

Brief 2: The 5th Population and Housing Census of Lao PDR

April 2022

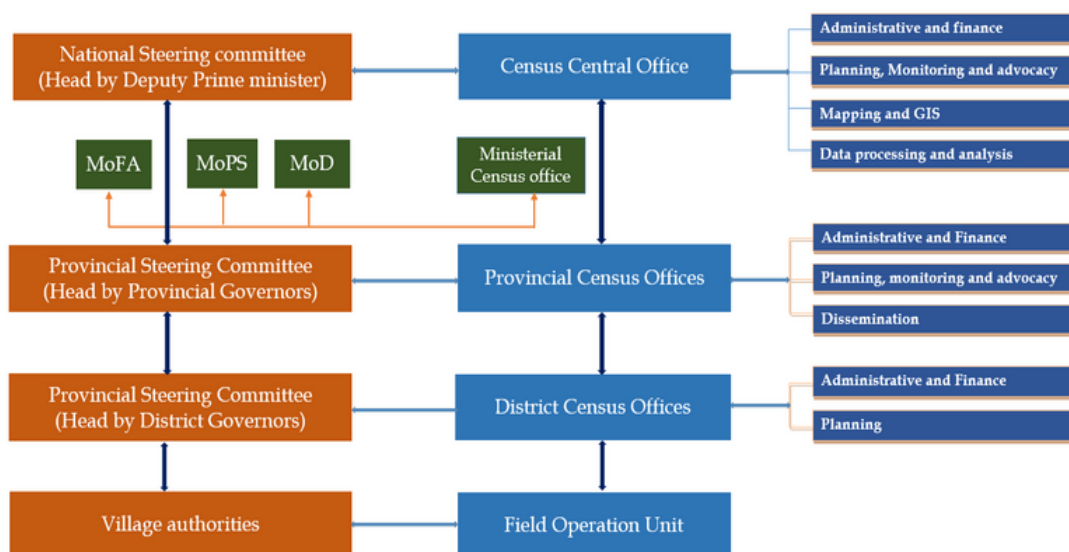
"Counting Everyone, Because Everyone Counts"

The Government of Lao PDR has conducted four population and housing censuses (PHCs) since 1985. The last PHC was conducted in March 2015. Census results have provided key statistics on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the Lao population. These statistics have proven essential for monitoring, evaluating, assessing and developing national social-economic development plans, national population and development policies, and managing population issues. The country is preparing for the next census to continue tracking population changes and updating information on the progress towards implementing the 9th five-year NSEDP 2021-2025, formulation of the five-year NSEDP 2026-2030 and the SDG 2030. The Fifth Lao Population and Housing Census is planned for March 2025, with census moment scheduled at midnight on the night of 1st to 2nd March 2025. Although this may seem like a long time in the future, it is not. A population and housing census is the Government's largest and most complex peacetime operation, requiring long and meticulously planned preparation. As such, the Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB), the Ministry of Planning and Investment, in close collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), has started preparing for the next census.

The organizational structure of the census comprises three administrative levels: 1) the National Steering Committee will be in charge of all aspects of the organization of the census at the national level, 2) the Provincial Steering Committee coordinates census activities at the provincial level and comprises work units such as administrative, finance, planning, monitoring and advocacy and research-analysis and dissemination, 3) the District Steering Committee is responsible for census activities at the district level and has work units related to administration, finance, planning and monitoring.



Census Management structure



Application of digital, innovative techniques for Lao PHC

A census provides a unique opportunity to introduce innovations into the country's statistical system. In the case of the 2025 PHC, two important innovations will be presented: a) The LSB has decided that for the 2025 census, it will make full use of digital questionnaires administered through tablets (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing - CAPI). All data gathered in the field will be transferred to the LSB census server through the internet. Data editing and checking will be completely automated, and the time-consuming data entry and manual checking of the paper questionnaires will no longer be required. The introduction of CAPI methodology in the census is expected to significantly increase the data quality and decrease the data handling time. b) Digital census maps of the enumeration areas will be produced and integrated into the digital questionnaires using global positioning system (GPS) capabilities. The preparation of digitalized maps for the census will be an important improvement over previous censuses. In the coming months, UNFPA will source technical experts to draw up strategic plans, detailed timelines and budgets for the CAPI and the digital maps.

