Managing risk for Canada’s Census

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

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.

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.

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 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. Plamondon)
- **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. DeIsle)
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
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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural disaster, public health</th>
<th>Program targets</th>
<th>Wave timing &amp; model</th>
<th>Systems outages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COVID-19</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wave 3 mail-out</strong></td>
<td><strong>Electronic questionnaire</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• facility closures</td>
<td>• budget request to address pandemic</td>
<td>• printing of letter in envelope vs. self-mailer</td>
<td>• minor outages only</td>
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<tr>
<td>• collection plan</td>
<td><strong>Schedule</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Collection management portal</strong></td>
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<td>• print and postal partners (minor)</td>
<td>• NRFU +2 wks</td>
<td></td>
<td>• minor outages only</td>
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<tr>
<td>• on-boarding of virtual field staff</td>
<td>• Canvasser reserve +6 wks</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Responses:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>+ Fires</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response rate</strong></td>
<td><strong>NRFU workload</strong></td>
<td>• Extensive planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>• West and Ontario</td>
<td>• some localised impacts, not overall</td>
<td>• NRFU started before some letters received in Ontario</td>
<td>• Redundancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• limited access to canvasser reserve</td>
<td></td>
<td>• more NRFU (also due to response)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Responses:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Re-planning, e.g. socially distanced collection, no early enumeration, no fingerprinting</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Planned over-hiring of NRFU staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Virtual workforce, including CHL</td>
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<td>• Longer collection</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**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
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?