

# Conducting the 2020 Population Census Under the COVID-19 Pandemic and Lessons Learned Therefrom

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme



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# Population Census of Japan

- Conducted once every five years in general since 1920
- Major survey is conducted in Christian years ending with "0," and simplified survey is conducted in Christian years ending with "5."
- The 2020 Population Census was the 21st survey.



# Milestone of 100-year history for the Population Census



- Preparation of logo and brochure
- Sale of 100th anniversary commemorative postage stamp
- Various events were scheduled.
  - Major events were all canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



# Outline of conducting the 2020 Population Census

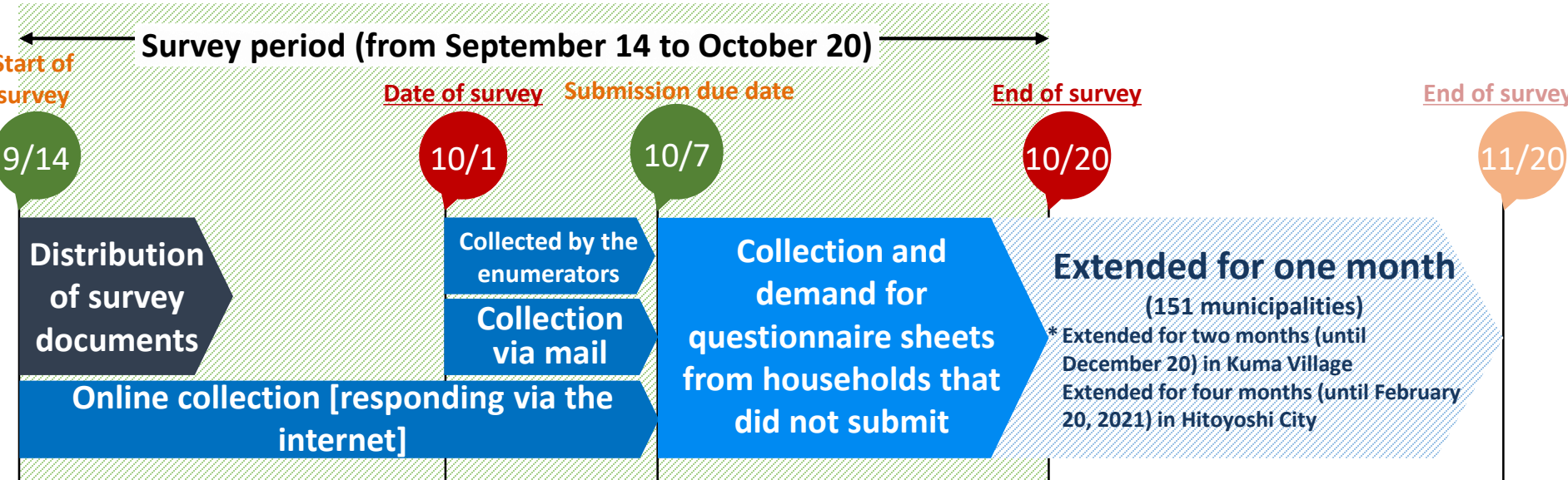
**Date of the survey:** As of October 1, 2020, 12:00 a.m.

**Target of the survey:** All people living in Japan as of October 1, 2020 (obliged to respond)

**Survey method:** Enumerator visits all households, and distributes the set of documents including the questionnaire sheet after the interview.  
Questionnaire sheets are collected online (responding via the internet), by mail, or by enumerators

**Survey period:** From September 14 to October 20, 2020 (due date for the submission of questionnaire sheet was October 7)  
Survey period was extended in 153 municipalities because of COVID-19 and damage from torrential rain in July.

- Extended for a month (until November 20) in 151 municipalities
- Extended for two months (until December 20) in Kuma Village
  - \* Start of the distribution of survey documents was postponed to November 14
- Extended for four months (until February 20, 2021) in Hitoyoshi City
  - \* Start of the distribution of survey documents was postponed to January 14, 2021



# Release schedule for the 2020 Population Census

	2021 (2016)												2022 (2017)											
	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
<b>2020 Population Census (prior)</b>	● Preliminary Counts of the Population and Households										● Basic Complete Tabulation on Population and Households													● Detailed Sample Tabulation
<b>2020 Population Census (after the alteration)</b>																								● Detailed Sample Tabulation
<b>[Reference] 2015 Population Census</b>	● Preliminary Counts of the Population and Households										● Preliminary Sample Tabulation*													● Detailed Sample Tabulation

As for the preliminary tabulation, postponement for four months in accordance with extension of survey and examination periods and changes in due date for submitting summary sheets

As for final tabulation (population results), postponed for two months

The final release will be the same period as the 2015 Census

\* Not being tabulated for the 2020 Census due to abolishment/allocation to different tabulation categories.

