









Forwarding Armenian Statistics Through Twinning

AM09/ENP-PCA/TP/04

MISSION REPORT

on

AGRICULTURAL CENSUS

ACTIVITY D4.2 TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR AGRICULTURAL CENSUS

Mission carried out by Rolf Selander, Statistics Sweden

Armenia 22-24 September 2011

Version: 1ST draft







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List of Abbreviations

AC Agricultural Census
AMD Armenian Dram
BC Beneficiary Country
EU European Union
MS Member State

NSSRA National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia

PC Population and Housing Census RTA Resident Twinning Adviser

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

1. General comments

This mission report was prepared within the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (NSSRA). It was the third mission to be devoted to Development of methodology and preparation of Census of Agriculture within Component 4 of the EU Twinning project "Forwarding Armenian Statistics Through Twinning".

The objectives for the mission were:

To actively involve the regional statistical agencies, i.e. the Marz level, in the planning and further implementation of the Agricultural Census. This was done through a 2-day training workshop where all 11 regional agencies were be represented. Furthermore, the activity was used to update the roadmap for the component and to discuss outstanding issues concerning the Agricultural Census with the BC Experts.

The MS Expert would like to express his thanks to all officials and individuals met for the kind support and valuable information which he received during the stay in Armenia, and which highly facilitated the work his work.

This views and observations stated in this report are those of the MS Expert and do not necessarily correspond to the views of Statistics Sweden or Statistics Denmark.

2. Assessment and results

2.1 General about the workshop

The main goal with the workshop was to involve the regional statistical agencies (i.e., at Marz level) in the planning of the Agricultural Census (AC). The regional level will have an important role in most steps of the AC. Two persons from each Marz were participating in the workshop together with staff from NSSRA's central office's Agricultural Statistics Division.

The content of the workshop was divided in basically four sections:

The present situation in the planning of the AC

EU and other international experiences of AC

Experiences from the pilot PC in Armenia

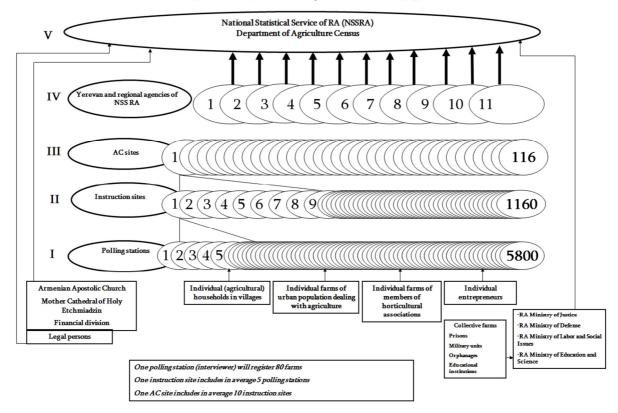
Group discussions concerning specific topics important for a successful AC

2.2 The present situation in the planning of the AC

The planning of the AC started in 2005. A census law was adopted on 27 November 2008 in which it was clarified that the AC is a responsibility for NSSRA and that collected data can only be used for statistical purposes. Assistance for planning of the AC is provided by USDA and from beginning of 2011 also by the on-going Twinning project.

The organisation chart below specifies the different responsibilities and tasks at regional and central level.

(5 levels of collection and summary of information on AC (I-V))



5,800 polling stations

All data collection will be done by 5,800 interviewers. Each interview will be documentated on paper. The quality will mainly be secured through the instructions and the education/training of the interviewers.

1,160 instruction sites

Here the paper questionnaires will be collected, and the instructor will do some more systematic quality checking of the results.

116 agricultural census sites

This is merely a logistical centre where the possible adjustments of plans will take place.

11 regional agencies of NSSRA (incl. Yerevan)

Another logistical centre where all the questionnaires will be collected and, finally, transported to the main office for the Agricultural Census in Yerevan.

Department of Agricultural Census

Here all data entry and final data validation will take place. Possible contact to the regional agencies (and further on to the previous levels in the organisation) if confirmation of single questionnaires is needed.

