

2008 General Population Census Plan of Cambodia

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

This document provides a plan for conducting a population census in Cambodia in March 2008, completing most of the data processing by the middle of 2009, and analyzing and disseminating the main results in 2009-2010. The previous census, conducted in 1998, was the first in 36 years, as Cambodia did not have a census from 1962 until 1998 due to civil strife and instability.

The 1998 Census together with the 2000 Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey (2000 CDHS), the 2004 Cambodia Inter-censal Population Survey (2004 CIPS), and Cambodia Socio-Economic Surveys have contributed in a large measure to benchmarking important aspects of socio economic conditions of the people of Cambodia. The set of population projections prepared on the basis of these sources facilitate informed decision-making.

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) is implementing a poverty oriented reform process. To guide the implementation of the policy agenda of the Government, the Rectangular Strategy (RS) for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency was launched in July 2004. In order to implement the development vision set out in the RS, the Government and development partners have agreed to prepare a single planning document, the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), for the period 2006-2010. The NSDP builds on the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDG), the Socio-Economic Development Plan 2001-2005, the National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003-2005 (NPRS) and the Governance Action Plan (including the National Public Administration reform).

A wide range of population and socio-economic statistics are needed for monitoring progress, making assessments, and guiding further policy formulation. A new Statistical Law came into force on May 9, 2005 that provides a clear demarcation of responsibilities and relationships, which is essential for the smooth and efficient working of a decentralized statistical system. It specifies that a population census should be conducted at least once every ten years. The proposed Statistics Master Plan (SMP) is expected to provide the long-term strategies and financing plan needed for organizing such necessary statistical activities.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) provided primary support for the 1996 Demographic Survey, the 1998 Census, the 2000 Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey (CDHS) and the 2004 CIPS. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have provided extensive support on capacity building and data collections for macro economic and industrial statistics. Training courses and on-the-job training was given on a variety of topics of economic statistics. The Cambodia Socio-Economic Surveys of Cambodia were conducted in 1993/1994 and 1996

with ADB assistance, and in 1997, 1999, and in 2003/04 with UNDP/Sida funding and World Bank execution. Establishment surveys were carried out in 1993, 1995 and 2000 with support received from ADB. USAID, UNFPA, UNICEF, and DFID/ADB financed rounds of the Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey in 2000 and 2005.

The ADB, after a decade, discontinued its support in 2003. The collection of prices in five provinces for the CPI (Consumer Price Index) was started with assistance from ADB but NIS continued to collect these data. Training activities continued with IMF support. UNDP, the Sida and World Bank have funded the 2003/2004 Cambodia Household Socio-Economic Survey, which includes an income and expenditure diary. Several other donors have also supported the development of demographic and social statistics. Bilateral donors have also helped build capacity for economic and social sector statistics.

The 1998 Census process and results were rated as a successful partnership in national capacity building and in the production of high quality population data sets for planning. To carry out the 1998 Census work, the NIS had to ensure the recruitment and training of thousands of data collectors in the field. The methodology for the census and the questionnaire itself required substantial input from the managerial staff of the NIS and technical advisers.

In sum the implementation of the census analysis and its dissemination resulted in strengthening the development planning process in Cambodia at various levels, and ensured that demographic concerns were taken into consideration within various sector plans and programmes.

There has been a continuous effort to build national capacity in the NIS. The different surveys carried out with donor assistance have always included promotion of national capacity. The NIS has well qualified and experienced staff to carry out the census. The technical assistance received by NIS in the last decade has contributed significantly to capacity building of national staff in undertaking census activities. The training program of the census and survey staff at different levels has resulted in creating a core of trained field staff. However it is necessary to expose the national staff to various latest developments in the fields of data processing, GIS and census analysis. The current UNDP project on capacity development of national statistical system with NIS as the implementing agency, and focuses on four components – integrated national statistical system, statistical governance, national statistics dissemination strategy and statistical capacity development strategy. The two projects, initiated by Sida and JICA respectively, will focus on training and capacity building.

Provisions have therefore been made in the present proposal for external training/study tours in these areas. As capacity for census taking and data processing has been developed in the NIS, a resident census adviser (CTA) on a long-term basis, as was done in the last census, does not appear necessary for the present census. A long-term data processing advisor may also not be required. Technical assistance by consultants would however be necessary at some important stages of the operation.

It is observed that there has been striking improvement in national capacity for demographic data collection, processing and dissemination. However, the level of capacity in respect to data analysis and interpretation is low. While JICA and SIDA will provide some support for developing data analysis and interpretation skills, additional training will be required for the in-depth analysis of census data.

2. Importance of the Census

Following the success in the creation of a valuable population database as a result of the 1998 Census, the RGC is committed to further build and strengthen the population database through the next census. There has been an increase in demand from governmental planners and researchers for reliable and updated demographic and social data in order to accurately review their plans and programs.