# Introduction of non-contact survey method

In order to prevent the occurrence and spread of the infection of COVID-19, a non-contact survey method, where the members of households and enumerators do not meet in-person (distribution of survey documents and collection of questionnaire sheets), was introduced mainly in urban areas according to the situations of the region.

\* Also results in the simplification of the clerical work by enumerators

## Distribution of survey documents

Under normal conditions, response to the survey is asked and the questionnaire sheet is delivered after interviewing the member of the household and giving an explanation.



Survey documents are distributed without going through an interview with the household, by giving a brief explanation through intercoms and using mailboxes, etc.



\* Enumerators thoroughly implement measures to prevent infection and heat stroke, such as checking body temperature and sterilizing hands and fingers, and wear masks when visiting households (secure physical distance when it is necessary to meet in person)

## Collection of questionnaire sheet

Active utilization of internet response is promoted. When it is difficult to make responses via the internet, ask for sending the questionnaire sheet by post through public relations activities to avoid contact with enumerators.



Develop public relations activities so as to avoid contacts between enumerators and the members of households as far as possible.



# Survey method for the 2020 Population Census

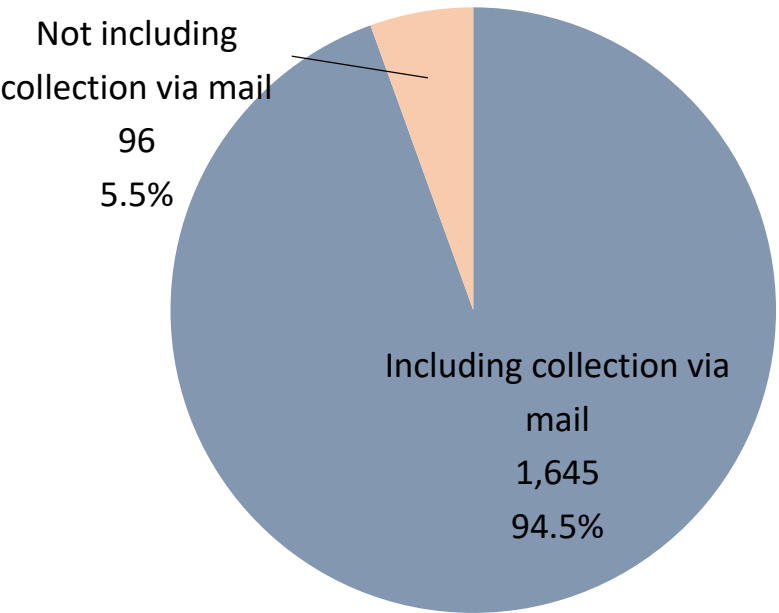
## Selection of collection via mail

- Methods were selected by each municipality, and there were 1,645 municipalities (94.5%) that selected "including collection via mail." There were 96 municipalities (5.5%) that selected "not including collection via mail."
- \* Following the expansion of COVID-19 infection, 73 municipalities among the 169 that initially selected "not including collection via mail" changed to "including collection via mail."

