

## 5. Project Implementation Process

### 5-1. Project Implementation

The project activities have been implemented as planned without significant delay. The smooth implementation is attributable mainly to NIS's experience in carrying out statistical activities as well as good planning of the census/surveys supported by the project. Considerable efforts made by JICA experts in response to delays in some work on the EC 2011 have also contributed to a great extent.

The management of the project has been appropriate in terms of: coordination among concerned organizations (See the next section); management of the operational schedule; coordination between JICA experts; and commitment of the top management of NIS to the project. The operational schedule has been extremely well managed despite the fact that JICA experts stay in Cambodia only for a short-time in each visit and that C/P are sometimes not available in the office. Communication and coordination among JICA experts has also been good. This is very important for successful implementation of the project, given their short-term dispatches and the number of experts involved. The commitment of the DG to the project is another important factor for smooth implementation of the project.

There are, however, issues that should be noted for better implementation of the project in the rest of the project term. First of all, the DG's commitment is high. There is a person on the Cambodian side that oversees the whole process of the project implementation. However, the management of the project is left to JICA experts, which makes information sharing about overall project progress difficult and also could undermine a sense of ownership of the project on the Cambodian side. The NIS side is encouraged to lead the management of the project more. Secondly, C/P scatters across department and there are no well-established communication channels among them for the implementation of the project activities in each field (e.g. data processing, data analysis and dissemination of survey results). This situation prevents streamlining of communication among JICA experts and also has led to the situation that the former has to initiate the project activities. Thirdly, the team has a concern about the consequence of the change of implementation schedule of the Agricultural Census on the project. Some C/P of the project is participating in the Agricultural Census 2013 implementation, which should have been implemented in 2014, and this is one of the factors for slow progress in the preparation of analytical reports. This issue needs to be appropriately dealt with.

### 5-2. Coordination with Development Partners and Related Cambodian Authority

Since the scope of the project covers support for the implementation of a census and some surveys, for which cooperation and inputs from concerned organizations are required, appropriate coordination with them is critical for the successful implementation of the project. Coordination between NIS and ministries for each census/survey has been very effective and facilitated the smooth implementation of the census/survey and the use of the survey results by them. The main reason is the effectiveness of the RGC's coordination mechanisms such as

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NCC and CTC, as noted in the previous section (See 4-2. Achievement of Outputs). Through these committees, proper coordination has been done both at the top level and the working level.

The project and support of other development partners has also been well coordinated. Both United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and JICA extend supports to NIS in its implementation of the CIPS 2013. The responsibilities of both parties have been clearly defined and their activities carefully coordinated through dialogues in CIPS-CTC meetings on one hand, and in ad-hoc meetings among NIS and them as well as between the two on the other. The Chief Advisor for the project has been playing a significant role in this regard. Although there are some difficult issues with regard to harmonization of some standards between UNFPA and JICA, concerned people from their local offices and the Chief Advisor as well as JICA experts have been working hard to find the best possible solution in consultation with NIS. Coordination with other development partners has not been required as much so far, but information on activities of each development partner has been shared through meetings of the RGC's technical working group on statistical master plan and also through informal meetings between the Chief Advisor of the project and consultants for other project.

## 6. Evaluation Results

Based on information gathered through interview with key informants, documents and visits to some PDPs, the team assessed the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

### 6-1. 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. Planned action in this regard includes analysis of population data, its dissemination at the national and sub-national levels, and enhancement of data utilization.

The objectives of the project are also consistent with those of the Statistics Master Plan (SMP) 2008-2015, which includes the increased use of official statistics, and the delivery of timely, responsive and quality statistical services by NIS.

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.

### 6-2. 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.

Though the level of achievement of the Project Purpose against the set OVIs was not measured during the Review study, the Team confirmed that, by undergoing the EC 2011 processes with 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 EC 2011. 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.

### 6-3. 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. Each of JICA experts was dispatched on a short-term basis in accordance with the implementation plans for each census/survey, which is very cost-effective. Equipment procured is all necessary for the implementation of the project activities and was provided mostly for PDPs taking into consideration the equipment provided under the last two phases of the project. C/P training in Japan and technical exchange programmes in the third countries are deemed highly appropriate from the cost-effective as well as cost-benefit perspectives.