The proposed 2008 Census represents the cornerstone of population statistics within the Statistical Master Plan of Cambodia. It would update and provide a continuous series of reliable and comprehensive data on population size, composition and characteristics, essential for economic and social development. Censuses are to be taken at regular intervals, so as to have comparable information in a fixed sequence. A series of censuses makes it possible to appraise the past, accurately describe the present and estimate the future.

The 2008 census is critical for a number of reasons:

- The 2008 census would help contribute to updating and comparing population and other development indicators. It would also help to assess trends and patterns in fertility, mortality, migration and other demographic and socio-economic variables over the last decade.
- The NSDP for the period 2006-2010 will help implement the development vision set out in the RS. It draws together CMDG, the Socio-Economic Development Plan 2001-2005, the National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003-2005 (NPRS) and the Governance Action Plan (including the National Public Administration Reform). Many of the indicators for monitoring and assessing the NSDP will be based on data obtained from the 2008 Census.
- The data obtained from the census are crucially needed by the ROG for integrating demographic factors into the overall development planning process. Line Ministries have expressed the need for data for sectoral planning as well.
- Small area statistics cannot be obtained from sample surveys. The census is the only source of such data and is critical for development planning at the village and commune level.
- It is proposed to adopt a new urban classification in the 2008 Census and to obtain fresh urban-rural population data for statistical purposes and urban planning.
- The RGC's commitment to the MDGs was firmly expressed with the adoption of the first country report CMDGR in 2003, and in the adoption of CMDGs as an overarching framework for the NSDP which is being currently formulated. With the commencement of NSDP implementation, there will be a need to put in place a monitoring system that will enable the tracking of achievements. In addition, such monitoring ought to include empirical and analytical exercises supporting policymaking towards the attainment of Plan objectives. Since the CMDGs largely define NSDP vision, and 45 out of 66 NSDP monitoring indicators are drawn from CMDGs, Census 2008 will contribute towards monitoring of NSDP implementation as well as CMDGs..
- Adequate gender-sensitive poverty assessments will be possible only with the sex-disaggregated information provided by the upcoming census.
- Due to security concerns, the 1998 Census could not cover some areas in the North West. The 2008 census will cover all areas in Cambodia and give a complete demographic picture of the entire country without any exceptions.
- The population projections for Cambodia based on the 1998 Census, 2000 CDHS and 2004 CIPS will be updated based on the 2008 census data.

- The Master sample frame provided by the 1998 Census will be updated by the 2008 census. This sample frame forms the basis of all national household surveys, including the CDHS, socio-economic household survey, and the inter-censal population survey.
- One of the aims of the census is to establish comprehensive population databases, which greatly expand the usability and dissemination of census data.

3. Objectives

3.1 Immediate Objectives

- a. By the end of November 2007 to have completed all essential preparatory activities for the 2008 Census, including the provision of external and on-the-job training for professional staff of NIS. This will include training in usage of state of-the-art data processing technology to establish a dynamic integrated population information system.
- b. By the end of March 2008 to have conducted a national census of population.
- c. By the end of August 2008 to have released the preliminary census results.
- d. By the end of August 2009 to have completed the production of census tables.
- e. By the end of August 2010 to have analyzed, evaluated and disseminated the main census results, to promote wider utilization of census findings and contribute to integration of population data in the planning activities at various levels.

3.2 Long-term Objectives

1. To further develop capability in NIS in producing a continuous series of reliable and timely demographic data through population censuses and surveys as well as in the processing, analysis, evaluation and dissemination of population data sets required for policy formulation, development planning and administration.
2. To create awareness between the public at large and senior level officials about the importance of high quality data for development planning.
3. To develop and maintain a comprehensive national population database as part of an integrated population information system.

4. Census Strategy and Activities

From 1995 onwards, a census office has been functioning within the NIS. After 1998 census fieldwork was completed, data processing, analysis and dissemination of data were undertaken by the census office. The availability, accessibility and utilization of population data in Cambodia was promoted through the production of census tables, analytical reports and four CD-ROMs containing 1998 census data. The census office also produced the revised urban classification for Cambodia in 2004, was involved in the

Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey in 2004 (2004 CIPS), and produced the Administrative and Health Facility Mapping project.

The census office has a core staff of approximately 27 members. For the 2008 Census, the following divisions will have to be re-established using available staff and supplemented with qualified staff from other departments of the NIS: administration and finance; planning and monitoring; cartography; analysis and research; and data processing. All the divisions will function under the overall charge of Director General of Census (DG). He will be assisted in his task by the planning and monitoring division, Deputy Directors General of the NIS, Director of Census and Bureau Chiefs. Provincial planning directorates will function as field offices.

