Enabel

Executive summary

Pilot Project for Improving the Guinean Civil Registration System through the Catalytic Effect of Digitalization (PARECIGUI Ext Phase 2)

Guinea

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Presentation of the evaluation

The Pilot Project for Improving the Guinean Civil Registration System through the Catalytic Effect of Digitalization – PARECIGUI Phase 2 – builds upon the support initiated in 2021 for modernizing Guinea's civil registration system. Implemented by Enabel from April 2024 to February 2026, the project aimed to consolidate the achievements of the first phase, in particular the development of the digital solution for the National Civil Registry (E-RENEC), while simultaneously supporting the operationalization of the legal framework established by Laws L/2023/0019 and L/2023/0020.

The overarching objective was to contribute to a more reliable, secure, and accessible civil registration system, pursued through three complementary lines of action: strengthening the legal and operational framework, expanding the digital solution, and building the capacities of key stakeholders. In doing so, the project directly addressed major challenges facing Guinea's civil registration system—namely, securing vital records, improving data quality, fostering interoperability between institutions, and progressively tailoring services to meet citizens' needs, including in municipalities, courts, and consular services.

However, this intervention took place within a sensitive institutional environment, characterized by underlying tensions related to sovereignty, identification, inter-institutional coordination, and the long-term sustainability of acquired gains.

The final evaluation of PARECIGUI Phase 2 was conducted by two independent experts between February and May 2026. It draws on a comprehensive documentary review, a five-day field mission to Conakry in April 2026, and approximately twenty institutional interviews. These were supplemented by remote interviews, written questionnaires, and spontaneous conversations with users, providing a rich base of information for this report. It is important to note, however, that access to civil registration centers was restricted; consequently, the evaluation team could not directly interview civil registration officers or data entry agents in their work environment. As a result, findings concerning the appropriation of the digital tool, its daily usage, and the quality of service delivery are formulated with caution, and identified blind spots have been explicitly flagged and factored into the interpretation of results.

Main findings

Overall Performance

The project has delivered tangible technical outputs, including the development of functional modules, the migration of 445,000 vital records, and the training of 121 agents. Nonetheless, this performance is constrained by a fragile institutional environment, deficient governance, and conditions that remain unfavourable for sustainability. Accordingly, the project received a "B" rating for most criteria, with a "C" assigned specifically for sustainability.

Coherence	B	PARECIGUI Phase 2 is formally aligned with the National Program for Administrative Census with a Civil Registration Purpose (PN-RAVEC) framework; however, operational coherence with other stakeholders remained limited. No documented synergies were established with key technical and financial partners such as the AFD, World Bank, or UNICEF. Moreover, the existence of overlapping initiatives and insufficient inter-ministerial coordination, particularly with the Ministries of Health, Religious Affairs, and Foreign Affairs, weakened the chain linking civil events to registration and record issuance and directly prevented the

