The national ID card is the only valid ID card citizens can use to interact with public and private institutions. DIGERCIC issues ID cards for both Ecuadorian nationals and foreign legal residents. Since 2009, DIGERCIC has issued an electronic ID with 16 security measures. It has simplified the process and reduced wait times to get a national ID card. Biometrics (10 fingerprints), signature, and photo are collected through electronic devices at all DIGERCIC offices and in special brigades. The database of issued identification credentials is linked to information in the civil register as part of a larger population register.

Interface with other sectors and operations

DIGERCIC is part of the National Public Data Registration System. This system combines information from many registers and makes it available to public and private institutions through interoperable platforms. Civil registration and identification data is included in this system. The data can be consulted through the services provided by DINARDAP. DIGERCIC is responsible for signing agreements with public and private institutions to grant access to identity information. Each agreement contains the terms and conditions for institutions to access data. They must provide justification for each field of information they wish to access.

DIGERCIC works closely with public institutions and agencies to improve service by sharing reliable and updated identity information. These include the Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social, or Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, and the National Electoral Council. The enrolment platform of public institutions and agencies includes a section where potential beneficiaries must enter their ID number and date of birth. An agreement between the public institutions and agencies and DIGERCIC allows the agency to verify and confirm identity and give the green light for enrolment.

DIGERCIC coordinates with the National Electoral Council to continuously update the electoral register. To do this, DIGERCIC periodically sends all information in the identification register. To finalize the electoral register, the Council cross-checks information from the identification register with data from migration authorities and judicial institutions, as some judicial processes might result in suspension or loss of political rights.

Improvement initiatives and external support

Improvement plan and budget

Strategic plan

DIGERCIC's modernization plan, Modernization of the National Civil Registration System, Identification and Financing-Phase of Massification, began in 2010 with an initial budget of US\$229.5 million. The plan was to be put in place within four years. The deadline was extended twice and is now set for 2021. By 2019, the total budget had reached US\$267.1 million. By the end of the process, the total investment is expected to be US\$277.6 million.

Budgetary allocations and requirements

Although DIGERCIC is self-sustaining and generates a surplus to the State, its budget depends on the amount assigned by the central government, per budget items authorized by the Ministry of Finance.

As DIGERCIC is financially self-sustainable, its revenues have been higher than its expenses since 2015, halfway through the modernization plan. Four services provided to citizens account for almost 85 percent of revenues:

- ID card renewal or duplication: 41 percent;
- Passports: 31 percent;
- e-Certificates of vital events: 6 percent; and
- Copies of original paper records: 6 percent.²²

Activities identified as high priorities

DIGERCIC's strategic plans for the period leading to 2021 outline a range of priorities, many of which focus on improving information and communication technology services, and delivering and issuing identification documents to all citizens. To further improve the CRVS business process, DIGERCIC will focus on strengthening the following:



- Mobile registration brigades to provide vital event registration services (births and deaths) to citizens in hard-to-reach areas or in places where there are large concentrations of people, such as universities, hospitals, schools, markets, and stadiums. The Magna system will be used during registration. This new system guarantees the inviolability of user data, since the signature, photo, and fingerprint are entered digitally and stored on the card's internal chip directly at the registration site. The system validates user information in the DIGERCIC central database, from which citizens' identity data is pulled and used to personalize their identity card.
- Civil registration agencies in health establishments to optimize services provided by agencies in health facilities nationwide. This will allow people who have a physical impairment and are being cared for in hospitals, clinics, and medical centres to approach civil registry offices.
- National Vital Data Registration System (REVIT), a computer application that allows healthcare professionals to record and sign medical birth certificates and links that information to the statistics information system, to make it easier for the State to immediately provide reliable, timely statistics and generate and strengthen social benefit policies.

Support from development partners

The civil registration system in Ecuador operates primarily using its own services as a source of revenue. In the process of developing the system, support was also provided by the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Development Bank. DIGERCIC is a member of the Latin American and Caribbean Council on Civil Registry, Identity, and Vital Statistics (CLARCIEV), which operates as a knowledge-sharing platform for civil registration and identification authorities in that part of the world.

Conclusion

The information provided by DIGERCIC is helping institutions provide more efficient and inclusive services by facilitating the identification of beneficiaries. It is also reducing leakages and duplicate and fraudulent registrations to prevent undue payments by social programs. The agency's transformation and modernization has allowed DIGERCIC to strengthen its collaboration with public and private organizations by exchanging data. As a result, DIGERCIC has become the country's primary source of identity information and provider of state-issued credentials used for identity authentication. There was clear political leadership from the executive, together with financial commitments to design and carry out an overarching modernization of civil registration and identification. The modernization plan was included as part of the National Development Plan, thus making it a policy priority.

