

Budget Advocacy Framework for CRVS Funding Sustainability

A methodology to increase political support and investment in civil registration and vital statistics systems

Sustainable Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system improvement in low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs) requires strong political commitment and investment from government leaders at all levels. Though donors play an important CRVS funding role in many countries, complementary financing mobilized from domestic sources will ensure long-term sustainability of system strengthening efforts. Strategic, locally led advocacy can help secure the political will and budgets necessary to fully fund country CRVS implementation plans and enable achievement of continuous, permanent, compulsory, universal and confidential CRVS systems.

The Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA), a core partner of the Bloomberg Philanthropies' Data for Health Initiative, supports LMICs to strengthen the enabling environment for CRVS system improvement through a dual focus on improved laws and financing.

To that end, GHA is currently developing the *Budget Advocacy Framework for CRVS Funding Sustainability*, which outlines a systematic, participatory approach to help a country's CRVS stakeholders develop, execute and monitor a tailored budget advocacy plan. However, the budget advocacy cycle doesn't end once increased resources are committed. The framework also encompasses guidance on effective public financial management to strengthen accountability for investments and protect gains.

GHA is developing the framework through close collaboration with Data for Health Initiative partners and national stakeholders, and the broader global CRVS community. It is also being informed by pilot-testing in at least one LMIC in late 2022. The framework builds upon GHA's extensive experience supporting country led budget advocacy for other pressing public health issues in LMICs, such as epidemic preparedness, tobacco control and drowning prevention.

The framework and associated tools are anticipated to be published in early 2023. Upon their release, technical assistance from GHA may be available to support country implementation.

Cycle for Budget Advocacy and Funding Sustainability



- 1 Advocacy Planning:** Conduct a political and financial landscape analysis to pinpoint a budget advocacy objective and plan the political strategy with indicators to track success.
- 2 Advocacy Implementation:** Build coalitions, generate economic evidence, and engage policymakers to make the case for increased investment in CRVS, while monitoring the strategy.
- 3 Budget Accountability:** Track budget allocations and spending of increased resources, identify bottlenecks to spending, assess and build capacity to increase accountability, and promote transparent disbursement and effective spending.
- 4 Budget Sustainability:** Assess budget needs for the next budget cycle, scale up successful strategies, and build demand to sustain and/or increase the investment in the medium and long term.

*This figure was adapted from the **GHAJ Budget Advocacy Framework for Increased and Sustained Epidemic Preparedness Investment** and is considered a draft at this stage.*

What is the purpose of the Budget Advocacy Framework for CRVS Sustainability?

This framework supports CRVS stakeholders in leading an intentional, multi-step approach to increase and sustain domestic investments in CRVS systems by engaging in budget advocacy. The framework's materials and process were designed to help demystify the concepts of budget advocacy and funding sustainability among CRVS stakeholders and provide a clear means to identify, understand and address gaps in domestic financing.

The goals of the framework, and the budget advocacy efforts it engenders, are to ensure the success and long-term sustainability of CRVS reforms at national and/or subnational levels and build capacity of CRVS programs to absorb budgets efficiently.



What is new or unique about this framework and why is it useful?

While there is ample programmatic guidance for countries on the legal and regulatory, governance, coordination and technical aspects of CRVS system improvement, to date there has not been commensurate focus on how to secure sustainable funding for CRVS reforms, despite sustainability being a key area of focus for global health and development donors and initiatives.

This framework serves as a practical guide for country advocates to locate, mobilize, manage and institutionalize domestic investments through budget advocacy. The framework offers a tested advocacy approach that focuses on reaching and convincing government decision-makers to drive transformative change, while promoting dynamic linkages between stakeholders, institutions and sectors.

How rigid or modifiable is the guidance in this framework?

Recognizing that countries are at various stages in the process of CRVS system improvement, the ***Budget Advocacy Framework for CRVS Funding Sustainability*** is inherently flexible and can provide value to any country with financing challenges to address. The framework offers an approach that is adaptable to policy and political environments and stakeholder priorities. It has been designed to provide a comprehensive roadmap to setting and achieving budget advocacy objectives, as well as modular information, tools and activities that can be deployed individually depending on the specific realities of your context and your advocacy priorities and opportunities.

Who should use this framework?

The framework is intended to be used by the alliance of country stakeholders who are responsible for implementing CRVS systems improvements and can act in partnership to collectively transform the funding environment for CRVS. This includes government officials from ministries, departments and agencies responsible for CRVS (national and local) as well as the ministry of finance and parliamentarians. It may also include funding agencies, technical and development partners, academic partners, CSOs and NGOs, private sector businesses, media and/or community-level leaders.

Because of the complexity and multi-stakeholder nature of CRVS systems, improvement efforts have the greatest chance of success if a cross-sectoral approach is used to ensure that all stakeholders understand each other's roles and mandates within the CRVS system, as well as their budgets.



When should a country apply the framework?

The framework is compatible with strategic plans developed for CRVS system improvement, but such plans are not a prerequisite to applying the framework's methodology. Countries that have already undertaken CRVS system assessment, costing, legal review or improvement planning will be able to use those findings to inform their budget advocacy objective, strategy and action plan. If the outputs of these diagnostic exercises have led to ambitions of specific system reforms, the framework can help actualize those goals. For other countries, the framework's first module on landscaping and assessment will be useful to conduct as a preliminary step.

What is required to get started?

Budget advocacy requires dedication, time and focused attention. The approach laid out in the framework will be most successful if you can prioritize the time needed to assemble your coalition, build consensus and thoughtfully design, implement and measure the impact of your advocacy strategy. Budget advocacy is a journey requiring ongoing commitment to achieve change and make sure the gains are sustained. Domestic resource mobilization wins do not happen overnight and are often hard-fought – it may take two to three years of diligent efforts to see the desired impact and institutionalize it. Wins may require annual safeguarding. The results that are possible through budget advocacy will be worth the effort, and the framework will support you every step of the way.

Where can I get more information and updates?

To stay up to date with GHAI's budget advocacy work and the *Budget Advocacy Framework for CRVS Sustainability*, visit our website at www.advocacyincubator.org or contact Sara Rossi, the Associate Director for Budget Advocacy with GHAI's Data for Health program: srossi@advocacyincubator.org.

The Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI), a project of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, supports civil society organizations advocating for public health policies that reduce death and disease. We bring a proven advocacy approach and a global network of local partners, built on a 25-year track record of success across multiple issues in more than 60 countries.

