



One Month to Census Day

The Population Census, a five-yearly national undertaking in Japan, will be taken on October 1 - just one month away from now. The preparations for the Census have been made according to the "Implementation Plan of the 2010 Population Census", which was announced by Mr. Kazuhiro HARAGUCHI, Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications on April 13, 2010.

The Population Census is the most important statistical survey of the country. It has been conducted every five years under the Statistics Act since 1920 to clarify the actual situation of the population and households in Japan. Based on the Act, the Cabinet Order and the Ordinance of the Ministry stipulate the concrete matters concerning the implementation of the Population Census.

Regarding the 2010 Population Census (2010 Census), the partial revision of the "Cabinet Order for the Population Census ^{*1)}" and the "Rule for the Execution of the Population Census (Ordinance of the Ministry) ^{*2)}" was promulgated and enforced on April 1, 2010.

Note:

*1) It sets the survey items and the survey methods etc.

*2) It sets the design of the questionnaire and the survey period etc.

This "Implementation Plan" sets out details of the census program based on the revised Cabinet Order and the Ordinance, and provides information on significance, survey items, survey methods and improvement of the survey environment concerning the 2010 Census. In the following, some highlights are introduced.

Significance and feature of the 2010 Census

1. The first Census under the population decline

The 2010 Census will be the first census since Japan's population began to show a declining trend. The aim of the Census is to obtain the latest actual condition concerning population/ households at national and regional level from different angles, and to provide reliable statistics, as a tool to provide indispensable statistical information for Japan's future.

2. Provision of accurate statistics for addressing important issues of Japan

With the population decrease, Japan's socio-economical situation confronts various important issues such as recovery of fertility, sustaining the medical and elderly-care system, employment policy for the elderly/young, and revitalization of communities.

The results of the 2010 Census will be utilized as information for addressing important issues and formulating measures, and form a basis for improving people's life and developing the economy in a healthy manner by national and local governments. In addition, the results will be made available widely, in order to enable citizens and enterprises to understand and analyze the actual condition and issues of nation and region in an appropriate manner.

3. Implementation as a part of the “2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses”

The United Nations recommends all the countries in the world to participate in the “2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses” in order to deal with the various global issues of food, energy, environment and so on. Japan’s 2010 Census is to be conducted as a part of it. Given such circumstances as the advancing globalization of Japan’s socio-economical situation, the SBJ will keep producing and providing official statistics in compliance with international standards in order to enable accurate international comparison.

Implementation methods of the 2010 Census

1. Coverage and Census organization

(1) Coverage

The 2010 Census covers all persons and households usually residing in Japan. Foreigners residing in Japan are also included in the coverage of the Census.

However, the following persons are excluded from the 2010 Census:

- Members of the foreign diplomatic corps, their suite and dependents
- Foreign military personnel, including both military corps and supporting civilians, and their dependents

Based on the Statistics Act, the enumerators and all staff related to the 2010 Census are bound to the confidentiality obligation to keep all personal information collected in the Census strictly confidential, and the persons enumerated including foreigners are obliged to respond to the Census.

(2) Census organization

The 2010 Census will be conducted through the following channel:

Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (SBJ) – 47 Prefectures (*to, do, fu, and ken*) – 1,750 Municipalities (*shi, ku, machi and mura*) – Supervisors (about 100 thousand persons) – Enumerators (about 700 thousand persons)

The supervisors and enumerators of the 2010 Census are to be engaged in the enumeration as part-time national civil servants appointed by the Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications.

Regarding the implementation of the 2010 Census, the enumeration districts (EDs) consisting of around 50 households in each ED were demarcated a year before the census date, in order to prevent undercoverage or overcoverage. The enumerators will attend the training sessions to learn the census procedures. They are to distribute the questionnaire to each household in their assigned areas, and give instructions and explanation for reporting. Later on, they visit the households again to collect the questionnaires. They submit the collected questionnaires to municipalities. Each supervisor will be assigned 10 EDs. The supervisors will supervise and support the enumerators, and check the census documents.

Close cooperation between national and local governments is required, in order to implement the 2010 Census smoothly and obtain accurate results. Implementation work for the 2010 Census is stipulated as “legally delegated operation” by the Local Autonomy Act, and the local governments have the responsibility to implement the work. In addition, the budget for implementation of the 2010 Census (approximately 65 billion) is ensured by the national government, and necessary expenses are distributed to local governments as expenses for commission. Thus, the Population Census of Japan is conducted effectively through close cooperation between national and local governments.