Resources

Websites

National Agency for Civil Registration, Identification, and National ID Issuance (DIGERCIC): registrocivil.gob.ec

National Agency for Public Data Registration (DINARDAP): gob.ec/dinardap

National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC): ecuadorencifras.gob.ec/institucional/home/

Ministry of Telecommunications and the Information Society: telecomunicaciones.gob.ec

Additional materials

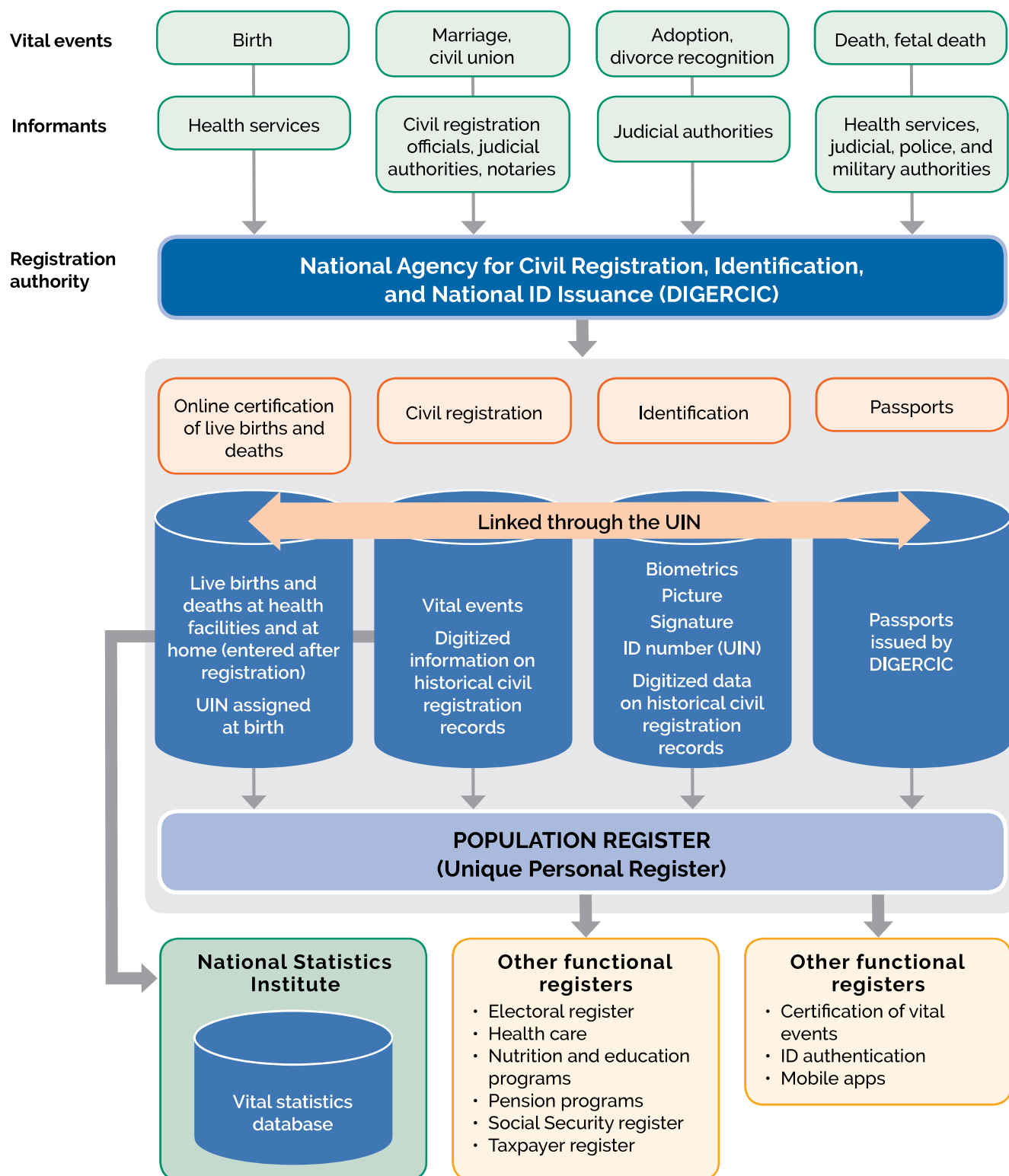
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Annex 1 – Overview of civil registration, vital statistics, and ID management



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