

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BRIEF

**CENSUS AND STATISTICS
(2021 POPULATION CENSUS) ORDER**

INTRODUCTION

A At the meeting of the Executive Council on 6 October 2020, the Council ADVISED and the Chief Executive ORDERED that the Census and Statistics (2021 Population Census) Order, at **Annex A**, should be made under section 9 of the Census and Statistics Ordinance, to direct the Commissioner for Census and Statistics to take a population census for Hong Kong in 2021.

JUSTIFICATIONS

Objective

2. Since 1961, it has been an established practice in Hong Kong to conduct a population census every ten years and a population by-census in the middle of the intercensal period. The aim is to obtain up-to-date benchmark information on the socio-economic characteristics of the population for studying the direction and trend of population changes. The data provide inputs for making projections concerning population, household and labour force, as well as references for formulating various population-related policies.

3. Population censuses/by-censuses differ from other general household sample surveys in their sizable scale, which makes it feasible to provide statistics of high precision even for population sub-groups and small geographical areas. Such information is important to the Government for planning and policy formulation, as well as to the private sector and academia for business and research purposes.

Timeframe

4. The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) intends to take a population census from 23 June to 4 August 2021 which would last for 43 days. The 2021 Population Census (21C) is a large-scale and complex operation involving the enumeration of around 2.7 million households in Hong Kong. About nine-tenths of the households will be subject to simple enumeration to provide basic demographic information using a “Short Form” questionnaire, and about one-tenth of the households will be subject to more detailed enquiry on a broad range of demographic and socio-economic characteristics using a “Long Form” questionnaire.

Content

5. C&SD has drawn up the data topics to be covered by the 21C, taking into account views and suggestions put forward in extensive consultation exercise conducted between 2018 and 2020. The data topics cover a broad range of items on socio-economic characteristics. These data topics are generally not covered by other data sources and are relevant to meet users’ need. Compared with the 2016 Population By-census (16BC), one new data topic, i.e. “elderly persons requiring care”, has been added to support policy formulation and research studies on care services for the elderly and support for their carers in light of the ageing population. For the existing question on the main reason for a person not being available for work/not seeking jobs, an additional answer option will be included to cater for those persons whose main reason is to provide unpaid care to family members or others.

6. The issue of households living in subdivided units (SDUs) and industrial buildings has gained public attention in recent years. In the 21C, more efforts would be dedicated to buildings (including industrial buildings) with a large number of SDUs based on information obtained via administrative data and pre-census field visits conducted by C&SD staff. Besides, C&SD will introduce further measures to improve the success rate of enumeration of households living in SDUs and industrial buildings in the 21C, e.g. engaging organisations providing services to these households to help reach out to their clients, and enhancing training of census officers on

data collection related to SDUs and industrial buildings.

Collection Approach

7. Having considered the advancement of technology, changing lifestyle of Hong Kong people and the favourable take-up rate of the self-enumeration approach of the 2011 Population Census (11C) and 16BC, C&SD will adopt a multi-modal data collection approach in implementing the 21C, and collect data through different means including (i) online questionnaires (OQs), (ii) telephone interviews, and (iii) postal returns with pre-paid envelopes (for “Short Form” only). In particular, leveraging the use of technology in the data collection work of the 21C, more publicity efforts will be deployed to encourage respondents to respond to the questionnaires through online means.

8. In the event of the COVID-19 epidemic persisting, C&SD will adopt the following measures to reduce social contact as far as practicable –

- (a) issuing press releases and additional rounds of reminder letters to encourage respondents to provide data through the modes in (i) to (iii) set out in paragraph 7 above;
- (b) arranging census officers to deliver appeal letters (with the direct contact of the responsible census officer) to mail boxes of respondents without any face-to-face contacts to encourage them to provide data through telephone interview; and
- (c) suspending face-to-face interviews with respondents.