The work in the Twinning project is running in line with the plans.

Also a draft questionnaire exists. Basic agricultural questions will be included in the PC of Armenia which is carried through 12-21 October 2011, and these questions have been tested in a pilot PC, see section 2.4.

2.3 EU and other international experiences

The general features regarding Agricultural Censuses in the EU were presented by the MS Component leader. The rules for EU farm structure surveys, and thereby also AC, are found in the EU regulation 1166/2008. In particular, the presentation had focus on basic definitions, the way to set thresholds, acceptance of certain administrative data, reference period, data transmission and methodological report and all types of variables included.

In addition, the EU regulation 1200/2009 gives rules for how to apply the above mentioned regulation 1166/2008. A handbook which is continuously updated is a further complementary to the regulations. The presentation is included to this report as Annex D4.2.10.

Mr Michael Steiner from USDA presented agricultural censuses from a general international perspective and the possibilities to improve the agricultural statistics in Armenia by conducting an agricultural census, i.e. receive a base for a statistical farm register and introduce modern sample surveys. He also mentioned the United Nations Agricultural Statistics Initiative. The presentation is found in Annex D4.2.11.

2.4 Experiences from the pilot PC in Armenia

Presentations were given from representatives from Gegharkunik and Tavush regional statistical agencies. The pilot PC had been conducted in these Marzes.

One important experience was that many households were reluctant to give information about agricultural activities. There were several different reasons for this:

- Lack of knowledge about the land areas
- Lack of cadastre information
- Lack of clear definition on what should be reported
- Perceived risk that data could be used for tax purposes
- Perceived risk of missing financial support

The importance of clarifying to the respondents that data were only to be used for statistical purposes was stressed. Another issue was how to handle land which is belonging to households in one marz, but is (partly) located in another Marz.

In general, expectations are high to the outcome and the results of the AC because the communities presently are providing data to the regional statistical agencies using old methods in the form of so-called community books that are not fully reliable.

In his presentation (see section 2.3), Michael Steiner also included his conclusions from analysing with the answers from the pilot PC. He stressed the advantages of including an agricultural section in the pilot PC, but he also informed about potential problems with data consistency and outliers among the observations that might often be either caused by the questions being misunderstood or simple typing errors when processing the data. The reason for these problems must be further studied.

2.5 Group discussions concerning specific topics important for a successful AC

The discussions were organised in four groups where each group had to deal with a specific topic related to a successful AC. The topics were:

Pros and cons of having the group of agricultural questions in the PC How to make people and respondents aware of and positive to the AC? How to secure quality of the answers in the AC? How to deal with underreporting in the AC?

For the <u>first question</u> it was easy to find a number of pros of having the agricultural questions in the PC: to get an overall picture of the agricultural situation, possibilities to copy or reuse PC procedures and logistics and to improve the formulation of questions in the AC. One difficulty was mentioned on how to handle land that is not farmed at all or farmed by a person outside the household.

The most important conclusion concerning the <u>second question</u> of how to make people and respondents aware of the AC was to work for having trust by the respondents. A slogan for the AC could be "the AC will make your life easier". Also to have respectful persons involved in the promotion, and awareness of the difficulties among farmers were mentioned.

For the <u>third question</u> on how to secure a high quality of the answers, the need for precise concepts, definitions and instructions and testing activities was mentioned. Maybe it should be considered to introduce a calendar for the households to help memorize the actual crops etc.

Concerning the <u>forth question</u> on how to deal with underreporting to the AC, it was considered important with an optimal timing of the AC, to have clearly formulated questions, good training of staff and enumerators (people with knowledge about the local community and understanding of the confidentiality concepts etc.), making use of all advertising resources and make use of international experience on how to deal with underreporting.

The questions and results from the discussion are included in this report as Annex 4.2.6.

In general, the MS Expert's assessment is that the general knowledge and the awareness of the difficulties in conducting a successful AC is very good among the regional staff. The regional staff will from now on be continuously informed of the activities in the planning of the AC within the Twinning project.

