

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1083)

Head: (26) Census and Statistics Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (2) Social Statistics
Controlling Officer: Commissioner for Census and Statistics (Leo YU)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury

Question:

The Budget shows that the Census and Statistics Department will conduct a population census throughout the whole year of 2026. This project requires a provision of \$151,300,000 in 2026-27, and the provision for 2026-27 represents an increase of \$50.8 million (21.2%) over the revised estimate for 2025-26. This is mainly to cover the additional provision required for conducting the 2026 Population Census, as well as other operating expenses, etc. In this regard, please inform the Council:

- (1) How many contract staff will be hired for the population census? What are the related recruitment and training expenses?
- (2) The 2026 Population Census will be conducted from January to December 2026. Households selected by sampling will receive notification letters and may provide information through online questionnaires, the census hotline, or face-to-face interviews. What are the Government's estimated expenditures on the aforementioned online questionnaire system, census hotline, and face-to-face interviews?
- (3) What was the response rate for the online questionnaire in the previous 2021 Population Census? How many households does the Census and Statistics Department expect to choose the online questionnaire method to submit information in the 2026 Population Census, and how much estimated expenditure is expected to be saved as a result?

Asked by: Hon HUNG Kam-in (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)

Reply:

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) has hired 246 non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff for data collection and statistics compilation work for the 2026 Population Census (26C). The costs related to recruitment and training of these staff are absorbed by the existing manpower and resources of C&SD with no itemised breakdown.

Among the provision of \$151.3 million in 2026-27, about \$54 million is for hiring of NCSC survey interviewers to collect data through Census Hotline and face-to-face interviews. The total expenses on information technology equipment and services related to Online Questionnaire (OQ) in 2026-27 is about \$10 million, which had been separately acquired under Head 710 – Computerisation (approved in the meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee on 19 January 2024).

About 40% of households submitted their information through OQ in the 2021 Population Census, and a similar figure is expected for the 26C. In planning for the 26C, C&SD has already incorporated the expected usage level of OQ as one of the preconditions for the overall resource planning, and hence there is no separate assessment on the saving.

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