9. While C&SD will endeavour to minimise social contact between the census officers and respondents as far as possible, it is expected that some face-to-face interviews may still be required for some respondents. C&SD will maintain close liaison with the Department of Health (DH) and seek their advice on infection control measures as necessary. For example, upon DH’s advice, census officers will be required to wear surgical masks at all times, and will be provided with personal hygiene products. Use of mobile tablets for data entry would also be restricted to census officers rather than sharing with the respondents.

10. As in previous population censuses/by-censuses, C&SD will implement strict procedures to protect the privacy of all information on individual persons and households collected in the 21C. OQs will be processed on a secure platform meeting the government information security requirements. Data collected using mobile tablets will be encrypted and immediately deleted after transmission to the central system. Also, C&SD will implement a mobile device management system to remotely wipe out all data in a tablet in case it is lost. C&SD will only release statistics which will not reveal the identity of the individuals involved. All completed questionnaires (including electronic copies) containing data on individual persons and households will be destroyed not later than one year from the commencement date of the 21C, i.e. not later than 22 June 2022.

11. To protect the personal safety of census officers, protective gear will be provided as in previous population censuses/by-censuses. Proper guidelines on protection of health and personal safety will also be drawn up and conveyed to census officers during training sessions.

Other Options

12. The Census and Statistics (2021 Population Census) Order (the Order) is necessary to provide statutory backing for the conduct of the 21C which cannot be achieved through administrative means. There is no other option.

THE ORDER

13. The Order specifies the dates for taking the 21C (section 3), the persons, premises and vessels in respect of which particulars are to be obtained (section 3), the purpose of this census (section 4), persons who are required to give the requisite information (section 6), and the deadline for destroying the completed questionnaires (section 7). The Schedule to the Order specifies the matters in respect of which respondents are required to give particulars.

LEGISLATIVE TIMETABLE

14. The legislative timetable is as follows -

Publication in the Gazette	16 October 2020
Tabling at the Legislative Council (LegCo) for negative vetting	21 October 2020
Commencement	14 December 2020

IMPLICATIONS

15. The Order is in conformity with the Basic Law, including the provisions concerning human rights. Although the making of the Order has no productivity, environmental and family implications, the data collected in the 21C would provide essential information for policy formulation in various aspects and service planning. The financial, civil service, economic and gender implications are set out at **Annex B**. The Order has no sustainability implications other than those set out in the economic implications paragraph. The Order does not affect the binding effect of the Census and Statistics Ordinance.

B

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

16. Extensive consultation on the data topics, questioning approach and dissemination schedule of the 21C was conducted between 2018 and 2020. The consultation involved District Councils, advisory and statutory bodies, selected organisations including non-governmental organisations and trade and industrial organisations, relevant faculties/departments in academic institutions, and government bureaux and departments. C&SD briefed the LegCo Panel on Financial Affairs on 7 January 2019 on the planned approach for the 21C including the data topics. The Statistics Advisory Board was also consulted in May 2018 and May 2020 on the data collection approach and the enumeration of households living in SDUs.

17. The consulted parties put forward various suggestions on the data topics, for example, elderly persons requiring care, to be included in the 21C. They also supported the proposal of introducing a new thematic report on children to address society's increasing concerns on children-related issues. On dissemination schedule of the selected data topics, they noted that the release of three data topics (i.e. ability to read/write languages, floor area of accommodation and hours of work) would be advanced by nine months from November 2022 to February 2022 while the release of summary statistics on income would be deferred by four months and published together with detailed income statistics including the Gini coefficient via a thematic report in June 2022.

PUBLICITY

18. The Order will be published in the Gazette on 16 October 2020, and a press release will be issued on the same day. A spokesperson will be available to handle media enquiries.

19. With the assistance of the Information Services Department, C&SD will mount an extensive publicity campaign for the 21C by phases. Starting from mid-2020, C&SD has been launching promotional activities gradually to create and sustain public awareness of the 21C. C&SD will roll out more intensive publicity about two months before the commencement of the data collection period in June 2021. Where necessary, a press conference will be conducted in June/July 2021 to appeal for self-enumeration using OQs or postal returns, and publicise the 21C hotline for telephone interviews. Apart from traditional media (e.g. radio and television, outdoor advertising, etc.), there will be more publicity on the Internet, such as online advertising in various social media and uploading video clips to C&SD's website and YouTube. Special efforts will also be made to appeal for the support of selected groups, including youths, the elderly, persons of different races and persons living in SDUs through dedicated publicity programmes.

