

Minutes of the Forth Meeting of Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC)

Project on Improving Official Statistics in Cambodia, Phase 3

Date & Time: 3:00 PM on 14 December 2012

Venue: Conference Room at 1st Floor of the New Building, National Institute of Statistics (NIS),
Ministry of Planning

Attendees:

National Institute of Statistics

H.E. Mr. San Sy Than, Director General
H.E. Mr. Hor Darith, Deputy Director General
H.E. Mr. Meng Kimhor, Deputy Director General
Mr. Khin Sokvorlak, Deputy Director General
Mr. They Kheam, Director of Demographic Statistics, Census, and Survey Department
M. Lim Penh, Director of Statistical Standard and Analysis Department
Mr. Saint Lundy, Director of Information, Communication and Technology Department
Mr. Sin Sereivuth, Deputy Director of Demographic Statistics, Census, and Survey Department
Mr. So Tonnere, Deputy Director of Economic Statistics Department
Mr. Lay Sophat, Deputy Director of Information, Communication and Technology Dpt.
Mr. Kim Net, Deputy Director of Social Statistics Department

Observer from Line Ministries:

Mr. Chhoeung Rachana, Staff of EMIS/DoP

JICA Side:

Mr. Kuniaki Amatsu, Head of Mid-term Review Team
Mr. Yoshiyuki Kobayshi, Mid-term Review Team member
Mr. Ryosuke Yoshida, Mid-term Review Team member
Ms. Rie Fusamae, Mid-term Review Consultant
Ms. Satoko Nadamoto, Project Formulation Advisor, JICA Cambodia Office
Mr. Fumihiko Nishi, Project Chief Advisor
Mr. Akihiko Ito, Project Team Leader
Prof./Dr./Mr. Nobuo Hirohata, JICA Expert
Mr. Akihito Yamauchi, JICA Expert
Mr. Joji Sawada, JICA Expert
Mr. Hiromi Mizuta, JICA Expert
Mr. Phok Phira, Program Officer, JICA Cambodia Office
Mr. Youk Seng An, Project Assistant
Mr. Reth Youn, Secretary Assistant

Agenda

1. Opening Address of **H. E. Mr. San Sy Than**, Director-General of NIS, Ministry of Planning
2. Remarks of **Mr. Kuniaki Amatsu**, Head of Mid-term Evaluation Team, JICA
3. Remarks and Explanation of How to Evaluate by **Mr. Ryosuke Yoshida**, Member of Mid-term Evaluation Team, JICA
4. Report of the Outputs of JICA Project by **Ms. Rie Fusamae**, Member of Mid-term Evaluation Team, JICA
5. Report of the Results of Evaluation by **Ms. Rie Fusamae**, Member of Mid-term Evaluation Team, JICA
6. Conclusions and Suggestions by **Mid-term Evaluation Team**, JICA
7. Exchange opinions with **Mid-term Evaluation Team**, JICA
8. Break
9. Ceremony of Signing the Minutes
10. Closing Remarks of **H.E. Mr. San Sy Than**, Director General of NIS

1. Opening Session

1.1 H.E. Mr. San Sy Than, Director General of NIS:

At the beginning of the session, H.E. Mr. San Sy Than, Director General, NIS expressed his great pleasure to warmly welcome the mission team of mid-term review for the Project on Improving Official Statistics in Cambodia, Phase 3 under the financial and technical assistance from Government of Japan and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The JCC meeting is a regular meeting for reviewing the progress of the project and this 4th JCC meeting was very special meeting which was attended by the JICA mid-term review team. The JICA mid-term review team stayed in NIS more than one week, interviewed NIS counterparts and other concerned stakeholders, and prepared the Minutes of Mid-term Review.

1.2 Mr. Kuniaki Amatsu, Head of JICA Mid-term Review Team:

Mr. Kuniaki Amatsu, Head of the JICA mid-term review team, has expressed his sincere thanks for good cooperation and support from NIS counterparts and hard work of the review team that made the mid-term review successful. Through the reviewing activities, we found a very good progress and positive signal of achieving the project's objectives. However, there are still some challenges which need to overcome. Subsequently, Mr. Yoshida and Ms. Fusamae will make the presentations on the methodology of evaluation and evaluation results.

2. Presentation

2.1. Ryosuke Yoshida, Member of JICA Mid-term Evaluation Team

Mr. Ryosuke Yoshida briefly reported how to evaluate the project as follows:

- Step of reviewing: The team reviewed the related documents which were collected through questionnaires and interviewed Japanese experts, Cambodian C/Ps, and relevant stakeholders according to the JICA Project Evaluation Guidelines (June 2010). The review was conducted as the following processes: review the inputs and activities; verify the outputs; review the project purposes and the overall goals; compare the outputs and schedule with the Project Design Matrix and the Plan of Operation; and verify the project implementation processes. The team also discussed and set the objectively verifiable indicators as specific numerical number targets and/or qualitative ones on the PDM. The team will also provide its recommendations on the measures to be taken for the remaining project period. The mid-term review applies general description of the Five Evaluation Criteria, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The team conducted the review and the major evaluation questions are as follows:
 - A) Are the project objectives consistent with the needs of the beneficiaries, the development policies of the recipient country, and Japanese assistance policies?
 - B) Is the project purpose expected to be achieved?
 - C) Is the project implemented efficiently?
 - D) Does the project have positive/negative impacts?
 - E) Is the policy, organizational, and technical environment for sustainable project effects in place?
- Data collection methods and analysis: Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed. Data collection methods used for review were: document review, key informant interview, group interview, and direct observation.
- Constraints of the methods: Due to time constraints, information collection from Provincial Departments of Planning (PDPs) was limited to a minimal.

