

SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

REGIONAL MEETING OF HEADS OF PLANNING AND HEADS OF STATISTICS (HOPS)
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 22–26 July 2013)

Session 1: Progress Population and Housing Censuses, 2010 – 2013

(Document presented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This paper reviews key achievements, main challenges and recommendations to address the noted challenges under Objective 1 of the *Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS)* that *Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs)* undertake key statistical collections as scheduled. This paper focuses on 2 key outputs associated with population and housing censuses:
 - a. census plans and budgets to be prepared within 12 and 18 months prior to scheduled census date, and that all pre-enumeration activities are completed; and
 - b. census products to be completed and disseminated within 12–18 months after completion of enumeration.

Key outcomes

2. Most countries achieved Output 1 of the TYPSS Objective 1. All PICTs, except for Palau, have conducted a Population and Housing Census at least once in the 2010 round of censuses, and all countries and territories except for PNG and RMI managed to conduct their census at the scheduled time. Some countries (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga) conducted two censuses in the 2010 round, and a full-scale household listing recently conducted in Palau will provide a credible actual population count.

Challenges

3. Most countries struggled with allocating appropriate lead-up times, with undertaking a pilot census 12 months prior to census date, or undertaking a pilot census at all, and no country undertook a post-enumeration survey to gauge population coverage.
4. Realizing output 2 was very slow, with few countries managing to release basic census products less than 12 months after completing census enumeration (Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu), with only Samoa releasing a detailed census report, including a demographic analysis within 12 months of census taking.
5. Many factors contributed to this situation, as already discussed at length in our joint UNFPA-SPC Review of the 2010 census round (www.spc.int/prism) in May last year, with:
 - a. high staff turn-over across most Pacific island NSOs and new, inexperienced staff having to manage such a complex statistical collection;
 - b. lack of documentation of previous census processes; and
 - c. too many censuses and surveys running concurrently causing delays in SPC TA support in some countries.

Proposed Way Forward/Recommendations

6. Review and adopt key recommendations derived from last year's joint UNFPA-SPC Review of the 2010 census round. A planning meeting will be convened by Statistics for Development Division in the first half of 2014, to assist countries requiring technical assistance, to comprehensively plan and prepare for their census operations in 2015 (Kiribati, Palau) and 2016 (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga).

INTRODUCTION

1. National statistical as well as national population and housing census legislations provide the legal frameworks under which population censuses are undertaken in many PICTs. More recently at the regional level, Objective 1 of the Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS) provided additional policy framework for PICTs to undertake key statistical collections as scheduled which included population and housing censuses.
2. Under TYPSS Objective 1 for population and housing censuses, there are two specific outputs to guide all our collective efforts: the first output is for census plans and budgets to be prepared within 12 and 18 months prior to scheduled census date, and that all pre-enumeration activities are completed. The second output is for census products to be completed and disseminated within 12 to 18 months after completion of enumeration.
3. All SPC (and partner agencies) technical support in the area of population and housing census taking is being guided by these expected outputs.
4. This paper provides a summary of the achievements and challenges related to undertaking population and housing census since 2000. The paper concludes with a summary about recommended future directions in population and housing census taking in the Pacific, which are contained in the outcome document of the joint SPC-UNFPA Technical review workshop of the 2010 Round of Pacific Population and Housing Censuses, held in Noumea in May 2012 (<http://www.spc.int/prism/events>).
5. Many statistical outputs derived from population and housing censuses contribute towards realising the requirements of Pacific Plan 12.4, such as generating key statistics required to update key NMDI and MDG indicators needed for policy monitoring, tracking of development progress and regular reporting.

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS – POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES

6. Except for Palau, all PICTs have conducted a Population and Housing Census at least once in the 2010 round of censuses with some countries (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga) having conducted two censuses in the 2010 round. Palau very recently conducted a mini census.
7. Except for two countries (RMI and PNG), all countries/territories applied sufficient lead time for planning their census operations, thus realising output 1 of the TYPSS Objective 1.
8. Some countries have released basic census products less than 12 months after completing their census enumeration, with Samoa managing to release a detailed census report, including demographic analysis less than 12 months after field enumeration, with Niue, Tonga and Vanuatu managing this within 18 months, and Tuvalu expected to achieve this as well. This means, Output 2 of TYPSS Objective 1 has not yet been realised for all countries yet.
9. Only Samoa had successfully engaged with data users (parliamentarians and key sectors) with funding support for own government as well as UNFPA during the 2010 round of censuses. As noted above, Samoa had taken two censuses during this round.
10. While several countries (Samoa, Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands) have successfully used the scanning technology to process their census questionnaires, only two continued to use this newly acquired technology for processing other statistical collections (Vanuatu, Cook Islands).
11. The 2010 round of population and housing census review took place in April 2012 in collaboration with UNFPA in a regional workshop environment in Noumea.
12. The census review workshop was followed by FAO/UNFPA/SPC Workshop on integrating agriculture questions into 2020 round of population and housing censuses.
13. In the Pacific, a PDA was successfully tested for data capturing in Tuvalu November 2012. The experience will be discussed in another session later this week.