BACKGROUND

20. Population censuses were conducted in Hong Kong at ten-year intervals in 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011; and population by-censuses were conducted in 1966, 1976, 1986, 1996, 2006 and 2016 in between consecutive population censuses. Population censuses and by-censuses have developed into well-known and well-accepted projects over the years. There is also a recognised need in the community for the continuation of such projects to provide comprehensive and useful data on Hong Kong's population and households for various planning purposes.

ENQUIRIES

21. Enquiries in relation to the Order should be directed to Mr CHAU Kam-tim, Assistant Commissioner (Social), Census and Statistics Department at 2582 4801.

Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau
14 October 2020

Census and Statistics (2021 Population Census) Order

(Made by the Chief Executive in Council under section 9 of the Census and Statistics Ordinance (Cap. 316))

1. Commencement

This Order comes into operation on 14 December 2020.

2. Interpretation

In this Order—

2021 census (2021年普查) means a census of population referred to in section 3(1);

census reference moment (普查參考時刻) means 3 a.m. on 30 June 2021;

premises (處所) includes a staircase, a corridor and an unsheltered place;

vessel (船隻)—

- (a) means any description of vessel, whether or not it is used in navigation or constructed or adapted for use in navigation; and
- (b) includes a ship and a boat.

3. Census to be taken

(1) The Commissioner must take a census of population from 23 June 2021 to 4 August 2021 (both dates inclusive) to obtain particulars of—

- (a) persons dwelling in Hong Kong—
 - (i) including persons dwelling on board a vessel in Hong Kong other than an excluded vessel; but

- (ii) excluding any naval, military or air force personnel;

- (b) premises, other than a vessel, in Hong Kong that are occupied by any person referred to in paragraph (a) for dwelling purposes, and households in those premises; and

- (c) vessels on board of which persons referred to in paragraph (a)(i) dwell, and households on board those vessels.

(2) In this section—

excluded vessel (豁除船隻) means—

- (a) a vessel used by—

- (i) the Central People's Government;

- (ii) the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; or

- (iii) the government of a foreign state,

at the time when a census officer seeks access to the vessel; or

- (b) a warship.

4. Purpose of census

The purpose of the 2021 census is to obtain information on the demographic, social and economic characteristics of the population of Hong Kong at the time of the taking of the census.

5. Sampling methods may be used

The Commissioner may use sampling methods for the collection of information relating to the 2021 census.

6. Specified persons to give particulars of matters specified in Schedule

- (1) A specified person occupying any premises subject to census under section 3(1)(b) or dwelling on board any vessel subject to census under section 3(1)(c) must, for the purpose of the 2021 census, give to the Commissioner particulars of the matters specified in the Schedule in respect of—
- (a) the specified person, the premises or the vessel, and the household in those premises or on board that vessel; and
 - (b) any other person—
 - (i) who occupies the premises or dwells on board the vessel; and
 - (ii) who is—
 - (A) aged below 15 and under the specified person's guardianship; or
 - (B) unable to give those particulars by reason of sickness, disablement, absence or other sufficient cause.
- (2) In this section—
- specified person* (指明人士)—
- (a) means a person who has reached 15 years of age at the census reference moment; but
 - (b) excludes any naval, military or air force personnel.

7. Deadline for destroying completed schedules

The Commissioner must destroy all completed schedules collected or received by census officers for the 2021 census, and all copies of the schedules, not later than 22 June 2022.