2.2. Ms. Rie Fusamae, Member of the Mid-term Evaluation Team, JICA

Ms Rie Fusamae presented briefly about the evaluation results as follows:

- Achievement of project outputs:
 - A) Output 1: NIS and provincial planning departments will be able to conduct planning and implementation of statistical surveys**
 - B) Output 2: NIS will be able to conduct data processing**
 - C) Output 3: NIS will be able to conduct analysis**
 - D) Output 4: NIS will be able to conduct dissemination**

- E) Output 5: NIS will be able to provide small area statistics**
- F) Output 6: PDPs will be able to tabulate and scrutinize data (SAS sub-project)**
- G) Output 7: NIS and PDPs will be able to keep institutional memory**
- H) Output 8: NIS and PDPs will be able to conduct coordination**

- Achievement of project purpose level: The performance of the project described in the above section means that the project is on the right track that NIS and PDPs will be able to implement the EC, the CIPS, the CIES, and other statistical activities. It is strongly expected that NIS will build its capacity furthermore by repeating similar exercises. More specifically, the CIPS, the CIES, and other statistical activities will be conducted in a more NIS-led manner. Output 8 of keeping the institutional memories is expected to sustain NIS's efforts of taking the lead of the process. At the provincial level, PDPs had had sufficient experience to implement the field operations of censuses/surveys and even in the first ever economic census in the country, they performed expected responsibilities without serious problems. However, their capacity development in SAS, which they had never engaged in, is advancing in a slow pace requiring more support than initially anticipated from ROs and AROs.
- Achievement level of overall goal: Overall Goal is Statistical results provided by NIS and PDPs will be utilized for planning and implementation of policies, plans and strategies of line ministries and provincial governments. Statistical data provided by NIS has been used by many ministries. NIS data has been used to monitor the following major policies: National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), MDGs monitoring, The ASEAN Framework. NIS carries out a census approximately every three year and also conducts a variety of surveys. The results of those surveys have been used mainly by government bodies. NIS stated that the results have been used in the national decentralization processes.

A positive signal is observed in this mid-term review mission. DG of NIS repeatedly emphasized on the significance of synergy between planning and statistic activities. The same message was confirmed in the meeting with Director General of Planning of the MoP. In this sense, the project has potential of achieving the overall goal.

- 1) Relevance: The project is highly relevant to development needs of Cambodia, development policy of the RGC as well as the cooperation policy of the Japanese Government. The RGC stresses in its National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) the importance of statistics in implementing priority policies. The EC 2011 is regarded as important means to effectively implement the RGC's private sector development policy and as well as to attract domestic and foreign investment. Population surveys including the CIPS 2013 are also given priority in order to implement the National Population Policy. The objectives of the project are also consistent with those of the Statistics Master Plan (SMP) 2008-2015 and The Project is also in line with Japan's assistance policy towards Cambodia, which gives priority to administrative capacity development including improvement of capacity in statistics.
- 2) Effectiveness: The effectiveness of the project appears promising given the good prospects for the achievement of the project purpose in light of the progress made and the largely smooth implementation process. Technical advice and support from JICA experts, NIS staff has enhanced their capacity required at each stage of: census/survey planning and implementation; data processing; data analysis and preparation of analytical report; and dissemination of the results. Some of them have also been trained under the project to help PDP develop their skills to carry out some small area statistics and have been providing support for them.
PDPs are capable to implement various censuses/surveys given their past experience including the EC2011. However, as far as their capacity in SAS is concerned, the amount of support provided by ROs/AROs and the slow development of skills of PDP staff suggest that there will be much to be done in the second half of the project
- 3) Efficiency: The team identified no major issues that may hamper the efficient implementation of the project. Inputs from both sides and the project activities

implemented have been largely appropriate and timely in light of the implementation progress and the achievement made so far. Inputs from the Japanese side have been kept to a minimum such expert dispatching is in accordance with the work plan, procurement of equipment for PDP, counterpart training in Cambodia and Japan, personnel allocation, and the fund contribution by RGC to EC2011 is 20% of the cost. The team identified a few issues undermining the efficient implementation of the project to some extent: require more time than in the original work plan for data cleaning and preparation of analytical reports on the EC and the work of ROs/AROs involved in support for PDPs regarding SAS has also turned out to be more than expected, requiring many follow-up visits after training and technical assistance in their preparation of provincial SAS reports.