14. In the same Tuvalu census in November 2012, some agriculture questions which were presented by FAO in the May 2012 were integrated into the census questionnaire, the results are being processed now.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHALLENGES – POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES

15. Although many PICTs have been taking population censuses for many decades, challenges still remain given the high staff turnover which leads to completely new management and leadership teams in taking censuses in many countries. Lack of documentation of previous census processes further contributed to the challenges experienced during the census round. These and many additional challenges were discussed in the context of preparing well for the 2020 round of censuses during the April 2012 census review meeting in Noumea (details are contained in the Workshop Report). Some of the main challenges are summarised below:
- a. Roles and responsibilities of all partners need to be defined so that there is no confusion as to which partner is responsible for what role. The lack of such understanding resulted in requests for TA at very short notice that has put regional resources under repeated pressure in the last round of censuses.
 - b. Longer census lead time for design and planning will help with mobilizing domestic and international resources, and thus help develop realistic MOUs between countries and development partners both parties have a better chance to implement.
 - c. Census funding support continues to be a challenge for many countries, especially when there is limited internal budgetary support.
 - d. Given the high staff turnover, lack of skills and expertise in census management/leadership in general as well as specifically in the following areas continues to be a challenge in many countries:
 - New technologies (Scanning, GPS)
 - Pilot Census and fieldwork
 - Demography and data analysis
 - Report editing and publication standards.
 - Policy and national planning issues affecting Census
 - PES

Managing Census field enumeration / data collection

- e. This continues to be a major challenge in many countries leading to comprising the quality of census results – not only for the main census but also for pilot census (for some countries) as well as household listing operations
- f. In the absence of post enumeration surveys, it is difficult to assess and evaluate coverage errors in all censuses in the Pacific in the 2010 round of census.

Data processing / Tabulations

- g. This continues to be a challenge despite many NSO officials having attended CSPro training workshops during the last round of census.

Data analysis and report writing

- h. Census data analysis and report writing as well as various other census product development continues to be a challenge for many countries.

Data dissemination and documentation

- i. This phase of the census operation also continues to be a challenge for many countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2020 ROUND OF PACIFIC POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES

16. As already previously alluded to, these recommendation are derived from a joint SPC-UNFPA Technical review workshop of the 2010 Round of Pacific Population and Housing Censuses held in Noumea in May 2012, bringing together census commissioners from all PICs who undertook at census during the 2010 World round of censuses. The numbering follows the format adopted in Annex-A of the May 2012 workshop report.

General Recommendations:

1. In the lead-up to the 2020 Round of Population and Housing censuses, SPC to circulate the *Pacific Statistics Strategy* Technical Assistance Plan (subset related to Census), so countries are aware of how and from whom to request specific technical assistance.
2. Census funding support - SPC and UNFPA to:
 - Circulate a list of funding support (with criteria) available to NSOs
 - Develop a template for Census funding proposals – made available on PRISM.
 - Clarify with Statistics New Zealand their financial and technical support relationships with regard to Tokelau, Niue and the Cooks Island.
 - SPC to circulate the core set of Census questions and standardised sequencing of questions agreed by HOPS.
3. SPC and UNFPA to develop a regional plan and calendar of Census trainings and capacity building activities. Include potential funding support for NSO's to attend these activities
4. Training was specifically requested in the following areas:
 - New technologies (Scanning, GPS)
 - Pilot Census and fieldwork
 - Demography and data analysis
 - Report editing and publication standards.
 - Policy and national planning issues affecting Census
5. South-south cooperation - SPC to provide a list of NSO officers (including specialist subject areas), who are available to approach for South-South assistance.
6. SPC to write letter to national MOF in order to highlight importance of upcoming Census – prompted by updated calendar of national Census and survey events in PRISM.

Planning

7. SPC to facilitate development of key Census planning document templates – made available on PRISM.

Cartography and household listings

8. SPC to facilitate the development of a guideline for drawing EA boundaries – incorporating Fiji's experience as regional leaders in establishing EA boundaries.

Scanning

9. SPC to facilitate development of a generic checklist to assist NSOs to review correct technology use.

Managing Census field enumeration / data collection

10. SPC to facilitate development of a spot-check manual including a generic list of checks to be performed in the field.
11. SPC to update field-staff training manuals.

Data processing / Tabulations

12. SPC to facilitate the development of regional standard data entry tables based around core questions and question sequencing.
13. SPC and UNFPA to consider how to strengthen data processing TA capacity - by contracting and managing consultants or hiring additional SPC resources for blocks of time based on high intensity Census rounds.

Data analysis and report writing

14. SPC to facilitate development of guidelines on report editing and publication standards.
15. CARICOM to share its policy on Micro-data use and dissemination.
16. SPC to develop and share template Data User Agreements to NSOs.
17. SPC to finalise and disseminate the *Pacific Census Managers Guide*.

Data dissemination and documentation

18. SPC to create an audience model for targeting user groups
19. PSSC consider creating a TWG on data use and dissemination.

Experience from CARICOM states

20. SPC and the PSSC to arrange a technical seminar on population registries for inclusion in the next HOPS meeting.

Where to in 2020? Guidelines and program of engagement

21. Good practice census preparation report to be developed from this meeting by SPC/UNFPA.

DISCUSSION POINTS FOR HOPS

- a. Note TYPSS Objective 1 related outputs summarised in this paper, as well as key recommendations derived from last year's joint UNFPA-SPC Review of the 2010 census round.
- b. Recommend to HOPS to consider taking these recommendations into account in 2014 when planning for the 2020 round of censuses in the Pacific, at an initial planning meeting to be convened by SPC-SDD in the first half of 2014, to assist countries requiring technical assistance, to comprehensively plan and prepare for their census operations in 2015 (Kiribati, Palau) and 2016 (Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga).