

April 2007

Cambodian 2008 Population Census
Memo on Pilot Census Activities

Twenty EAs were selected for this exercise. It would have been better if EAs covering some whole villages had been selected for the pilot census for comparison, and all the procedures of a census were gone through. Nevertheless the pilot census held has brought out some important points which deserve attention at this stage.

The pilot census data have not yet been tabulated. Data entry is in progress. However a scrutiny of the filled in questionnaires for a few EAs showed that the field work has been carried out satisfactorily.

Lessons from the pilot census

A comparison of households estimated for each of the 20 EAs on the basis of mapping and delineation of EAs in 2006, and the actual number EAs found in the pilot census showed wide variations in most of the cases (Please see statement at Annex 1).

In order to verify this, three EAs among the 20, one each in Battambang (EA 02050202), Kampot (EA 07080101) and Kracheh (EA No. 10010102) was selected. Three teams each consisting of the original mapper of the EA and a NIS staff who did not carry out the pilot census enumeration in that EA, were sent to the EAs concerned on April 2-3 to spot check and come out with the reasons for the difference.

The result of this verification is as follows:

The NIS staff reported that in the EA of Kampot mentioned above, more households were found in the pilot census than was estimated at mapping stage due to lower estimation at mapping. He mentioned that a road which was a landmark was not marked on the EA map.

The UN consultant found in the Battambang EA that the number of households was actually only 33 as against 100 mentioned on the map. The EA boundary had to be re-drawn. In the Kracheh EA, the NIS staff found 176 households as against 100 households estimated at the mapping stage. In the pilot census this EA was split into two parts and one part containing 78 households was taken up for pilot census and this was the reason for the difference between the number of households in mapping and in the pilot census. He further reported that EAs in the village have to be re-delineated as the village contained 338 households as against 280 estimated at mapping stage. The reports of the three teams are available with the NIS director for reference.

The important point that emerges from these exercises is that the EA map and household estimation have to be re-verified so that the number of households indicated for each EA on the map will be close to what is actually in the field. This could be done with the assistance of the District planning staff under the supervision of province director of planning. It is pointed out in this connection that the province/district staff members have better local knowledge than the staff from the headquarters. Further they are going to be in charge of the census in the respective provinces.

To illustrate the need for estimation of households fairly correctly before hand we may consider the case of Battambang EA mentioned above: Two neighboring EAs have been estimated to have each about 100 households on the EA map. But actually one had 33 households and the other had the remaining. Such a situation could create confusion in the field at the time of the census with two enumerators having uneven work load. Though we could ask the supervisor to re-distribute the enumerators' work it would be better to avoid such a situation on a large scale. It should be more an exception than the rule. Proper distribution of blank census questionnaires to enumerators could also be jeopardized if we cannot reasonably assess the number of households in an EA prior to the census workload.

Population estimation at village level

One of the basic steps in planning and monitoring of a census is to have an estimation of population at village level based on the population in the last census which should be as close as possible to the population figures estimated at the mapping stage taking into account that the maps were prepared in 2006-2007.

According to the census office, the mapping/delineation of EAs which commenced in the middle of 2006 has been completed for 18 provinces out of 24 provinces. The mapping staff had filled-in a village schedule along with drawing of the EA sketch. This schedule gives the estimation of number of households in the village as well as in the EAs delineated. The Province Directors of Planning who would function as the Province census officers responsible for the census count in the provinces, have also furnished a list of villages in their respective provinces, by district and commune, with the estimated number of households of each village based probably on the village chief's record. No comparative study has been made so far by the census office between what was obtained in mapping and what was provided by the Province Directors to arrive at a reasonable estimate of households and population at village level.