The enumeration is proposed to be undertaken during two weeks in March 2008, as this is considered to be a period of stability and low level of international and internal mobility, which would allow accurate estimates of population size and distribution. It will also exactly mark a ten-year interval after the first census in 1998. In planning the overall activities of the census, the following approaches will be adopted:

1. It is proposed to continue the canvassing method utilized in 1998. House-to-house visits will be made by enumerators for accounting of each individual in every household. For this purpose each household will be identified in all buildings and structures within each Enumeration Area (EA). The households counted will include normal, institutional and homeless households.

The reference time for the census will be the census night (March 3, 2008). The number of usual members present, usual members absent, and visitors present in the household on the census night will be collected. Detailed information on social, economic, cultural and demographic characteristics of usual members present and visitors will be recorded in the questionnaire.

Building and household numbering and listing will precede the enumeration. This operation will take place for four days. For this, a separate form will be used. Apart from serving as an inventory for buildings and households in the EA, this form will also furnish useful information on housing characteristics.

The census enumeration will be conducted for two weeks. The homeless population who will be identified during the house listing, and will be enumerated on the census night itself. Special arrangements will also be made to enumerate the following groups of persons: persons in military barracks, inmates of penal institutions, patients in hospitals or other such institutions, those staying in hotels and boarding houses, living in boats, and nomads.

2. Intensified information and communication activities are needed throughout various phases of the census to create awareness, and ensure public cooperation.

3. Systems to reduce the level of non-response will be created by adopting well-defined procedures for callbacks.

4. Quality control measures will be adopted at various stages of the census, especially at the data collection stage, to ensure accuracy.
5. Data processing will be completed using state-of the-art technology (micro-computer hardware and software) to carry out data entry and analysis.
6. Apart from evaluation of various stages of the process, the outcome of the census will be evaluated with regard to contents and coverage. This will include a post enumeration survey and in-depth evaluation of the findings.

In the 1998 census, sketch maps of villages and EAs were prepared. For the 2008 census, it would be useful if village locations and other places/features were plotted at their actual locations using GPS. This will also bring in a degree of precision and accuracy in the base maps needed for computerized mapping and GIS applications.

A detailed work plan and budget for this census has been prepared and is presented as Annex 1 and 2.

5. Institutional Framework and executive agency

The NIS will be responsible for the execution of the census activities. This will capitalize on NIS's increased capacity developed during the last decade. On the whole, the current structure of the NIS and its substantive activities confirm its ability to establish an up-to-date, efficient and reliable national statistical system, based on sound scientific methodologies. It also enjoys a high-level of credibility.

The overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of census activities is to be shouldered by the DG. Consultants on census, data processing, cartography and census analysis may provide technical back stopping to the NIS at appropriate stages of the census operations as indicated in the work plan. The consultants may be supported from development partner agencies.

6. Related Activities

The 2008 census activities will be closely coordinated with other on-going projects of NIS. Large surveys like CSES provide the basis for most of the economic social and demographic information available. The training components of these activities have developed the skills and capacity of NIS.

Social data are collected in all villages annually for Commune development plans by the Ministry of Planning supported by SEILA and UNICEF. The Ministry of planning is the principal agency responsible for coordinating efforts in monitoring the National Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Close collaboration will be maintained by the census office with these and other projects for the successful conduct of the 2008 census. There is a need for improved consultation

and agreement with other stakeholders on census tabulation and analysis and in the production of socio-demographic indicators.

7. Constraints and Risks

A major constraint in implementing the census is the relatively low allocation of funds in the government budget. NIS has therefore to rely heavily on international donors for support. This issue is also linked to the low level of salary for civil servants. It is expected that civil servants will need to be provided honorarium or incentive payments for the census work to supplement their limited government salaries. Necessary provision has therefore been made in the budget proposal for the 2008 Census for payment of honorarium to the census staff.

One anticipated risk is in the probable change of the census date due to national elections in 2008. This can be faced or solved through transparent planning and periodic coordination meetings with the Ministry of Interior.

8.	Budget	Summary
By component	Total budget US\$	
Census planning & preparation phase	1,068,216	
Census cartography & EA delineation	297,000	
Training of census enumerators & supervisors	1,126,498	
Census enumeration phase	1,741,816	
Data processing	567,150	
Analysis and dissemination of census results	96,600	
Meetings/workshops	14,400	
Study tours	50,000	
Equipment	207,500	
Census vehicles	486,000	
Operation and maintenance	141,000	
Miscellaneous	60,300	
Contingency	100,000	
Total:	5,956,480	

Note: Additional statistical activities that should be implemented if adequate resources become available are included in Table 2. Overhead and indirect costs are not included. Cost of international consultants is excluded from the donor commitment estimates.