2.6 Meeting with BC Project leader

A meeting was organised between the BC project leader, representatives for USDA and representatives for the Twinning project to discuss contacts with relevant ministries on budget issues for the AC. The plan is to have a contact with the Deputy Prime Minister, possibly in the week 14-18 November, and a meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture in December. The former meeting will be arranged by NSSRA, while the initiative for the latter will be taken jointly by USDA and EU, who will also provide a strategy document for the meeting.

2.7 Updating the road map for the Agricultural Census

The draft roadmap for the AC (previous report, Annex D2.5) was updated during the mission. The present plan is to conduct the interviews related to the AC in late 2012. See Annex D4.2.7.

2.8 Outline of the Terms of Reference for the next activity, D3

The next mission in this component, D.3 will deal with questionnaire, instructions, concepts and definitions (continuation of mission D.2) and also deal with implementation of the logistics for the AC. The Ministry of Agriculture, the regional agencies and relevant associations of farmers should be consulted. The following work would be useful before next mission:

- Translation of the PC pilot survey report into English;
- Listing in English at least the headings of the 66 instructions for the PC (later some of them that are assessed useful for the AC need full translation);
- Translation of tables from the PC pilot survey to English;
- NSSRA provides draft ideas of definitions and linked comments to them;
- NSSRA provides draft comments/instructions to the different sections of the AC questionnaire;
- NSSRA provides preliminary strategy for setting thresholds in the AC.

Instructions for enumerators used in the agricultural censuses in Serbia and Moldavia are made available by the MS Expert for comparison.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

The workshop was very successful. The participants from the regional offices were very much aware of what difficulties to expect in the AC and had a lot of ideas how to tackle them.

Combining this local and central knowledge and experience with international experience and also make best use of the experiences from the PC (including pilot PC) will provide a good base for the AC planning. It is recommended that the regional staff will be involved in the coming AC planning steps.

Annex 1 Terms of Reference

Activity D4.2 Training workshop for Agricultural Census

1. Purpose of activity

The purpose of the activity is to actively involve the regional statistical agencies, i.e. the Marz level, in the planning and further implementation of the Agricultural Census. This will be done through a 2-day training workshop where all regional offices will be represented. Furthermore, the activity will be used to update the roadmap and to discuss outstanding issues concerning the Agricultural Census with the BC Experts.

2. Expected output of the activity

The expected outputs of the activity are:

- o An update of the road map concerning the Agricultural Census;
- o Participation in the Training workshop for the regional statistical offices;
- o Presentation of the EU Regulation on Farm Structure Surveys (Agricultural Census);
- O An outline of the Terms of Reference for the next activity, D.3.

3. Project Participants

Mr. Gagik Ananyan, Member of State Council on Statistics (BC Component Leader)

Mr. Arsen Avagyan, Head of Agriculture Statistics Division

Mr. Rolf Selander, Senior Adviser, Statistics Sweden (MS Component Leader)

External Stakeholders taking part in the activity

Mr. Michael Steiner, Senior Advisor, US Department of Agriculture, International Programs Office Mr. Levon Gyulkasyan, Agricultural Specialist, US Department of Agriculture, Caucasus Agricultural Development Initiaive

Annex 2 Meeting Programme for MS Expert

4. Meeting Programme for MS Experts: 22-24 September 2011

Time	Place	Event	Purpose / detail
Thursday, 22 Sept.	Congress	Meeting with	To discuss the programme for the activity.
Morning	Hotel	RTA	
Afternoon	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader end Ex- perts	Current status of the component – developments since D.2. Updating of the road map. Preparation of activity D.3.
Friday, 23 Sept.	Ckhalovka Sevan	Training work- shop	Taking part in 2- day workshop for regional statistical offices. Presentation on EU Regulation on Farm Structure Surveys
Saturday, 24 Sept. Morning	Ckhalovka Sevan	Training work- shop	Taking part in 2-day workshop for regional statistical offices. Drawing up of conclusions with specific focus on regional implications.
Afternoon	NSSRA	Debriefing with BC Project Leader	Conclusions and recommendations. Possible revisions to the road map. Outline of the Terms of Reference for next activity D.3.