As a test case, Sihanouk Ville was taken for making this comparison. The figures are given below:

Province	No. of Households according to					
	1998 Census		Province Director's Estimate (2005)		Mapping (2006)	
	Households	Population	Households	Population	Households	Population
Sihanouk Ville	27,351	149,921	31,694	169,028	29,353	157,026

The population as estimated at the mapping stage seems to be much lower and amounts to less than one per cent annual growth rate in Sihanouk Ville province during 1998-2006. As this is very low it is necessary for the Census office to compare the number of households and population village by village to make any necessary correction in consultation with the province director of Sihanoukville. There could be some valid reasons for the drop in the population over the years. This exercise has to be carried out in all provinces to arrive at one fairly reliable estimate of the number of households/ population in the village. This in turn will enable such estimation at the province level.

Review updated village data base (census frame) for census planning

The review of this activity reveals as already mentioned that first it is necessary to compare the two sources of data namely the list of villages with number of households provided by the province director has to be compared with the list based on mapping. The latter list is still being prepared for most of the provinces for which mapping has been completed to-date (18 provinces). Data processing division has to expedite this. The census planning section has to compare the two lists with the 1998 data base in the background and also consult province directors, and arrive at a reasonably fair estimate of population for the villages for monitoring. This a most important preliminary census activity which should be given priority and completed satisfactorily by July, 2007. While delineating the EA maps for the remaining six provinces the mapping staff may be asked to consult the province director of planning concerned.

Recommendations

1. A team of two senior officers of the planning and monitoring division of the census office (the NIS staff who are experienced in village data base) with the supervision of the NIS directors have to prepare lists of villages with reliable population estimates for each village in coordination with the cartography and data processing divisions.

For this purpose, they have to list for each province, the villages which show abnormal differences between Director's estimate and mapping estimate and refer it to province director. Each village in this list should be studied with available records and discussion with district/commune/village staff and if necessary by selective field visits, by province director assisted by RO/ARO concerned to arrive at a reasonably good estimate of population of the village. This exercise should be completed before the end of June 2007. The NIS staff of DP division has to complete the data entry of village data from the village schedules prepared during mapping and provide the Planning and monitoring division the village list with estimated population.

2. The EA demarcation with particular reference to the size of EA has also to be checked in each village. The Province Director of Planning who will function as the province census officer responsible for the census in the province and the district staff under him/her should be involved in EA delineation in view of his/her local knowledge and also to instill in them a sense of responsibility in mapping and census by associating them even at the early stage of mapping.

3. About 120 officials of MOP/NIS have been trained (including practical training) by the census office with the assistance of the consultant during the present consultancy. ROs/ AROs and TOTs will be selected from among these candidates. The trained staff has to study the manuals intensely, practice enumeration and also attend one or two refresher training in small batches before they are sent to provinces. The NIS nominated senior staff may please give TOTs training by asking them to take mock training sessions. Only the most suitable among them should be sent as trainers of trainers.

4. For estimating the printing of manuals/questionnaires/census forms/enumerators and supervisors' stationery, the number of enumerators and supervisors as well as number of households have to be properly estimated as mentioned earlier. This will help avoid any wastage in this regard. This activity has to be completed by July 2007.

Number of Households
According to Mapping 2006 and Pilot Census 27/02 to 13/03 2007

Province Name	EA No.	Urban(1)/Rural(2)	Estimated No. of households in Mapping	Actual No. of households found in Pilot Census	Population as per Pilot Census
Battambang	02080203 EA1	1	90	85	400
	02080106 EA1	2	110	119	593
	02050202 EA1	2	100	73	351
	02030605 EA1	1	100	103	474
Kampong Chnang	04010201 EA3	2	100	108	588
	04080202 EA2	2	95	93	411
	04030102 EA1	1	100	107	543
	04050101 EA4	2	120	110	544
Kampot	07011107 EA3	2	90	80	353
	07070306 EA3	2	70	60	238
	07080101 EA5	1	112	137	653
	07060701 EA1	2	107	106	400
Svay Rieng	20060205 EA1	1	107	110	493
	20060106 EA2	1	100	63	287
	20070901 EA1	2	99	101	398
	20070704 EA1	2	80	71	295
Krachech	10010102 EA2	1	100	78	350
	10030303 EA3	2	115	103	445
	10020105 EA4	1	105	66	305
	10040803 EA2	2	106	102	416
Total			2006	1875	8537