The Cambodian side has provided sufficient number of C/P, which has contributed to the smooth implementation of the project activities. The RGC also contributed 20% of the costs of the EC implementation. Meanwhile, it should be noted that a part of NIS counterpart personnel of the project does not allocate enough time for the project activities because of the implementation of Agricultural Census and this situation is a risk factor to hamper ensuring efficiency of the project to some extent under the given input level at the JICA side.

On the other hand, the team identified a few issues undermining the efficient implementation of the project to some extent. First of all, since some work, such as data cleaning and preparation of analytical reports on the EC, turned out to require more time than in the original work plan, as mentioned in the previous sections, the workload of JICA experts has increased to the level

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that substantial engagement from Japan is required. 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.

#### 6-4. 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. It will also be used for the formulation of a new NSDP scheduled for the next year. Although the uses of the EC results by line ministries have not yet been confirmed, the information is very likely to be utilized in policy development/implementation by line ministries, particularly the MIME and the MEF.

The awareness of the citizens about the importance of statistics, NIS's activities as well as Japanese cooperation on statistics in Cambodia has been raised as well through the EC campaign conducted across the country.

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<sup>1</sup>.

The impact of the EC 2011 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. Although the development of SAS in Cambodia will take some time, the attempt under the project to introduce SAS can be considered an important first step.

Synergies with support from other development partners are also expected. Since some of the C/P that has undergone the EC 2011 process are involved in the Agricultural Census 2013 supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and a few more development partners, their experience and skills will facilitate its effective implementation. In addition, the

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<sup>1</sup> Their research papers using data from the EC 2011 can be found at <http://scholar.qsensei.com/content/1qdtk7> and [http://gcoe.ier.hit-u.ac.jp/research/newsletters/pdf/newsletters\\_no6.pdf](http://gcoe.ier.hit-u.ac.jp/research/newsletters/pdf/newsletters_no6.pdf)

results of the EC will serve as valuable information in the formulation of their assistance strategy as well as individual projects. They have, in fact, already been used in the Investment Climate Assessment conducted by the World Bank, for example. The support of other development partners can promote the achievement of the Overall Goal, on the other hand: technical support for the implementation of the Agricultural Census will further strengthen NIS's technical capacity; and English training given under SIDA support will lead to improvement of the quality of NIS's reports.

There is another positive impact that should be noted. Following the technical exchange programme 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.

#### 6-5. 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.

As for policy sustainability, RGC enacted the Statistic Law in 2005, clearly stating that Population Census and Economic Census should be implemented every ten years and inter-ministerial coordination mechanism be established. NIS developed the SMP articulating what statistic censuses and surveys will be implemented toward 2015. The CIPS and CIES and agricultural census are included in SMP. Therefore, policy sustainability is supposed to be high at this moment.

As for organizational sustainability, as mentioned earlier in this report, the DG's commitment is high. This is a positive signal. However, there is person on the Cambodian side that oversees the whole process of the project implementation. However, the management of the project is left to JICA experts, which makes information sharing about overall project progress difficult and also could undermine a sense of ownership of the project on the Cambodian side. These are a potential risk factor for ensuring institutional sustainability.

As for technical sustainability, there is a concern about SAS sub-project (Output 6). The Project has been engaged in the sub-project for capacity development at the PDP level, under which NIS assigned ROs and AROs. As a result, PDP statistical official is experiencing a series of tasks relating to data processing, tabulations and scrutiny, and dissemination of the results through the training. To sustain these activities, NIS side is expected to develop an action plan on how to continue this capacity development framework (e.g. (i) articulating PDP training activities in the terms of reference of RO and AROs and (ii) conducting trainings for PDP) even



after the project completed in March 2015.

A number of manuals and reference documents have been prepared in order for NIS to keep institutional memory. The leaning by doing way of technical cooperation extended by JICA experts will also contribute to the sustainability.

As for financial sustainability, the team has a concern about the availability of financial resources to NIS to conduct censuses/surveys continuously. Census/survey implementation as well as printing of reports has relied heavily on funding from development partners, and financing plans for some scheduled surveys are not in place. Financing statistics appropriately is necessary to maintain knowledge and skills of individual staff as well as institutional knowhow. Secondly, the team is concerned whether appropriate staffing for each census/survey will be possible without POC, which some development partners do not cover any longer. The Cambodian side has been increasing the proportion of its funding censuses and surveys census by census, in particular, 10% in Population Census and 20% in Economic Census. However, these percentages are basically decided in the Cambodian side setting the appropriate funding level as the counterpart fund for the specific donor-funded project. Financing are not always budgeted linked with the SMP 2008-2015. This is a critical risk factor for financing censuses.