		declaration module from materializing. Institutional tensions with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MATD), including a suspension in July 2024 and the subsequent transfer of source codes, compounded by the absence of a functioning Steering Committee (COPIL), prevented any meaningful arbitration and undermined overall coherence. Internally, several other Enabel projects (SAFE, FIERE, PAIED) target the same vulnerable populations but lack any articulation with civil registration; a missed opportunity to leverage legal identity as a vehicle for inclusion. In the absence of effective governance bodies, the articulation with the PN-RAVEC remained ambiguous, and potential synergies were never fully realized.
Relevance	B	The project is fully consistent with national priorities, including the 2018 strategy, the creation of ONECI and the PN-RAVEC, and the provisions of Laws 019/020. It also responds to clearly identified needs for modernizing civil registration, such as securing records, improving registry reliability, and enhancing access to legal identity. Nevertheless, its design underestimated the time required for a reform of this magnitude, particularly for stabilizing implementing decrees, codification, governance arrangements, and interoperability. While the technical solutions developed are contextually adapted, relevance remains only partial: the technical architecture proved demanding for a system with fragile foundations, and insufficient connectivity, power outages, a lack of qualified personnel, and weak inter-institutional coordination all limited concrete outcomes.
Effectiveness	B	The project produced concrete technical results: 445,000 records digitized, indexed, and integrated into the central database; functional modules for suppletory judgments, statistics, and advanced search; legislative texts voted into law; and agents trained (though with limited autonomy). These constitute a real foundation. That said, effectiveness is only partial when assessed against actual usage, the autonomy of national teams, and the transformation of working practices. Interoperability with PN-RAVEC has not been achieved, not for technical reasons (DXC confirms the migration is technically complete), but due to political blockages concerning code lists and the delayed stabilization of the NPI format. The source code transfer is formal rather than operational, and training did not produce the expected cascade effect due to a lack of follow-up and institutional embedding. Consular equipment was delivered but never used. In short, while quantitative achievements are real, transforming them into sustainable capacities and accessible services remains the central unresolved challenge.
Efficiency	B	Financial management is broadly satisfactory, with the budget well executed. However, activity suspensions, delays, undeployed or unused equipment, and successive reorientations generated costs that weighed on operational efficiency without, however, compromising overall budget execution. Despite the project team's adaptability, the fragilities of institutional governance increased the real cost of implementation.
Sustainability	C	Sustainability emerges as the most fragile criterion, as it hinges on conditions not yet fully in place: maintenance, effective access to technical tools, stabilized human resources, post-training follow-up, an operating budget, connectivity, and institutional governance. Regarding maintenance, several shortcomings are evident: the absence of a multi-year plan, a centralized support service, or a dedicated budget, coupled with limited access to source codes for national technical teams, leaves the system vulnerable and dependent on external expertise. The regulatory framework is under development, but implementing texts must be urgently accelerated; without them, interoperability, the declaration chain, and scaling-up will remain stalled. Human resources constitute a second vulnerability: a numerous but precarious workforce, with unclear status and no continuous training, makes tool appropriation susceptible to turnover and local practices. Technically, the formal handover of source code is insufficient; sustainability demands long-term skills, usable documentation, a maintenance budget, and clear institutional responsibility.

		Finally, the learning mechanism—including training, capitalization, and monitoring-evaluation was not sufficiently articulated as a continuous process, with capitalization occurring late and under constrained conditions.
Impact	B	The project contributed to establishing solid institutional and technical foundations: better-trained agents, processed records, developed modules, and secured procedures. Nevertheless, the lack of authorized access to civil registration centres prevents direct measurement of delays, service quality, actual costs, reception practices, daily tool use, and user satisfaction. Consulates are not using the equipment provided and are not producing digital records, thereby denying the diaspora the expected benefits. Furthermore, interoperability has not been activated—not for technical reasons, but due to a lack of political decision, reducing migration to simple digitization without functional linkages between actors. Religious authorities feel excluded from the process, and available information points to persistent variable delays, informal costs, continued paper use, and breaks in the declaration chain.

Specific Evaluation Questions

Q7. Coherence – Influence of coordination mechanisms on project performance

To what extent have institutional arrangements, governance mechanisms, and inter-institutional coordination influenced the coherence, fluidity, and effectiveness of project implementation?

Project governance proved to be a major limiting factor. The Steering Committee was never convened, leaving coordination to bilateral and informal channels incapable of arbitrating structural blockages. Tensions were managed reactively and on a case-by-case basis, with lasting effects on overall coherence. The consequences were concrete: in July 2025, the exclusion of the Health, Security, and Religious Affairs ministries—key entry points for birth, marriage, and death declarations—directly compromised the development of Module 3 and rendered interoperability non-existent. Successive suspensions generated inefficiencies, slowed execution, and eroded trust with the Guinean side. Additionally, Enabel's procedures were perceived as rigid and poorly adapted to the context.

Q8. Innovation, digitalization, and appropriation: effects on relevance and sustainability

To what extent has the participatory and iterative co-construction approach of the digital solution allowed for meeting the expectations and functional needs of different users, strengthening their ownership, and improving the sustainability conditions of the solutions developed?

The participatory approach produced relevant modules during the design phase but showed its limits over time. Code lists were modified repeatedly without prior validation, rendering specifications obsolete and preventing development of Module 3. Data quality issues—such as homonymy and non-standardized dates—had not been anticipated. The lesson is clear: co-construction cannot be effective without binding prior agreement on technical repositories. In practice, officers continue to use paper in parallel, national technicians lack access to source codes, and the solution is not aligned with open standards. Formal participation alone

is insufficient; real appropriation requires effective access to tools and continuous support.

Q9. Unexpected effects of digitalization on institutional actors and users

What unexpected multiplier effects has the digitalization of civil registration event management produced beyond the municipalities, in terms of improving professional practices and strengthening the legal and operational role of other institutional actors such as justice, consulates, or religious authorities?

The analysis did not reveal any significant unexpected multiplier effects from digitalization. Some secondary effects were observed—institutional reactions and occasional adjustments in practices but they remained limited and did not produce notable transformations beyond the project's immediate scope. This absence is largely explained by the unstable context: institutional tensions, partnership restructuring, activity suspensions, and a reduced operational perimeter.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1 – Real technical achievements in a complex institutional environment

Digitalization cannot be dissociated from the progressive construction of the ecosystem that must sustain it: inter-institutional governance, legal framework, technical capacities, human resources, and user trust. The tool cannot compensate for institutional foundations that remain under construction.

Conclusion 2 – Insufficient inter-institutional governance for a systemic reform

Civil registration reform involves numerous institutions—administration, justice, health, digital affairs, and others—and therefore requires robust coordination. Yet governance bodies did not function effectively, weakening the project through a lack of clear arbitration, vague responsibilities, and decisions made bilaterally rather than consensually, all of which undermined overall coherence. Given the sensitivity of the issues—sovereignty, personal data, the State-citizen relationship—informal coordination is inadequate; structured and sustainable governance is essential.

Conclusion 3 – Stakeholder engagement must be secured by clear and continuous political dialogue

A signed funding agreement does not guarantee national stakeholder adherence; this must be actively built and maintained throughout the project lifecycle. Several elements should have been clarified from the very beginning: the scope of support, covered activities, responsibilities of each party, the role of governance bodies, and the limits of mandates. Such clarity would have prevented misunderstandings—particularly regarding the links between civil registration, identification, and the electoral process. Beyond COPILs, regular high-level political dialogue is necessary to prevent blockages and maintain strategic alignment on such sensitive projects. The European Union Cooperation Support Office (BACUE) could play a more structured facilitation and early-warning role, provided its mandate and responsibilities are clearly recognized by all parties.

Conclusion 4 – Relevant digitalization, but insufficient without practice transformation

Digitalization is a useful tool for securing and modernizing civil registration, but it does not, by itself, transform practices. The PARECIGUI experience demonstrates that the effectiveness of a digital solution depends on concrete conditions: training, support, equipment, connectivity, clear procedures, and supervision.

Without these prerequisites, the tool remains underutilized—as evidenced by consular equipment delivered but never used due to lack of training. Similarly, transferring source codes does not guarantee genuine technical autonomy.

Conclusion 5 – Effects on users are still partial and insufficiently documented, with a gender dimension to explore

The project has strengthened certain institutional capacities, but its concrete effects on user access to civil registration services remain difficult to measure. In the field, technical advances do not yet translate uniformly: delays vary, informal costs persist, paper continues to be used, and the declaration chain remains incomplete. A dimension that has not been sufficiently taken into account is that of gender: in practice, it is predominantly men who interact with authorities, even though the law makes no distinction. The non-registration of marriage or a husband's death exposes women to serious legal and property consequences—a dimension not integrated into the project's design.

Conclusion 6 – A declaration chain still partially operationalized

Digitalization secures data already in the system but does not resolve upstream obstacles: non-declarations, transmission breaks, mistrust, and informal costs. The legal reform, by integrating health facilities and places of worship, offers interesting prospects but remains largely unimplemented. Without implementing texts or adapted procedures, digitalization will improve management of existing data without addressing the problem of initial registration.

Conclusion 7 – Sustainability depends on an ecosystem, not just a tool

Sustainability is the principal area of concern. It requires a complete ecosystem—central level, municipalities, courts, technical actors, users—capable of maintaining and evolving tools over time. Yet several conditions remain to be consolidated: human resources, maintenance, budget, connectivity, continuous training, and institutional governance. Providing tools or source codes alone does not guarantee longevity.

Conclusion 8 – An important learning resource for future support

PARECIGUI Phase 2 has produced real technical achievements, but their sustainability depends on institutional and human foundations still to be strengthened. The lessons learned argue for future projects that are co-constructed, with effective governance, agile procedures, and a capacity for readjustment. This project is not a failure; it is a foundation whose lasting effect remains to be built.

Conclusion 9 – Obstacles to registration are not only technical, but also social and cultural

Beyond institutional barriers, obstacles to registration are also social and cultural: perceived limited utility, primacy of religious practices, funeral timelines incompatible with the law, deterrent costs, and gender inequalities. Not considered in PARECIGUI phase 2, these factors limited the project's impact on the most vulnerable. They must be integrated into future initiatives.

Conclusion 10 – Legal identity as a cross-cutting infrastructure to be better articulated with sectoral projects

Civil registration is not a simple administrative formality; it is an infrastructure that conditions access to employment, health, justice, and social protection.

Several other Enabel projects in Guinea share the same target populations and timeline as PARECIGUI phase 2 yet lack any specific articulation on legal identity. Better linking these interventions with the civil registration system could offer a safety net for beneficiaries—identifying, guiding, and registering undocumented persons, securing their pathways, and producing more reliable data. For future programs, legal identity would benefit from being integrated as a cross-cutting lever from the design stage, rather than treated as an issue reserved for a specific project.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Related Conclusions	Targeted Actors
R1: Render inter-institutional governance mechanisms effective before any new deployment or scaling up.	C2, C7	MATD, ONECI, National Program for Administrative Census with a Civil Registration Purpose (PN-RAVEC), Enabel, DUE, sectoral ministries
R2: Clarify, from the formulation stage, the reciprocal commitments of the partnership, including what is financed, what is not, national responsibilities, and arbitration mechanisms.	C2, C3, C7, C8	DUE, Enabel, European Union Cooperation Support Office (BACUE), MATD, Prime Ministry, sectoral ministries
R3: Accelerate the production of implementing texts for Laws 19 and 20 by mobilizing dedicated technical, legal, and human resources.	C1, C6, C7	MATD, ONECI, Security (ONI), Justice, Health, Religious Affairs, MFA, Prime Ministry
R4: Conduct a maturity diagnostic before any national expansion of a civil registration digital solution.	C1, C4, C7	MATD, ONECI, PN-RAVEC, ANDE, ARPT, Enabel
R5: Involve sectoral stakeholders from the design and formulation stages of civil registration modernization projects.	C2, C6, C8	Enabel, DUE, MATD, Justice, Health, Religious Affairs, MFA, municipalities
R6: Operationalize the declaration obligations of health facilities and places of worship within the official civil registration chain.	C5, C6	MATD, ONECI, Health, Religious Affairs, Justice, municipalities
R7: Transform technical transfer and training into a continuous ownership pathway, beyond the formal handover of tools or source codes.	C4, C5, C7	Enabel, technical service providers, PN-RAVEC, ONECI, ANDE, ARPT, MATD, MFA, Egmont/BOSA
R8: Co-construct a national monitoring-evaluation-learning (MEL) system for the project and, by extension, the National Civil Registration Strategy, integrating users in monitoring service performance.	C5, C7, C8	MATD, ONECI, PN-RAVEC, INS, Health, Justice, Religious Affairs, MFA, Enabel, municipalities, CSOs
R9: Involve stakeholders in the evaluation process from the receipt of the terms of reference.	C5, C8	Enabel, DUE, MATD, sectoral ministries, evaluators
R10: Produce a learning note on the minimum conditions for success of a civil registration digitalization project.	C1, C2, C7, C8	Enabel, DUE, national partners

Lessons learned

L1: Learning integrated into the project cycle: Capitalization and monitoring-evaluation should not be end-of-cycle activities. They must be integrated from the formulation stage, with a shared MEL system.

L2: Evaluation as a process of dialogue: Stakeholders must be informed and involved from the terms of reference stage. Transparency fosters ownership and reduces misunderstandings.

L3: From digitalization to transformation: Modernizing civil registration is a progressive transformation of an ecosystem. Continuous learning is a condition for sustainability.

L4: Operational flexibility: Rigidity of procedures limits adaptation. Flexible budget envelopes, process indicators, and delegated decision-making are necessary.

L5: Ownership is built over time: Stakeholder engagement does not maintain itself automatically. Re-anchoring mechanisms at each phase are essential.