

COUNTRY PAPER - CAMBODIA
for the
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EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM OF CAMBODIA

I. Background

In the modern period statistical activities began when Cambodia was a French protectorate 1863-1953, however it was only **in 1948 that a separate department titled the Statistics Department of Cambodia** was formally established as a central statistics office. Since then, the Department has undergone many transformations due to political, economic and social circumstances. Its name, role and activities have changed from time to time. Between 1948 and 1953 it was titled the Statistics Department of Cambodia and from 1953 to 1963 it was named the Department of Statistics and Economic Study and from 1963 to 1975 it was known as the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Research under the Ministry of Planning. The statistical system had deteriorated in the early 1970s and was dismantled in 1975 and it was re-established only in 1979. During this period the qualified statisticians and statistical cadres have either died or left the country. From 1979 to 1981 DOS was under the Ministry of Finance and it was assigned to the Ministry of Planning (MOP) in the same year under which it continued to function.

In 1992 when we started the first project of ADB and UNDP, the staff strength of DOS was around 40 staff at central level and 450 staff at local level (provinces and districts). MOP strengthened DOS and upgraded it to NIS in 1994. In September 1997, NIS has received the status of Directorate General of the Ministry of Planning. The NIS strengthened further its authority by the enactment of Statistics Law in 2005.

According to the Statistics Law, the NIS is the Directorate General of the Ministry of Planning but the technical independence is ensured by statistical legislation. The title of Director of NIS and Deputy Director of NIS has changed to Director General and Deputy Director General of NIS in early 2006. The number of staff has increased particularly at central level and the budget has reached 6 million US\$ in 2007 (2008 is the census year). **The NIS has a total staff strength of 260 at central level and 375 staff at local offices (provinces and districts).** Cambodia participated in the GDDS of IMF since 2001. **The Statistics Law was enacted in May 2005 and statistics on statistics organization approved in December 2006.** NIS has opened policies, NIS website launched in December 2000, NIS Data Users Service Center opened to public. NIS has team to disseminate important statistical findings and statistical legislation like population census, DHS, Statistics Law to wide range of users and population including policy makers, technical staff at central and local level (all provinces and districts staff, users of statistics). The Statistics Law is widely known in Cambodia.

II. Evolution of National Statistical Systems- Trends and Implications

As a follow up to the Millennium Declaration (Sept, 2000), Cambodia has launched several initiatives to meet its global and national commitment to fight extreme poverty, including several institutional reforms. The national poverty reduction strategy - outlined in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2006-2010 build upon a policy stance of economic growth and equitable redistribution. In addition to poverty reduction, there is also a stronger focus on economic growth and stability.

The reform agenda of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) essentially focuses on a deepening of economic reforms and macroeconomic stability, including fiscal and monetary reforms, trade and investment promotion, administrative reforms, military demobilization, and improved fishery and forestry management. The RGC is committed to a reform process that is essentially poverty focused, participatory and result-oriented allowing for all segments of society to contribute towards informed policy decision, strategy formulation, implementation and monitoring.

With the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and mutual development partnership accountability platform, as well as the various economic, fiscal and monetary policy initiatives, there are undoubtedly increased demands on producing and accessing official statistics, to enable systematic and sustained tracking and review of progress - in terms of achievements, trends and shortfalls. A credible and sound national statistical system is therefore an important component of overall reforms. Tracking the MDG goals and related national indicators calls for well-defined concepts of poverty and timely, authoritative and whenever possible disaggregated data for both national and sub-national levels, i.e. by urban and rural area, by region and big provinces, by socio-economic group, and by age and gender. High standard and quality statistics are needed to capture economic growth, poverty reduction, as well as other dimensions of social development (e.g. gender equality, education and literacy, health and nutrition) and related demographic, economic, social, and natural resources statistics.

III. The Reorganization of National Statistical System to meet the supply of statistics

Cambodia statistical infrastructure and capacity were largely non-existent a decade ago. In recent years, the quality and coverage of economic and socio-demographic statistics have gradually improved. A significant number of donor-led data collection and compilation activities have been undertaken.