4) Impact: The project is on the right track towards the achievement of the Overall Goal in the future. The team also recognized several impacts of the project. The prospects for the achievement of the Overall Goal are very good in terms of the use of NIS's statistical information by line ministries. It has been used to monitor the NSDP, the MDGs and the ASEAN framework. The mid-term evaluation team also identified the cases that statistics provided by NIS were used outside Cambodia. Some research institutes such as Institute of Developing Economies, Japan and Institute of Economic Research, Hitotsubashi University, Japan used NIS's statistics in their research papers. The impact of the EC2011 can be very extensive. The results can be used for improvement of the quality of national accounts, which can contribute to the development of effective industrial policy. The comprehensive establishment directory and a sampling frame have been prepared from the EC and will be used for future economic surveys. In addition, the first attempt to provide SAS by district, commune and villages could have a significant impact on decentralization. There is another positive impact that should be noted. Following the technical exchange program between NIS and Sri Lanka Department of Census and Statistics, NIS received a request from them for sharing of the manuals and reference materials used in the implementation of the EC 2011. Sri Lanka is preparing for the first economic census planned for 2014

5) Sustainability: Assessing sustainability is undertaken from (i) policy, (ii) organizational, (iii) financial and (iv) technical perspectives. In general, the project has made good efforts to ensure sustainability of the project's outputs and outcomes.

- Conclusion: The project has been implemented without significant delay and shown good performances despite some unexpected situations and slow progresses in carrying out some activities. NIS successfully completed the EC2011 which is the main factors for such achievement are attributable to NIS's accumulating experiences, good planning of each statistical survey, excellent coordination among concerned parties, and a great deal of support from JICA experts. As for the evaluation criteria, the project objectives remain to be highly relevant to the development needs of Cambodia and the RGC's development policy and also to the assistance policy of the Japanese Government. The project is on the right track towards the achievement of the Project Purpose and therefore the effectiveness of the project can be considered high at this stage. Although the team identified a few issues in the implementation process of the project, the inputs executed and the project activities undertaken are largely appropriate facilitating the efficient implementation of the project. Especially, the statistical information was used widely to monitor the major indicators of government development policy. However, by tackling some institutional issues, the sustainable effects will be ensured.

- Recommendations:

- A)** Ensuring strong ownership in the project management;
- B)** Proactive action for allocating the budget for statistical activities;
- C)** Facilitation of coordination at the provincial level;

- D) A support mechanism for PDPs;
- E) Low salary of civil servants shall be noted. Incentive is important for officers engaging the censuses and surveys. However, this issue cannot be solved in a short-term. It is expected that the Cambodian government will raise the government personnel salary reform in the medium and long-term plan.
- Lessons learnt: Under the Statistics Law of Cambodia, three censuses, that is, a Population Census, an Economic Census, and an Agriculture Census are to be conducted once in ten years respectively. For the smooth implementation of each census, adequate interval is required between censuses. Since NIS conducted the Population Census in 2008 and the Economic Census in 2011, the Agriculture Census should have been conducted in 2014 in order to avoid overlapping between Economic Census works and Agriculture Census works. Unfortunately, however, since NIS decided to implement the Agriculture Census in 2013 and assigned some Economic Census C/Ps also to the Agriculture Census, they couldn't finish writing the reports of the Economic Census on schedule. Although the team understands that this is an exceptional case at NIS, it teaches a lesson that schedule adjustments between two censuses are very important for the smooth implementation of census activities.

2.3. Exchanging opinions with Mid-term Review Team

- Mr. Kuniaki Amatsu:

Through the presentation by the member of the review team, some actions are proposed to be taken by NIS for the smooth implementation of the project and the proposed actions will be reported again in the last JCC meeting of the final evaluation study. As for the sustainability for implementing the censuses and surveys, the budgetary issue is mainly concerned. That is, the Cambodian government does not have sufficient financial capacity to conduct the censuses and surveys by itself even though the Cambodian government has increased its budget contribution from one census to another census.

- H.E. San Sy Than:

This project is very important for monitoring and evaluating the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP). NIS personnel gained lots of knowledge on data analysis that contributes greatly to monitoring and evaluating various development policies of the Cambodian government. He appreciates very much for supporting not only the central office but also the provincial offices which are deeply related to the Cambodian government policies such the de-concentration and decentralization policy. This project also contributes to the computation of National Account that assists in shortening the gap between Cambodia and other ASEAN countries in term of statistics information.

3. Signing Minute and Closing Session

At the end of the session, H.E. Mr. San Sy Than, Director General of NIS emphasized the important role of JICA Project which has been supporting NIS since 2005. In Phase I, it mainly supported the capacity building of statistical officers at central and provincial level through statistical training. In Phase II, it mainly supported the 2008 Population Census and the 2009 Establishment Listing. In Phase III, it has mainly been supporting the 2011 Economic Census. In addition, the small area statistics subproject, which provides PCs with peripherals and training for all of 24 Provincial Departments of Planning, could be a great contribution to the decentralization currently being promoted by the Cambodian Government.

Before closing the 4th Join Coordination Committee Meeting, Head of JICA Mid-term Review Team and Director General National Institute of Statistics signed on the Minute of Meetings of Mid-term Review for the Project on Improving Official Statistics in Cambodia Phase III. Then both sides expressed their commitment for assisting in achieving the successful completion of JICA Project.