At the PDP level, sufficient budget for the maintenance of equipment provided under the project should be prepared.

## 7. Conclusion

### 7-1. Achievement of the project

The project has been implemented without significant delay and shown good performances despite some unexpected situations and slow progresses in carrying out some activities. The first half of the project period was dedicated mainly to the Cambodia's first economic census. NIS successfully completed the EC and the mid-term review team considers that 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.

In view of such good performances of the project, the team concludes that the project is likely to achieve the planned Outputs and achieve the Project Purpose by the end of the project period.

### 7-2. Evaluation by Five 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.

The team confirmed that statistical information provided by NIS has already been used to monitor major indicators for the RGC's development policy implementation. Thus it can be said that the prospects for the achievement of the Overall Goal is high. The users of the results of NIS's statistical surveys have already extended beyond the RGC. The impact of the project is very likely to expand further in the coming years.

A number of manuals and other reference materials prepared under the project as well as the learning by doing way of technical cooperation will facilitate the sustainability of the project effects. By tackling some institutional issues, the sustainable effects will be ensured.

## 8. Recommendations and Lesson Learned

### 8-1. Recommendations

Based on the above findings and evaluation results, the team would like to present the following recommendations:

#### (1) Ensuring strong ownership in the project management

As stated in the above, there is a person on the Cambodian side that oversees the whole process of the project implementation. However, the management of the project is left to JICA experts, which makes information sharing about overall project progress difficult and also could undermine a sense of ownership of the project on the Cambodian side. The NIS side is encouraged to lead the management of the project more.

#### (2) Proactive action for the budget for statistical activities

The technical capacity of NIS staff is being enhanced by undergoing statistical surveys with support from JICA experts. It is important for them to continuously engage themselves in statistical surveys in order to maintain the skills they gain under the project. However, the prospects for financing for future statistical surveys are uncertain. Although decision-making concerning allocation of the RGC's budget is beyond the control of NIS/MoP, the team expects NIS/ MoP to step up its efforts to obtain more funding from RGC, more specifically, (i) financing the necessary cost as capital investment and (ii) increasing amount of recurrent budget for census/statistical studies and activities on a year basis. These should be included in both multi-year and single year investment and budget frameworks. An action plan on how to finance statistic censuses and surveys should be presented as early as possible after the Review completed.

#### (3) Facilitation of coordination at the provincial level

Coordination at the central level through ad-hoc committees such as NCC and CTC as well as permanent platforms such as the SCC and the TWG has proven to be very effective. Coordination among concerned parties will continue to be imperative for the smooth and





successful implementation of statistical surveys, and therefore the abovementioned coordination mechanisms need to be sustained. At the same time, the effectiveness of coordination at the provincial level through the PCC is not very clear. Since one of the planned Output of the project is coordination for statistical activities both at the central and the provincial level, it is recommended that NIS/MoP ensure effective coordination at the provincial level as well. The proposed actions should be presented by NIS side in the final JCC meeting and/or the terminal evaluation study mission.

#### (4) A support mechanism for PDPs

PDPs are conducting SAS under the project. Since it is the first experience for them, it turned out to be a more demanding task than NIS had initially expected. Although it is expected that they will be able to tabulate and scrutinize statistical data from the 2008 Population Census and the 2009 Establishment Listing by the end of the project period, continuous supports from NIS will be necessary for them to sustain the skills they learn under the project and conduct SAS. NIS currently assists them through ROs and AROs, which are assigned for the specific period of time. Therefore it is recommended that NIS work out a sustainable support mechanism by the end of the project term. The proposed actions should be presented by NIS side in the final JCC meeting and/or the terminal evaluation study mission.

#### (5) Others

Apart from these matters, issue relating to salary level of civil servants should be noted. In the review meeting, it is mentioned "incentives" are needed for NIS official's continuous engagements in statistical censuses and surveys. This cannot be solved in the short-term. It is expected the Cambodian government address this issue in the medium- and long-term through implementing government personnel salary reform.

#### 8-2. Lessons learnt

NIS generally conducts a census every three year to focus on each census implementation. The implementation of the Agricultural Census has made it difficult for some C/P to allocate sufficient time to the project activities. Although the team understands that this is an exceptional case at NIS, it teaches a lesson that schedule adjustments between different statistical activities are very important for the smooth implementation of statistical activities.

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