2. Survey methods

At first, the enumerators will make the rounds of their assigned enumeration areas, check the borders of EDs and deliver a leaflet for preliminary announcement of the census-implementation in the mailbox of each household. After that, the enumerators will distribute questionnaires before the census date (October 1, 2010) and collect them after the census date as follows:

- (1) Regarding the distribution of the questionnaires, the enumerators will visit each household from September 23 to 30, 2010, and confirm whether or not the household is inhabited in order to ensure distribution and collection.
- (2) In the previous method of collecting the questionnaires, households submitted questionnaires to the enumerators and the enumerators inspected their entries. In the 2010 Census, however, the households are to select the following newly introduced response-methods from October 1 to 7, 2010.
 - a. Handing over questionnaires enclosed in sealed envelopes to enumerators.
 - b. Putting the questionnaires in pre-addressed envelopes and mailing them to local governments (dropping them into post boxes).
 - c. Keying in answers in the online survey system. The system is adapted in Tokyo as a model area. But the language is limited to Japanese only.

The purpose of introducing these methods is to address the change of conditions such as increase of households in which members are absent from home in the daytime, and their privacy concerns.

- (3) For the households whose questionnaires are not returned by October 7, 2010, the enumerators will revisit the households and request their submission between October 22 and 24, 2010.

3. Questionnaire and Survey items

(1) Questionnaire

The questionnaire for the 2010 Census is designed with A4 size and double-sided OCRs (Optical Character Readers) type for mark and number entry. The questionnaire can accommodate up to 4 persons' responses.

The questionnaire uses easy-to-read font (Universal Design Font) , and is to be folded into thirds to fit into mailing envelope.

The electronic questionnaire (HTML format) will be used on the online survey. In addition, the following auxiliary questionnaires are prepared, in order to be read and filled in easily by aged persons or foreigners:

- a. "Enlarged Character Questionnaire" which is printed out with enlarged characters for aged persons or amblyopic persons.
- b. "Braille Questionnaire (questionnaire and response sheet)" which is used for persons with impaired vision who would like to respond in Braille.
- c. "Multilingual Documents" in which the questionnaire is translated into 27 languages (an increase of 8 languages from the 2005 Census) for foreigners who are not able to understand Japanese.

(2) Survey items

The following 20 questions (15 questions for household members and 5 questions for households) will be asked in the 2010 Census.

a. Questions for household members

Name, Sex, Year and month of birth, Relationship to head of household, Marital status, Nationality, Duration of residency at the current domicile, Place of residence 5 years ago, Educational Status such as enrolled in school or graduated, Status in employment, Name of establishment and type of business (industry), Type of work (occupation), Employments status, Place of work or location of school, Transportation to the place of work or school

b. Questions for households

Type of household, Number of household members, Type of dwelling, Floor area of dwelling, Type of building and number of stories

Strengthening the Organization and Improving the Survey Environment of the 2010 Census

1. Strengthening the Organization

In October 2009, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), to which the SBJ belongs, established the “Headquarters for Implementation of the 2010 Population Census” headed by Mr. Kazuhiro HARAGUCHI, Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications. The MIC is working to prepare for the 2010 Census with the support from all the departments. All prefectural governments also established their own regional “Headquarters for Implementation of the 2010 Population Census” by April 2010.

2. Request for cooperation to related parties and securement of support

In the 2010 Census, the “National Collaborator Conferences” are held with participation of various parties to be involved in the Census operation, such as those working in management of apartments, support of alien, education, financial circles and the mass media. The SBJ is making continued efforts to get support from persons and organizations who are familiar with the households that are difficult to approach or contact in the Census enumeration, and to promote coordination and cooperation toward the smooth and accurate enumeration of the 2010 Census.

3. Setup of a call center and improvement of response system to inquiries

The SBJ will newly set up a call center from September 11 to October 31, 2010, in order to respond to the inquiries and consultations from households all over the country in regard to the questions of the Census as well as the Census itself. In addition, prefectural and municipal governments are to improve their response system to respond to the inquiries and consultations from households more promptly and appropriately.

Tabulation and Publication of the 2010 Census Results

The SBJ will entrust tabulation of the 2010 Census data to the National Statistics Center, and the questionnaires will be captured using OCRs. The tabulation will be divided into several phases, due to the diverse Census statistics requested from users. Upon completion of tabulation, the results will be published through the Internet in series accessible free of charge.

The first release of the 2010 Census results, “preliminary counts of the population” which contains the total population for the whole country, prefectures and municipalities will be released and published in the official gazette in February 2011, about 4 months after the survey. The “prompt sample tabulation” which includes tabulations on the all survey items will be released in June 2011. After that, the results of the complete tabulation for the whole country, prefectures and municipalities will be released and published successively from July to October 2011.