Schedule

[s. 6]

Specified Matters

1. For persons

- (1) Whether an owner of the premises
- (2) Whether a member of the household
- (3) Relationship to other members of the household
- (4) Sex
- (5) Year and month of birth
- (6) Marital status
- (7) Usual accommodation in Hong Kong
- (8) Place of birth
- (9) Ethnicity
- (10) Nationality
- (11) Duration of residence in Hong Kong
- (12) Whether a Hong Kong permanent resident, Hong Kong non-permanent resident, visitor holding Two-way Permit from the Mainland or visitor holding other travel document
- (13) Number of months stayed in Hong Kong in the past 6 months
- (14) Expected number of months of stay in Hong Kong in the next 6 months
- (15) If staying, or expecting to stay, outside Hong Kong during any period in 2021, main reason for that
- (16) Whereabouts at the census reference moment

- (17) Place of residence 5 years ago
- (18) Type of housing 5 years ago
- (19) Usual language
- (20) Ability to speak other languages or dialects
- (21) Ability to read languages
- (22) Ability to write languages
- (23) Whether an elderly person requiring care
- (24) If an elderly person requiring care, the primary carer
- (25) School attendance
- (26) Educational attainment—
 - (a) highest level attended
 - (b) highest level completed
- (27) Type of school attended
- (28) Field of study
- (29) Place of study
- (30) Mode of transport to place of study
- (31) Economic activity status
- (32) Industry
- (33) Occupation
- (34) Place of work
- (35) Mode of transport to place of work
- (36) Hours of work in main employment
- (37) Earnings from main employment
- (38) Whether having other employment
- (39) Hours of work in all other employment
- (40) Earnings from all other employment

- (41) Other cash incomes

2. For households

- (1) Type of household
- (2) Household size
- (3) Household composition
- (4) Household income

3. For premises other than vessels

- (1) Type of premises
- (2) Type of accommodation
- (3) Whether usual or occasional residence
- (4) Number of households in premises
- (5) Number of persons in premises
- (6) Whether subdivided units
- (7) Number of living or dining rooms
- (8) Number of kitchens
- (9) Number of bathrooms or toilets
- (10) Number of bedrooms
- (11) Number of other rooms
- (12) Number of cocklofts
- (13) Number of bedspaces
- (14) Saleable area of accommodation
- (15) Tenure of accommodation
- (16) Mortgage payment
- (17) Outstanding mortgage period or loan period
- (18) Rent

(19) Rates, Government rent and management fee

4. For vessels

- (1) Type of vessel
- (2) Whether usual or occasional residence
- (3) Number of households on board vessel
- (4) Number of persons on board vessel

Clerk to the Executive Council

COUNCIL CHAMBER

2020

Explanatory Note

This Order directs the Commissioner for Census and Statistics to take a census of population of Hong Kong in 2021 to obtain particulars relating to persons, premises, vessels and other matters described in the Order.

Financial, Civil Service, Economic and Gender Implications

Financial and civil service implications

In March 2019, the Legislative Council Finance Committee approved an amount of \$202.68 million for the acquisition of information technology (IT) equipment and services for the 2021 Population Census (21C). Separately, an additional time-limited funding of \$668.69 million has been allocated to the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) over a five-year period from 2019-20 to 2023-24 for employing additional manpower resources and setting up an office for conducting the 21C.

2. A project team has been set up comprising mainly statistical, administrative, clerical and field staff, and IT professionals. The additional manpower required in the project team varies in different stages of the project, with the peak of around 298 civil service and non-civil service contract (NCSC) posts¹ to be required shortly before and during the census period. The majority of the additional manpower will be in the form of NCSC posts and there are also 119 additional civil service posts approved in accordance with the established mechanism. These additional posts are time-limited in nature and will lapse corresponding to the completion of the relevant stages of the census exercise. Apart from the project team, C&SD will recruit some 13 000 to 15 000 temporary field workers, mainly secondary/primary school teachers and post-secondary students during the census period.

¹ This figure includes time-limited civil service and NCSC posts, but does not include temporary field workers, daily-rated staff, T-contract IT staff or agency workers.

Economic implications

3. The 21C will provide useful population and household related information to the Government, the academics and the business community for planning, research and formulating business strategies, which will benefit Hong Kong as a whole.

Gender implications

4. The 21C will enable the collection and analysis of gender related data.