Annex 3 Persons met

- 1. Stepan Mnatsakanyan, NSSRA President
- 2. Gagik Ananyan, Member of State Council on Statistics
- 3. Thomas Bie, Resident Twinning Advisor at NSSRA
- 4. Ahanit Safyan, International statistical cooperation division head
- 5. Arsen Avagyan, Agriculture Statistics division head
- 6. Levon Davtyan, Head of Ararat Marz regional agency
- 7. Vrezh Manukyan, Head of Lori Marz regional agency
- 8. Gayane Makaryan, Armavir Marz regional agency, leading specialist
- 9. Vrezh Avetisyan, Head of Yerevan city regional agency
- 10. Rubik Hambartsumyan, Head of Lori Marz regional agency
- 11. Laura Grigoryan, NSSRA Agriculture statistics division, leading specialist
- 12. Georgi Torosyan, NSSRA Transport and communication division head
- 13. Ruzanna Vardanyan, NSSRA Agriculture statistics division, leading specialist
- 14. Ishkhan Sargsyan, Head of Armavir Marz regional agency
- 15. Karapet Deghoyan, NSSRA Gegharkhunik regional agency
- 16. Amalya Babajanyan, Syunik Marz regional agency
- 17. Vladimir Grigoryan, Head of Syunik Marz regional agency
- 18. Arushan Ghazaryan, Head of Vayots Dzor Regional agency
- 19. Vahram Muradyan, Ararat Marz agency, leading specialist
- 20. Anahit Margaryan, Shirak Marz regional agency
- 21. Levik Movsisyan, Head of Aragatsotn marz regional agency
- 22. Artak Hayrapetyan, Aragatsotn Marz regional agency, leading specialist
- 23. Vahagn Davtyan, Head of Kotayk Marz regional agency
- 24. Marine Stepanyan, Kotayk Marz regional agency
- 25. Vahe Chagharyan, NSSRA Agriculture statistics division, first class specialist
- 26. Vardan Arevshatyan, NSSRA Agriculture statistics leading specialist
- 27. Aram Kyosyan, NSSRA IT department leading specialist
- 28. Hakob Badalyan, Head of Gegharkunik Marz regional agency
- 29. Hovhannes Urumyan, NSSRA Shirak Marz regional agency, leading soeclist
- 30. Aida Achinyan, Head of Tavush Marz regional agency

Rolf Selander, Statistics of Sweden

Michael Steiner, Senior Advisor, US Department of Agriculture, expert Levon Gyulkasyan, US Department of Agriculture, agricultural specialist, Hasmik Shahbazyan, Municipality of Gegharkunik Gagik Stepanyan, Deputy Head of Gegharkunik Marz

Mass Media

Suren Barseghyan, Director of Geghama TV company Gayane Manukyan, journalist at STV 1 channel Vahram Voskanyan, operator at STV 1 channel Elina Melikyan, EU Newsletter Marina Ghukasyan EU Newsletter Tatevik Babayan EU Newsletter

Annex 4 Press release on training workshop 23-24 Sept. 2011











Press Release

Yerevan September 2011

EU Training on Agricultural Census in Armenia

Agriculture plays a major and significant role in the economy and society of Armenia, and establishing a complete statistical data system on the agricultural sector is an urgent and important task.

For this reason, the National Statistical Service of Republic of Armenia (NSSRA) plans for the implementation of an Agricultural Census for Armenia. The statistical results of the Agricultural Census will vastly improve the knowledge and information base for the further development of the agricultural sector.

To inform the public about the planning of the Agricultural Census, a training workshop is conducted 23-24 September, 2011 in Chkalovka village, Gegharkunik Marz within the framework of the European Union project "Forwarding Armenian Statistics Through Twinning".