## Selection of non-contact survey method

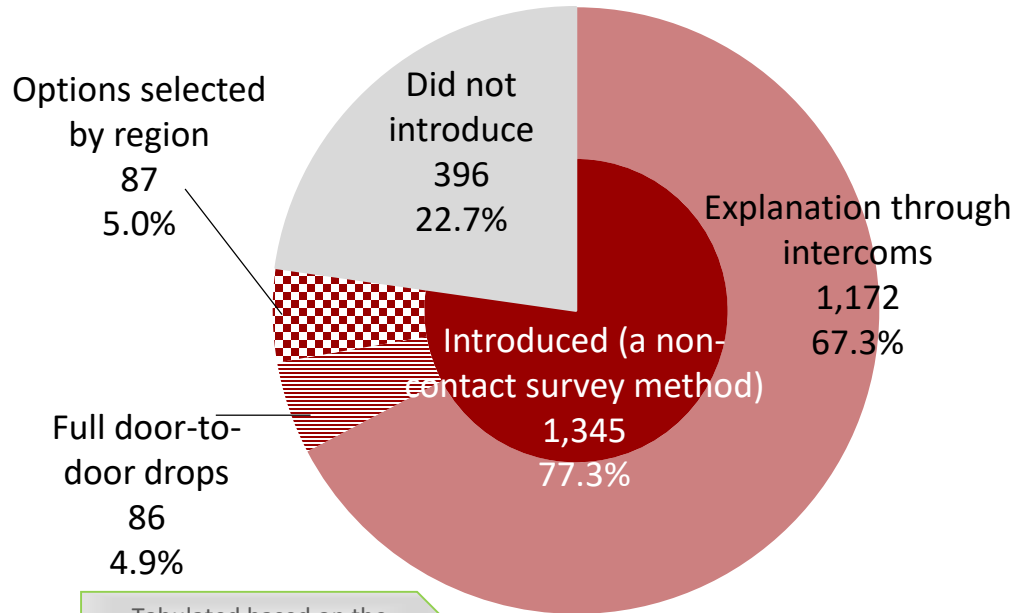
- There were 1,345 municipalities (77.3%) that introduced the non-contact survey method, and 396 municipalities (22.7%) that did not introduce it.
- As for the non-contact survey method, there were 1,172 municipalities (67.3%) that selected explanation through intercoms, 86 municipalities (4.9%) that selected full door-to-door drops, and 87 municipalities (5.0%) where options were selected by region.

Selection of collection via mail; municipalities



Summarized based on reports from prefectures

Selection of non-contact survey method; municipalities



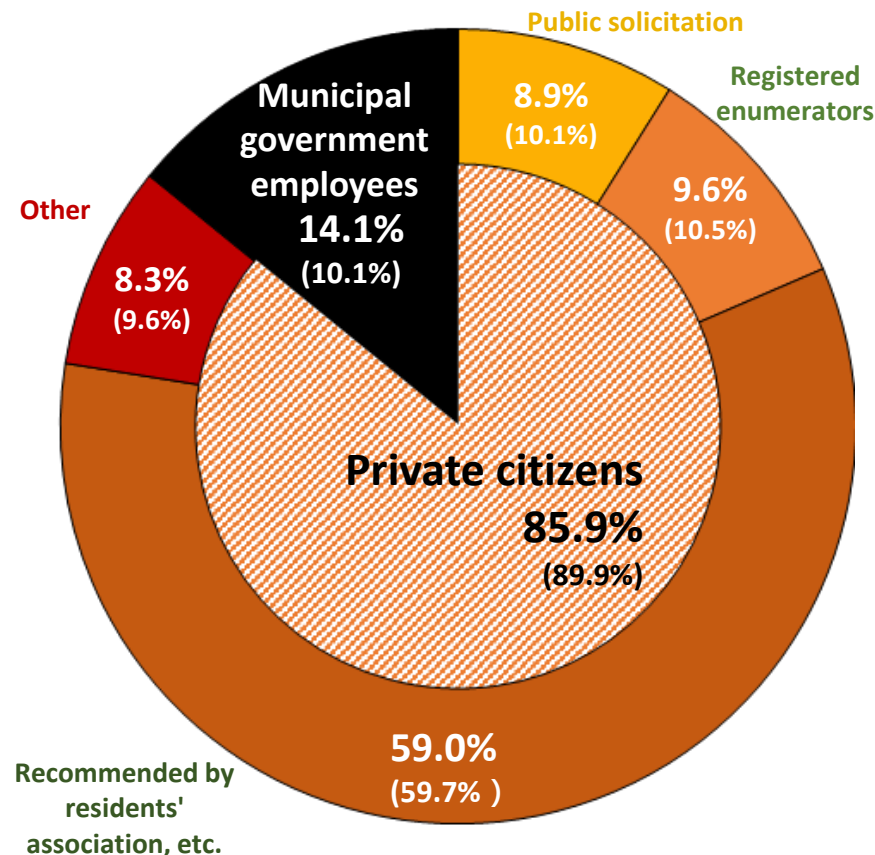
Tabulated based on the Operational situation report



