

## Large-Scale Survey Interviewing Following the 2008 WenChuan Earthquake

*Zhang Huafeng and Jon Pedersen, Fafo, Institute of Applied International Studies,  
Oslo, Norway*

### **Abstract:**

In July 2008, one and half month after the WenChuan earthquake, the Chinese Academy of Science and Technology for Development assisted by the Norwegian research institute Fafo conducted a rapid needs assessment survey in the earthquake affected area. The main purpose of the survey was to provide data for the formulation of "The General Plan of Restoration and Reconstruction Work in Wenchuan after the Earthquake" by the central government of China. One year later, a follow-up survey was carried out in the same area. Both surveys were large-scale computer aided interviewing surveys, and each covered around 4000 households. Especially the first survey operated on a very strict timeline as data were required for the General Plan.

During the field work, each interviewer was equipped with an Asus Eee-pc sub-notebook computer running Windows XP and using Blaise 4.8 as for data entry.

The surveys in question had a relatively complex set of questionnaires, with sections for households, individual household members and a randomly selected person in the household. The development of the data entry application benefitted greatly from using standard Blaise software, rather than less capable software for PDAs. The use of CAPI reduced the time needed for data cleaning, thus making more time available for data analysis.

Nevertheless, some problems were also noted. Since the interviewers have to concentrate on both interviewing and data entry, mis-keys were rather frequent and extra checks had to be designed in order to avoid them.