In an Agricultural Census data is collected on agricultural lands, livestock, equipment and facilities, human and financial resources management, etc. The Agricultural Census will provide the basis for a statistical farm register in Armenia, thereby improving the on-going short term statistics. Moreover, the Agricultural Census will improve the quality of statistics on, among others, poverty, and food security.

The Law on the Agricultural Census was developed in co-operation with international experts, and adopted in 2008. The Law states that an Agricultural Census should be taken every 10 years. The possibility of using the infrastructure of the Population Census that will be taken in October 2011 makes 2012 the optimal time for carrying out the first Agricultural Census in Armenia.

When implementing the Agricultural Census it is considered of the highest importance to follow methodologies and concepts that are internationally recognized and recommended. To ensure this, the Agricultural Census will be implemented in co-operation with experts from European Union, US Department of Agriculture as well as UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

The training workshop is organized for the regional statistical agencies of NSSRA with additional participation of representatives from the Central Office of NSSRA, experts from Statistics Denmark, Statistics Sweden, and US Department of Agriculture. The training workshop is opened with a press meeting to outline the importance of the Agricultural Census and the current plans to the public.

The 2-year EU Twinning Project "Forwarding Armenian Statistics Through Twinning" focuses on harmonizing a range of Armenian statistics with European Union standards.

Press meeting:

Time 11:30; 23 September 2011

Location The Pyramides, Ckhalovka village, Gegharkunik Marz

Annex 5 Program for Training Workshop 23-24 Sept. 2011











Forwarding Armenian Statistics Through Twinning AM09/ENP-PCA/TP/04

Preparing for carrying out Agricultural Census in Armenia

Training workshop for Regional Statistical Offices 23-24 September 2011, The Pyramides, Ckhalovka village, Gegharkunik marz

Preliminary programme

Friday 23 September

11:00–11:30 Arrival and registration

11:30–13:00 Session 1 - Opening speeches

Stepan Mnatsakanyan: The importance of an Agricultural Census

Thomas Bie: The ENPI programme for Armenia

Gagik Ananyan: Current status and plans for the Agricultural Census

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00–15:30 Session 2 – Agricultural Census in an international perspective

Rolf Selander: The EU Regulation on Farm Structure Survey (Agr. Census)

Michael Steiner: International experiences and recommendations

Arsen Avagyan: Concepts and definitions

15:30–15:50 Coffee break

15:50–17:15 Session 3 – Experiences and other perspectives at Marz level

Aida Achinyan, Head of Tavush Regional Office

Hakob Badalyan, Head of Gegharkunik Regional Office

Plenary discussion

17:30-19:30 Social event

20:00 Official dinner

Saturday 24 September

08:00-09:00 Breakfast

09:00–10:45 Session 4 – The concrete methodology of the Agricultural Census of RA

Arsen Avagyan: Questionnaire and instructions

Group discussions and plenary session

10:45-11:15 Coffee break

11:10–13:00 Session 5 - Communication and net working

Gagik Ananyan: How to optimize the flow of communication?

Group discussions and plenary session

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00–15:00 Session 6 - Closure of work shop

Stepan Mnatsakanyan: Summary, conclusions and agreements

Annex 6 Questions for group discussions at the Training Workshop 23-24 Sept. 2011

The work shop participants were divided into four groups, each discussing one of the questions below.

Group 1

What are the pros and cons of having the questions on agriculture included in the Population and Housing Census?

- And how should we deal with the cons?

Pros:

- The PC provides a good basis for the AC
- Because of the separate questions on agriculture, farmers will feel "important"
- The agricultural questions will (mentally) prepare the farmers to the AC
- The logistics of the PC can be reused
- Experience from the PC should be used to improve procedures and formulation of questions

Cons:

• Some questions may be difficult to answer, in particular non-farmed land or land farmed by a person outside the household. This should be dealt with through precise and operational questions.

Group 2

How could we increase people's awareness of the importance of the agricultural census?