# Appointment of enumerators for the 2020 Population Census

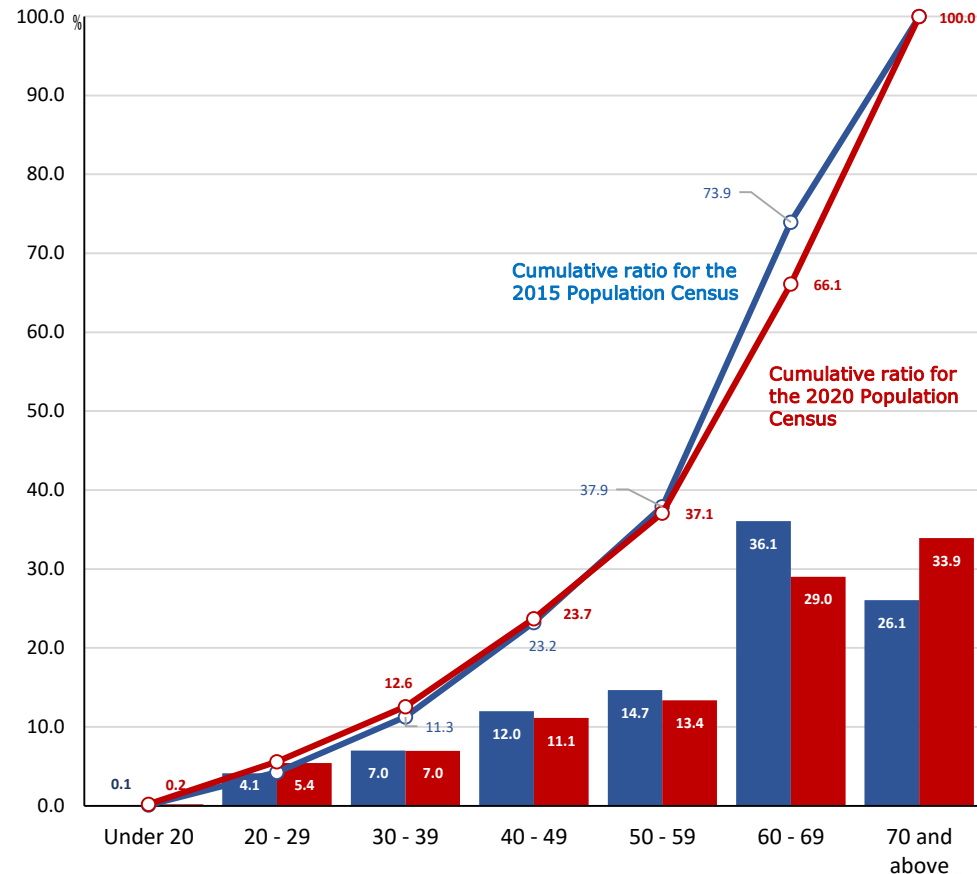
- The number of the enumerators for the Population Census is 614 thousand throughout Japan (700 thousand was originally scheduled).
- About 86% of them are recruited from the private sector. Among them, those recommended by residents' association, etc., holds the largest share, accounting for about 60%.
- More than 60% are 60 years old and over. More than 30% are 70 years old and over, increasing from the previous survey.

## Method of selecting enumerators



\* Figures in ( ) are the ratio of the previous survey (2015 Population Census)

## Appointment by the age groups of enumerators



# Particulars to be taken into consideration for enumerators (other)

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- "DVD for Explaining About the 2020 Population Census (for advisors and enumerators)" was prepared as a video explaining the flow of clerical work for enumerators and advisors in an easy-to-understand way.
- "The Key Points of the Work of Enumerators (Special Measures to Prevent the Expansion of the Infection of COVID-19)" was prepared upon the introduction of the non-contact survey method.
- Establishment of call center responding to inquiries from enumerators
- Additional fiscal measures on expenses to purchase health supplies, including masks and disinfectants

# Public relations taking COVID-19 into consideration

## ● Implementation of public relations activities on the solicitation of enumerators

- Considering the situation that local governments are unable to sufficiently implement enumerators solicitation activities due to COVID-19, a solicitation advertisement was run in trade journals.

Chamber of Commerce News, July 11 Issue / THE JAPAN FOOD SERVICE NEWS, July 15 Issue / Newspaper of Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry, July 20 Issue / Houhan News, July 23 Issue

## ● Preparation of public relations materials taking COVID-19 into consideration

- Public relations materials (videos and still images) were prepared to be utilized for public relations activities by the Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and by local governments.
- Public relations materials prepared mainly focus on the following matters.
  - Enumerators thoroughly follow etiquette for coughing such as always wearing masks when conducting the survey.
  - Ask to utilize online answering to avoid the contact between the household members and enumerators

## ● Implementation of public relations activities taking COVID-19 into consideration

- Online advertising, etc. were implemented using the materials prepared as above.

## ● Preparation of website page on measures against COVID-19 infection

- A page on measures against COVID-19 was made within the comprehensive information site of the 2020 Population Census, and made announcements to citizens, such as using the public relations materials prepared as above and uploading a message video by the Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications.



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インターネット回答期間  
9/14(月) → 10/7(水)

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**マスクを着用して  
お伺いします。**

※対応はできません。必ずマスクを着用してください。



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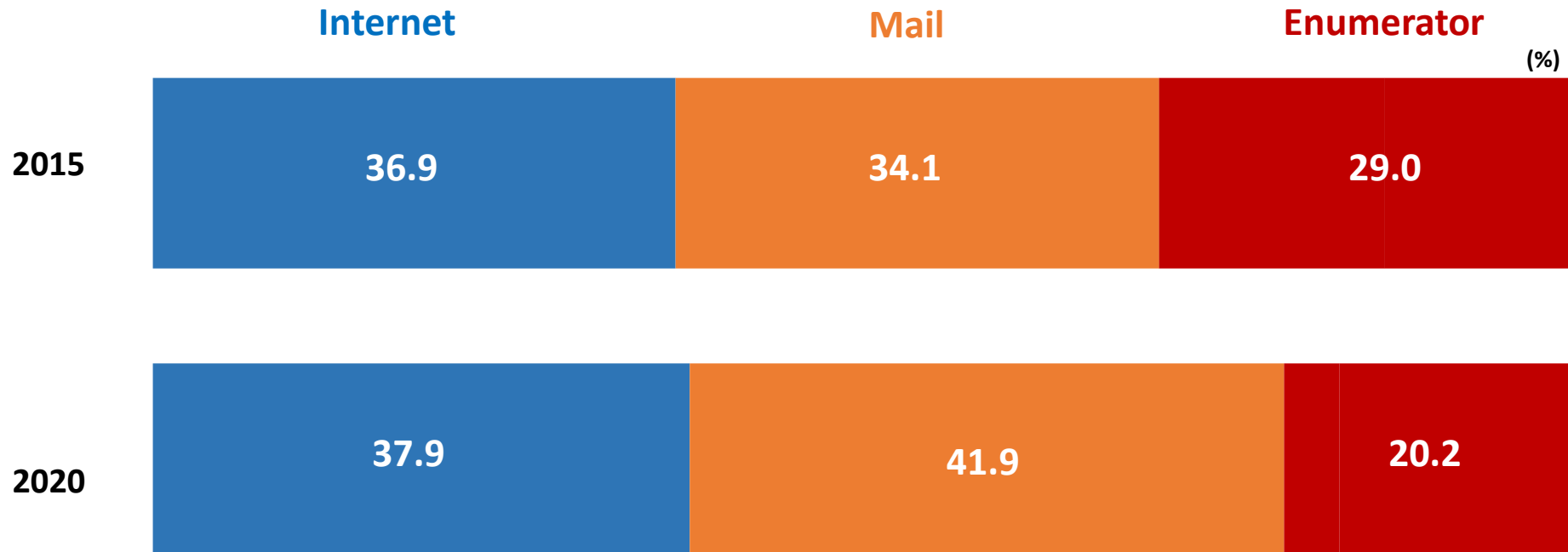


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# Ratio by the Population Census response method



# Excessive number of mail responses: Support from private sector

## Details of the work:

Acceptance of questionnaire sheet submitted from households via mail.