Budget Estimate and Resources Required



Currently, the LSB with UNFPA's technical support is drawing up a detailed budget for the 2025 PHC. The April 2022 estimate is that the census will cost around US\$ 22.2 million. This amount can vary through the census process and, if necessary, be adapted. For instance, transport costs may change, the dollar exchange rate may vary, or activities may be adapted. The table below summarizes the census budget and indicates possible sources of funding:

Summary Provisional Budget (as of April 2022) 5th Lao PHC 2025

Budget Item	Total (USD)	Potential source of funding
1. Cost international personnel	2,277,260	UNFPA + Other donors
2. Human resource development LSB	72,402	UNFPA + Other donors
3. Census preparation including equipment	13,172,125	Government + UNFPA + Other donors
4. Census fieldwork (except training costs)	6,374,333	Government
5. Data processing	169,771	UNFPA + Other donors
6. Census products and results	144,047	UNFPA + Other donors
Total	22,209,938	

A large part of the equipment cost will be for purchasing tablets. Although these are expensive, one must consider that other expensive line items, such as printing paper questionnaires and data entry costs, will no longer be required. Moreover, the tablets can be used again for other statistical activities such as an agricultural census, household surveys, field updates of the GIS system, etc. For the 2015 PHC, the Government contributed 55% of the total cost, while development partners covered the rest. Also, for the 2025 census, the Government plans to cover a large part of all costs but recognizes that it will need substantial technical, in-kind, and financial support and partnerships to conduct a successful census.

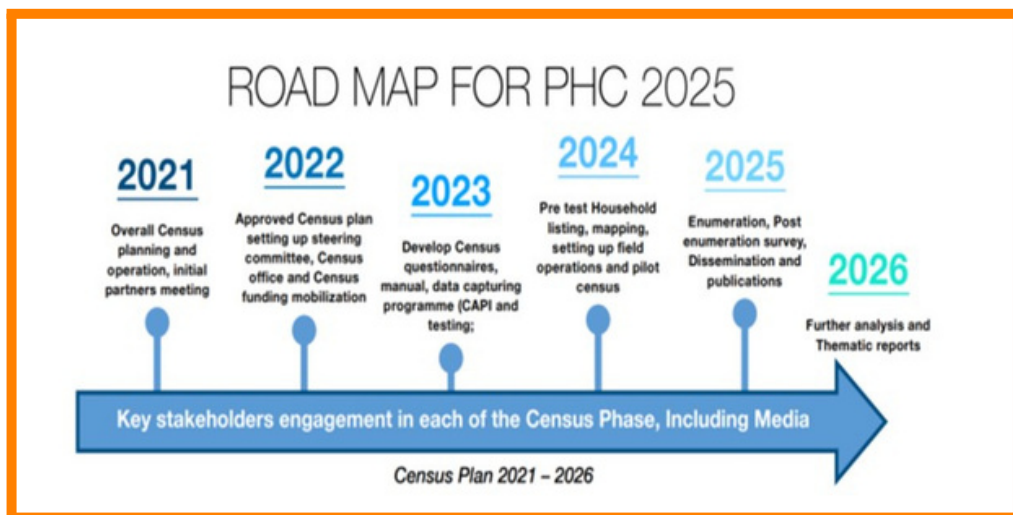
Principles of cooperation between the Government of Lao DPR and UNFPA

The Government of Lao PDR requested UNFPA to provide technical, logistic and financial support for the 2025 Population and Housing Census. Given its mandate to assist member countries in strengthening national capacities to collect, analyze and use population data, UNFPA has committed to supporting the LSB. The cooperation between UNFPA and the Government of Lao DPR will follow a number of basic principles. These principles are:

- **Cooperation with stakeholders:** A close collaboration with important stakeholders within the Government and amongst development partners will be maintained throughout the census process to brief and consult.
- **Capacity building and institutional development:** throughout the census process, emphasis will be placed on the capacity building of staff from the LSB in the various census fields. This will require training courses, study tours and on the job training.

- **Technical support:** UNFPA will provide a long-term expert in the field of census taking and short-term experts who will provide assistance in a number of key specialization areas. The basic principle of technical support will always involve a maximum transfer of knowledge from the expert to the staff of LSB. During the technical support, census stakeholders will be involved, among others, with the development of the questionnaires, the tabulation plan and the analytical reports.
- **Quality assurance:** UNFPA and LSB are committed to the highest standards of quality for the 2025 Lao PHC. UN Principles and Recommendations will be strictly followed. A number of actions will be taken to assess the coverage and content quality of the census. Quality issues will be monitored throughout the census process, and independent international observers will monitor the census fieldwork operation. Shortly after the census, a Post-Enumeration Survey (PES) will be organized to assess the coverage and content of the census.
- **Genderizing the census:** Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) approach will be incorporated in each phase and every output of the census. The Government of Lao DPR and UNFPA will ensure that gender realities of the population are captured adequately, both in the content and results of the census, as in the organization itself.

5th PHC Census Road map



Contact Us:

- Ms Thirakha Chanthalanouvong, Director General, Department of Social Statistics, Lao Statistics Bureau, Tel: +856 20 22242815, email: thirakha12@gmail.com
- Ms Mariam A. Khan, Representative UNFPA Lao PDR, Tel: +856 20 55508793, email: mkhan@unfpa.org
- Mr. Phonexay Sithirajvongsa, National Programme Analyst (M&E), UNFPA Lao PDR, Tel: +856 20 55061085, email: sithirajvongsa@unfpa.org