In January 2001, Cambodia adopted the General Data Dissemination Standards (GDDS) framework on core economic and social statistics, and has commenced implementation of these standards, in order to expand and improve these statistics. Similarly, the NIS is also focusing on the implementation of the IMF Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF), initially in relation to the prerequisites of quality (i.e. legal and institutional environment, resources, and quality awareness).

The Statistical Master Plan (SMP) sets out a longer term, prioritized plan for Cambodia's national statistical system (NSS). It covers the whole of the NSS including the National Institute of Statistics (NIS), statistical units in line ministries and the National Bank of Cambodia. The Statistical Master Plan provides the strategic long term view and longer term financing plan needed for planning statistical activities.

The estimated RGC statistics budget for 2007 taking into account the Population census 2008 is estimated at 1,204 thousands US\$. Donors contributions are essential for the development of NIS and equal to 4,816 thousands US\$. In 2010, the budget from RGC and donors will be almost equal, the Royal Government increasing by 10 percentage point of the financing gap a year over the period to 100% by 2015.

The NIS needs to reorganize itself to meet the growing demand of statistics. The following statistics Department needs to be created and strengthened namely IT Department, National Accounts Department and Statistical Analysis Department.

IV. Prospects and Risks for the future

At present Cambodia's statistical system is highly decentralized, with NIS being the only statistical unit that has statistics as its sole function. In virtually all ministries and other institutions, the statistical activity is combined with other functions, such as planning, policy and program formulation and monitoring, research and analysis.

To avoid duplication of efforts and non-optimal use of resources, a centralization of responsibility and funding is necessary, as it would improve both the quality of the data and efficiency of data collection.

Under this Law the NIS will have the authority to establish: coordination and cooperation in statistical activities and development, including training, with the ministries and institutions of the RGC, as well as the private sector at the national as well as sub-national level; cooperative arrangements in statistical activities with international organizations, other national statistical agencies and other private institutions; and national statistical standards pertaining to classifications, concepts, definitions and statistical units. The Law and the Sub-decrees include provisions to facilitate effective governance of official statistics. A peak advisory body to be known as the Statistics Advisory Council will be established, with representatives from the donor community, NGOs, academia, policy ministries, the Ministry of Planning and the NIS. The role of the Council will be to advise the RGC and the NIS on statistical capacity building and statistics priorities, as well as providing a forum to address associated financial and technical assistance issues.

Effective formal arrangements and procedures need to be implemented that clearly specify the responsibilities for coordination of statistical work and promotion of statistical standards. These arrangements are to be implemented through the development of a coordinated national program of statistical activities, to be assisted by the establishment of the Statistics Coordination Committee, with representatives from each statistics producing ministry and institution, and the NIS.

A number of statistics units do not have adequate staffing levels to effectively coordinate, collect, compile, analyze and disseminate statistics. Some ministries do not

have any statistical staff at all. Staffing levels need to be improved in order to handle ongoing statistical activities and to develop the outputs to meet priority emerging needs. Salary levels need to be improved and to be more competitive in order to recruit, retain and reward qualified statisticians, clearly the highest priority for the government. Most staff require further training and skills development to get to the levels of competency needed to undertake the tasks required. Priority needs to be given to further developing leadership and management; methodology; statistical standards; survey design and methods; questionnaire design; information and communications technology; data dissemination; and writing and presentation skills. These skills need to be used continuously in undertaking regular statistical collection, compilation and dissemination activities, so that they can be maintained and developed further. Skills development for NIS provincial and district office staff, and staff working in the other RGC statistics units is the highest training priority.

There is also considerable scope to improve buildings, equipment, facilities, and technology infrastructure, especially for NIS provincial and district offices, and in establishing new RGC statistics units. Office space for statistics units need to be improved to provide good physical security and there needs to be fully protected computer facilities and procedures. Office furniture and equipment (desks, chairs, filing cabinets, computers and related equipment, software, telephones, etc.) need to be adequate to perform required statistical tasks.