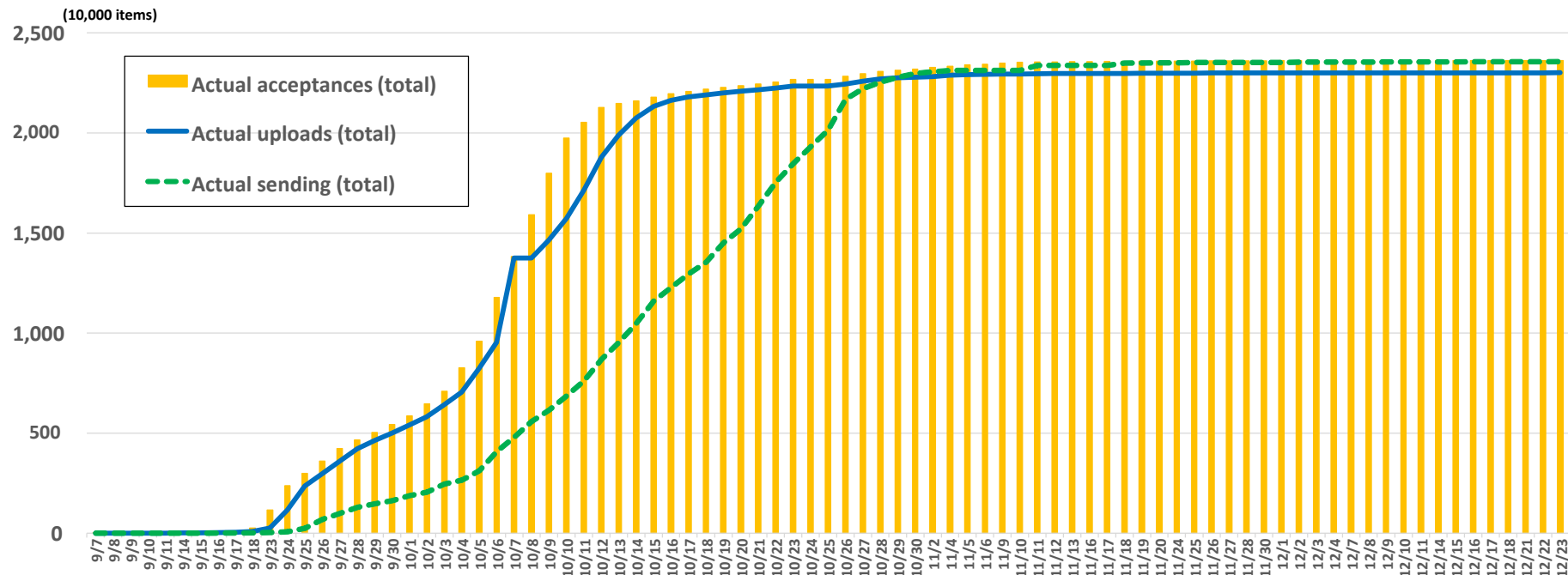
Reading the QR code printed on the envelope for response via mail and uploading the data to the system

Sorting of envelopes for response via mail by municipalities and sending

## Implementation period:

From September 7 (Monday) to December 28 (Monday), 2020

Implemented in three base locations



- **23,627,867** mails were accepted during the period (Those with QR code readable: 23,010,959; those with QR code unreadable: 616,908).
- Although the data was uploaded immediately after arriving at the support organization of the private sector, it took significant days counted from the day the mail was dropped into a post box by the responding household member.
- The amount of mail significantly exceeded the initial expectation (20 million), and by giving top priority on data upload, sending was largely delayed.

# Occurrence of accidents to enumerators

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Falls, bite wounds, traffic accidents, etc.

**619 cases** (902 cases in the previous survey)

Loss of survey documents, survey supplies, etc.

**494 cases** (344 cases in the previous survey)

Fraud disguised as the Population Census, etc.

**88 cases** (335 cases in the previous survey)

Those infected with COVID-19 (during the survey period)

**31 persons**

\* None among households were infected or had direct contacts of positive cases through the survey activities.



# Major issues to be considered towards the 2025 Population Census

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- Promotion of online responses
  - Consideration of survey method suitable for the post-pandemic (the measures for respondents that cannot meet, thoroughness of reminders, etc.)
  - Promotion of measures to secure enumerators
  - Making the clerical work by enumerators smooth and simple
- After reviewing the 2020 Population Census conducted during the pandemic, consideration will be made towards the 2025 Population Census.