

Planning a Census and Managing Risks and Issues

UN Expert Group on Revisions of the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses
May 2023



Delivering insight through data for a better Canada



Statistics
Canada Statistique
Canada

Canada



Managing risk for Canada's Census

- Strong governance
- Focus on key risks
- Lean approach for emergency response
- Streamlined incident management
- Lessons learned?



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

Delivering insight through data for a better Canada

Canada

Census Governance

**Senior
Management
Committee**

The **SMC** is the senior governance body at the agency, and is chaired by the Chief Statistician and composed of the Assistant Chief Statisticians. CSC seeks direction from SMC on issues that could affect the agency's strategy and objectives.

**Census Steering
Committee**

The **CSC** is a cross-field governance structure responsible for overall direction on content, methodology, operations, and quality. It is co-chaired by the Assistant Chief Statisticians (ACS) of the Census, Regional Services and Operations Field and the Social, Health and Labour Statistics Field, and reports to SMC.

**Census Project
Team**

The **CPT** is a matrix team that combines disciplines and abilities throughout Statistics Canada needed to tackle a large, complex project. It provides ongoing direction and control for all aspects of the program. It is chaired by the Census Manager and reports to CSC.

Census Project Team (CPT)

CENSUS PROJECT TEAM

Census Manager (CMO) — G. Bowliby

Census Program Subject Matter (CPSM)	Content determination; questionnaire design and testing; data certification; population reviews (A. Levett)
Address Register / Geography (AR/GEO)	Collection and dissemination geographies; geography services and maps; statistical building register (E. Castonguay)
Field Operations (FOP)	Planning and implementation of field collection operations (L. Mazuzumi)
Data Operations Centre (DOC/CHL)	Receipt and capture of questionnaires, voice and call centre solutions (C. Campeau)
Processing (PROC)	Systems and processes for registration, capture, image, and coding, edit and imputation; questionnaires and wave letters (M. Grenier)
Coverage Management and Improvement Project (CMIP)	Activities to quantify person/dwelling omissions to reduce overall coverage error; overall methodology support (J. Morel)
Dissemination (DISS)	Products, services, training and support for data users (G. Hohlmann)
Communications (COMM)	Communication and outreach for recruitment, data collection and dissemination (C. Léger)
Systems Integration and Architecture (SIA)	Integration and interoperability of systems; systems infrastructure, security and performance (R. Plamandon)
Program Management (PM)	Governance, planning, project coordination and control; operations support including incident management and prosecution (M. Turner)
Research, Evaluation and Quality Management (REQM)	Program research, evaluation, quality management support and wave model (S. Lefebvre)
Census Futures	Development of the future vision of census-taking in Canada (S. Delisle)



Managing risks prior to operations

- Early identification and ongoing evaluation with census managers of strategic risks and establishment of project risk register
- Fast adaptation to COVID-19
- Internal audit requested to identified opportunity to strengthen mitigation and contingency plans
- Risk playbooks, walkthroughs successful (2020-21)



Fast adaptation to COVID-19



Statistics
Canada Statistique
Canada

Delivering insight through data for a better Canada

Canada



Managing risks during operations

- Management information systems and virtual operational command centre. Physical command centre developed, but not used due to COVID risk
- Had an incident management process ready to be used during operations, activated as necessary
- Used group text messaging, with Teams meetings as required



Risks that materialized (fully or partially)

Natural disaster, public health

COVID-19

- facility closures
- collection plan
- print and postal partners (minor)
- on-boarding of virtual field staff

+ Fires

- West and Ontario
- limited access to canvasser reserve

Responses:

- Re-planning, e.g. socially distanced collection, no early enumeration, no fingerprinting
- Virtual workforce, including CHL
- Longer collection

Program targets

Cost

- budget request to address pandemic

Schedule

- NRFU +2 wks
- Canvasser reserve +6 wks
- Self response +6 wks

Response rate

- some localised impacts, not overall

Responses:

- FEFU during NRFU
- Admin data where possible
- Longer collection
- Staggered data processing

Wave timing & model

Wave 3 mail-out

- printing of letter in envelope vs. self-mailer

NRFU workload

- NRFU started before some letters received in Ontario
- more NRFU (also due to response)

Responses:

- Planned over-hiring of NRFU staff
- Longer collection

Systems outages

Electronic questionnaire

- minor outages only

Collection management portal

- minor outages only

Responses:

- Extensive planning
- Redundancy





Contingency planning

- In the event that COVID-19 or other disasters prevented the traditional census from a satisfactory enumeration
 - Statistics Canada developed a “statistical contingency plan” based on the use of administrative data for post-collection imputation of 2021 Census non-responding households
 - Low scale implementation:
 - 1,045 collection geographies (out of 49,000 in Canada) showed a response rate below 90%.
 - Dwellings that had good quality administrative data were in-scope.
 - About 12,000 non-responding households – representing less than 0.1% of occupied private dwellings in Canada



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

Delivering insight through data for a better Canada

Canada



Discussion

What are your thoughts on:

- Documenting risks?
- Developing and executing an effective emergency management plan?
- Effective pre-operational preparation (practice sessions etc)?
- Being flexible and lean enough to respond quickly and effectively to the unexpected?
- Developing contingency plans?