Developing and implementing an integrated dissemination strategy for official statistics is another high priority project. A draft strategy has been developed to significantly improve the quality, periodicity, range and timeliness of official statistics, as well as improving the dissemination of related metadata and concepts, sources and methods. Implementation of a one-stop shop approach is proposed, with all web access to official statistics and metadata being via a single website (i.e. the NIS Website). The dissemination strategy will be consistent with GDDS quality, periodicity and timeliness objectives. Official statistics will be released in English and Khmer, in both publication and electronic format, as well as via the NIS Website.

Work plan priorities relating to economic statistics include improving the periodicity, quality, and timeliness of macroeconomic, finance and economic sector statistics. Improving the quality of annual and quarterly national accounts estimates, in current and constant prices, are the highest priority.

The NIS urgently needs to conduct regular business surveys and decennial agriculture and establishment censuses. The censuses are critical as they have never been conducted in Cambodia, and this lack of benchmark data has significant implications for the accuracy of GDP levels estimates in current prices. Similarly, the lack of producer and trade price indices brings into question the quality of GDP constant price estimates. The NIS also plans to establish and maintain an integrated business register in order to provide a reliable population frame for sample surveys, as well as to produce reliable annual national aggregates. Regular annual and/or sub-annual surveys are required to

measure labor force and labor costs, production and services, and producer prices; and CPI data collection activities expanded to cover the remaining provincial capital cities.

The reorganization at NIS by creating 3 more departments will strengthen further the NIS giving more focus on national accounts, analyses and IT to support subject matters statistics. This will solve the issues mentioned above.

The borderlines to other departments need to be elaborated, especially to the new department for national accounts and to the existing departments of Economics Statistics and Department of Social Statistics. Deeper and wider analysis in assigned statistics, statistics in gaps concerning situation of the households and individuals for monitoring such as: population, migration, urbanization, household economy, income and expenditure, production, poverty measurements, health, education, housing, safety, crime and gender statistics.

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Information of NIS (Summary on 17 February 2007)

Srl. No.	Item	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
1	Central Staff (NIS)	40	40		111			130					191	210	225	260	260
2	Provincial Staff	450	450					400						367	375	376	376
3	With master degree (now at NIS)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	4	4	8	9	9	13	17	17
4	With overseas diploma (at NIS)	0	0	1	2	4	6	8	10	10	10	10	10	8	8	8	8
5	With overseas short traincourse (<6months)	0	0	0	1	3	5	7	11	12	18	23	30	36	58	72	74
6	Participation in international workshop or study tours (integration)	0	0	0	2	2	3	10	4	9	14	16	31	25	61	83	16
7	Number of Computers in use																
	- In NIS (incl. 2nd hand some not working)	0	10	15	20	30	30	70	70	70	75	75	90	90	143	177	190
	- In Provinces (Including 2nd hand some not working)	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	10	15	24	48	48	48	48
	- In District (2nd hand some not working)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	185	185	185	185
	- In Line Ministries (Given by NIS)												20	20	20	27	27
8	Government Budget (In 000US\$)*	180.0	190.0	200.0	210.0	220.0	237.4	244.4	245.8	298.1	314.7	427.3	435.4	440.0	500.0	580.0	1204.5
	Donors Budget*(In 000US\$ incl. consultants)	150.0	450.0	300.0	828.5	981.1	779.2	3048.4	696.5	1376.7	605.0	489.2	820.5	1300.0	1,746	2,800	4,728
	Total Budget (In 000US\$)	330.0	640.0	500.0	1038.5	1201.1	1016.6	3292.8	942.3	1674.8	919.7	916.5	1255.9	1740.0	2246.0	3380.0	5932.5
9	Statistical Yearbook (Pages)	0	0	0	171	0	0	0	0	184	279	0	467		548	560	
10	Number of Surveys	0	1	2	2	6	3	3	5	7	6	3	6	4	5	8	8
	- Basic	0	1	1	1	5	2	2	4	6	4	1	4	2	3	5	5
	- Ad hoc	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3

* In 2007, UNFPA and Germany: 1,225,236US\$; JICA and Gvt of Japan: 1,521,000US\$; Sweden: 1,090,000US\$; WB: 320,000US\$; UNDP: 264,000US\$; UNICEF: 170,000US\$

* In 2007, Government buy cars for census 500,000US\$