- And how do you think people should be informed about the agricultural census?
- People (and respondents) should have trust in the AC
- PR for the AC is important in order to have high quality results
- The AC should be promoted using mass media and modern technologies like text messages
- A slogan for the AC could be for example "The agricultural census will make your life easier"
- The promotion should be done by respectful persons
- The promotion should be respectful and show awareness of the general situation among farmers, including aspects such as use of fertilizers, pesticides, technologies, insurance issues, irrigation
- The AC should be of relevance to the single farmer
- Farmers should understand the importance the importance of the AC and the consequences of wrong answers

Group 3

What tools – broadly defined as software, interviewer training techniques, instructions, procedures, etc. - would be useful to ensure a good quality of the answers to the agricultural census?

- And how would you design these tools?
- Precise and operational concepts, definitions and instructions are of the highest importance
- Testing of questionnaire both field trials and pilot AC should be conducted
- The international experience should be used intensively
- Special tables should be developed to the interviewers
- A "calendar" could be considered to the farmers to help them keep track of the amount of crops etc. in order to enable the farmers to give correct answers
- PR should be used to increase the general public awareness

Group 4

What are the reasons for underreporting data to the agricultural census?

- And how would you address underreporting:
 - 1. How to avoid it?
 - 2. If it happens, how to reveal it?
- The questions of the AC should be formulated correct and precise
- The optimal timing of the AC should be considered, taking into account seasonality factors
- Training of staff and interviewers
- The interviewers should be people with knowledge about the local community
- The interviewers should understand and be able to explain about the confidentiality concept
- There should be intensive PR on the AC
- The international experience on how to handle underreporting should be used
- With single, concrete suspicion of underreporting, double-checks should be conducted.

Annex 7 Road map for Component D, Agricultural Census

Premisses:

- The Population Census (PC) is, as planned, implemented 12-21 October 2011
- The PC data entry and validation of data is, as planned, finished by 30 June 2012
- The financing of a pilot Agricultural Census (AC) secured by 30 March 2012
- The financing of the AC secured by 1 September 2012
- Infrastructure (computer hardware, staff recruitment procedures etc.) from PC can be used

Milestone / Activity (see footnote)	Deadline	Twinning Activity
Development of strategy (1) Involvement of regional agencies (1) Development and adoption of questionnaire (5)	March 2011, May 2012 September 2011 May 2011, Nov. 2011	D.1, D.2 D.4.2 D.2, D.3
Final (dynamic) budget for AC (7)	February 2012	
1 st field test of questionnaire (appr. 25 interviews)	February 2012	
Development of interviewer instructions (5) AC logistics and organisation (7) Development of PR campaign for AC 8) Population and thresholds	Nov. 2011, March 2012 Nov. 2011, March 2012 March 2012 March 2012	D.3, D.4 (training) D.3, D.4 (training) D.4 (training) D.4 (training)
2 nd field test of questionnaire (appr. 25 interviews)	April 2012	
Recruitment and staff instruction for Pilot AC	April 2012	
AC pilot census data collection/processing (13,14)	May 2012	
PC results; AC population and thresholds Evaluation of results from AC pilot census (14) Last adjustments of questionnaire and instructions	Aug. 2012 Aug. 2012 Aug. 2012	D.5 (study visit) D.5 (study visit) D.5 (study visit)
Recruitment and staff instruction for AC (16-18) AC data collection (19)	Oct. 2012 Nov. 2012 (4 weeks)	
Further work and evaluation of process	Nov. 2012	D.6
Data entry, validation of data etc. (20-26) Preliminary results (27) Final results and dissemination (30)	Dec. 2012- Mar. 2013 Summer 2013 Spring 2014	LL NGGDA (NGDA)

Numbers refer to Annex D1.7b of Mission Report from activity D1 (list of activities produced by NSSRA/USDA)

Activities (missions) within the Twinning period:

` '	O 1
March 2011	Assessment of situation
May 2011	Plan and reporting form
September 2011	Training workshop for regional agencies
November 2011	Implementation assistance
March 2012	Training (regional aspects)
August 2012	Study visit to Statistics Denmark
November 2012	Review of the implementation of the Twinning Component
	May 2011 September 2011 November 2011 March 2012 August 2012