Background

Data production in the Philippines is highly decentralized which means that various agencies are conducting data collection and processing activities in accordance with their respective mandates.

To achieve quality and harmony in the conduct of these statistical activities, the NSCB was created under Executive Order No. 121 in 1987 to serve as the highest policy-making and coordinating body in the government on statistical matters. One of the coordinating mechanisms that the NSCB has been implementing is the Statistical Survey Review and Clearance System.

Concept, Purpose and Objectives

- *What is the Statistical Survey Review and Clearance System?*

The Statistical Survey Review and Clearance System (SSRCS) is a mechanism instituted by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) which involves **the process of evaluating the design and instruments of statistical surveys or censuses sponsored and/or to be conducted by government agencies, including government corporations at the national and/or sub-national level.**

- *What is the legal basis of the SSRCS?*

In the exercise of its function as provided under E.O. 121, the NSCB passed **Resolution No. 4-88** requiring the proponent agencies to submit survey forms/questionnaires prior to their use in the conduct of statistical surveys/censuses.

However, in August 1995, NSCB **Memorandum Circular No. 4-95** was issued providing a new set of guidelines for the implementation of the SSRCS.

- *What are the objectives of the SSRCS?*

The SSRCS was formulated to ensure conformity with standard definitions, concepts and classifications, and consequently, the reliability, comparability and accuracy of statistics generated out of said surveys and/or censuses. **Its specific objectives are: (a) to ensure sound design for data collection; (b) to minimize the burden placed upon respondents; (c) to effect economy in statistical data collection; (d) to eliminate unnecessary duplication of statistical data collection; and (e) to achieve better coordination of government statistical activities.**

Scope and Coverage

- *What is a statistical survey? a census?*

A **survey** refers to data collection activity in which the primary concern is to compile data or statistics on a particular class, segment, activity, or geographic area (sample) of a bigger population. It is a method of collecting information about the population in which direct contact is made with the units of study, e.g., individuals, organizations, communities, etc., through such systematic means as statistical survey forms, questionnaires and interview schedules. A **census** is a process of complete enumeration of which every unit of the defined population being studied is included.

- *What aspects of a survey or a census are being reviewed by the NSCB?*

The process of evaluating a survey and/or census proposal dwells primarily on the following aspects: **(1) the need for the conduct of the survey/census** - Will the need for the data justify the conduct of the survey, or are there other more cost-effective means of generating the data?; **(2) unnecessary duplication** - To minimize the conflicting data and rationalize allocation of statistical responsibilities among government agencies, the next thing being considered is whether there is an existing similar activity generating the same data; **(3) sampling design** - Is the design appropriate and efficient to come out with the desired level of reliability and level of disaggregation within the funding availability?; **(4) forms content and table format** - Are the questions relevant to the objectives of the survey/census? Does it satisfy the prescribed standard statistical concepts, definitions and methodologies? Will the table formats provide the desired information? Are these burdensome to the respondents?; **(5) operational plan** - This includes the cost estimates, survey operations, etc.; and **(6) statistical outputs** - Are the presentations effective enough to meet the objectives of the survey, to suit the needs of data users and to impart the relevance of the survey results?

- *Which statistical surveys/censuses are covered by the SSRCS?*

All statistical surveys/censuses which are sponsored and/or conducted by government agencies, including government corporations and academic institutions, are covered by the SSRCS regardless of the sample size and funding source. The system is intended to be implemented nationwide and its institutionalization has been started in seven regions (Regions I, V, VI, VIII, IX, XI and XII) where there are NSCB units.

Those statistical surveys which are sponsored and conducted by private offices and non-government organizations (NGOs) are not covered by the review process. However, surveys contracted out by government agencies to private organizations and NGOs are covered by the system.

Those surveys which are conducted by government agencies for their internal use, i.e. survey results will neither be published nor released to the general public, are exempted from clearance.

Procedures

- *How and when should a survey proponent apply for a clearance?*

The NSCB requires survey proponents to secure clearance at least forty-five (45) days before the scheduled conduct of the survey to give the agencies ample time for the incorporation of NSCB recommendations. **The application for clearance should be supported by the following documents:**

*** Statistical Survey Notification Form (SSRCS Form 1)**
*** Survey questionnaires**

*** Enumerator's Manual/Manual of Instructions**
*** Table formats**
*** Pre-test results, if any**
*** Previous survey results, if any**
*** Survey proposal, if any**
*** Any additional information not stated in SSRCS Form 1**

All documents should be submitted to:

The Secretary General
National Statistical Coordination Board
2nd Floor, Midland Buendia Bldg.
403 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City

- *What actions are taken by the NSCB on the surveys submitted?*

The NSCB shall process survey clearance applications **within a period of fifteen (15) working days from receipt of the complete documents.** The NSCB shall review the various aspects of the survey/census using SSRCS Form 2 (Evaluation Form). The Technical Committee on Survey Design which is composed of professionals in survey design provides technical advice in the preparation and development of the survey designs for government censuses and sample surveys.

The NSCB shall then transmit to the proponent the decision as documented in SSRCS Form 3 (NSCB Action Notification Form), together with recommendations aimed to further improve the system of data collection. If approved, the clearance number and the expiry date are indicated. If disapproved, the reason for such is also indicated.

- *What period is covered by the clearance?*

An expiration date is assigned for every clearance number given which is usually one year from date of application. Regular surveys which are not often revised are given clearance numbers valid up to three (3) years. If the clearance number is about to expire but the activity will be repeated in the following year/s, the proponent must apply again for renewal of clearance, following the same process as in the previous one.

For irregular or adhoc surveys, the clearance number shall be valid until six months after the proposed schedule of enumeration.

- *How does the public know about the surveys that have been cleared?*

The NSCB clearance number together with the expiration date should be printed on the upper right corner of the first page of the questionnaire to be used in the survey. Likewise, the NSCB issues press releases informing the general public of the surveys which have been cleared as a way of promoting and seeking the cooperation and support of the respondents.

For any inquiries or clarifications, please contact us at any of the following numbers:

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*Primer on Statistical Survey Review and Clearance System**

National Statistical Coordination Board
http://www.nscb.gov.ph

* As of February 1999