Consulting for the 2021 Census of Population content: Canadian approach

Margaret Michalowski, Ph.D.
Census Subject Matter Secretariat
Statistics Canada

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www.statcan.gc.ca
Outline of the presentation

• Lessons learned
• Consultation strategy
• Census data stakeholder engagement
• Potential areas of content change for 2021
• Key expected results
• Putting it all together – the 2021 consultation and the content determination framework
Lessons learned

- The 2016 Canadian Census of Population - the best ever census taken in Canada
- Ongoing public interest in the sequence of releases
  - Unprecedented level of media coverage of the release of population and dwelling counts on February 8, 2017
  - Very extensive media coverage of all subsequent releases (Age and Sex in May, Families and Language in August, Income data in September)
- Modernization would benefit the content consultation process
Lessons learned (continued)

• Ability to shorten release cycle to 18 month from Census day
  • Publication of a comprehensive suite of products
  • Multimodal and innovative dissemination

• New initiatives
  • Use of administrative data to gather income information
  • Record linkage to departmental administrative data for immigrants’ admission category and applicant type
Consultation strategy

Main features

• Apply best practices and lessons learned from the 2016 Census
• Expand outreach to different stakeholders’ groups and Canadian population at large
• Gain a better picture on
  • Canadians’ use of census data
  • Data gaps
  • Novel and reliable data sources
Census data stakeholder engagement: 
Stakeholder groups

- All levels of government
  - Federal departments
  - Provincial/territorial governments
  - Municipal governments
- Indigenous communities and organizations
- NGO and interest groups
- Census experts
- Statistics Canada advisory committees.
Census data stakeholder engagement: Outreach

- Public consultations
  - Focus on e-collection
  - Use of database of Statistics Canada data users to improve outreach, especially to reach local governments
  - Start on September 11, 2017
- Tools
  - Invitation email sent to data users and several follow up communications before closing on December 8, 2017
  - Website with FAQs and Consultation Guide
Engagement strategies

- Proactive outreach to Canadians
  - Social media
  - Census release communications
- ‘Nation-to-Nation’ framework for reaching Indigenous communities
  - Regional meetings with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities
  - Consultations with leadership and data users from local, provincial and territorial organizations
- Face-to-face consultations with selected stakeholders
- Learning from 2016 Census Comments’ Study
Potential areas of content change

Demography

• Gender identity question(s)
  • Legislative context – Bill C-16, amending the Canadian Human Rights Act
  • The Treasury Board and Department of Justice are in the process of drafting an approach to collection of gender statistics
  • Statistics Canada experience - focus groups (Fall 2016) and cognitive testing (early 2017) to assess several approaches to collect gender identity data; inclusion in some current surveys

• Review the census questionnaire from a gender neutral perspective
Potential areas of content change (continued)

Other topics under consideration

- **Indigenous topic** – review the terminology and the question wording
- **Labour** - better capture diversity of jobs and work arrangements
- **Education** - better capture phenomenon of multiple diplomas/degrees
- **Language** - better meet legislative/policy requirements for data on language rights holders
Key expected results

• Improved relevancy of census content in anticipation of new data needs
  • Reflects societal changes and the mosaic of Canadian society
  • Delivers quality data for small population groups and small geographic areas
  • Provides benchmarks for all Statistics Canada programs

• Increased efficiency of content gathering
  • Use of administrative data whenever possible
  • Lower burden for census respondents.
Putting it all together

• Working assumption - time to complete the questionnaire does not increase in 2021

• In 2016
  • It took between 20 min (1 person household) and 45 min (5 persons and more household) to complete e-questionnaire
  • Most time consuming - labour section (24% of the total completion time for 1 person household, increasing to over 30% for bigger household size)
  • Ethnocultural section took between 19% and 24%, and Demographic section between 5% and 10%, respectively to the household size
Putting it all together (continued)

• Continuation with the 2016 Census framework
  • Focus on user needs
  • Expanded and enhanced consultations

• Other considerations
  • Respondent burden
  • Privacy
  • Operational considerations (including costs)
Next steps

- Qualitative testing of the proposed modifications and potential new content: Spring/Fall 2018
- Quantitative testing of content options: Spring/Fall 2019
- Recommendations to the Cabinet: Fall 2019/Winter 2020
- Publishing content in the Canada Gazette: Spring 2020
Appendix

2021 Census content determination process: high level overview
2021 Census of Population Content Determination Process

Statistics Act

- The Statistics Act institutes a Census of Population every fifth year (Section 19(1))
- The Governor in Council by order prescribes the census questions (Section 21(1))
- The Canada Gazette publishes the census questions (Section 21(2))

Statistics Canada

Content determination starts with a framework

- Assessing census data users' needs
  - Legislative requirements
  - Policy & program needs
  - Regional data needs
  - Availability of alternative sources
  - Comparability over time

- Canadian context
  - Burden on Canadians
  - Privacy concerns
  - Sensitivity of questions

- Operational considerations
  - Costs
  - Ability to generate quality data
  - Operational feasibility

Engaging census data users

- Public consultation
  - Federal departments
  - Provincial/Territorial governments
  - Municipal governments
  - Indigenous communities and organizations
  - NGO / interest groups
  - Academics
  - General public
  - Over 11,500 contacts and their networks!

- Face-to-face discussions
  - Internal experts
  - Federal/Provincial/Territorial Committees
  - Statistics Canada Advisory Committees
  - Key federal stakeholders
  - External experts
  - Indigenous communities and organizations

Content determination action plan: Key dates

- Strategy: June '16
- Design: Sept '16
- Public Consultation: Sept '17
- Stakeholder discussions: Dec '17
- Analyze results: Feb '18
- April '18
- Focus groups: May '19
- Content tests: Nov '19
- Recommendations to government: Mar '20
- Publication in the Canada Gazette: May '20
- Planning and preparing: June '16
- Data needs gathering: Sept '17
- Testing: May '19
- Decision: Nov '19
- Communicate to public: Mar '20
2021 Census of Population: Action plan for content consultation

**Consultation Participants from...**
- Different levels of governments
- Indigenous communities and organizations
- NGOs, Academics and private businesses
- Statistics Canada Advisory Committees
- General public

...and their networks

**Communication Activities**
- STC Regional Offices monthly newsletters
- Census data release day emails
- Consultation webpage (statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/consultation/index-eng_cms)
- Census Program Module Image Rotator (Spotlight)
- Government website: "Consulting with Canadians"
- Frequently asked questions
- Social media campaign (Facebook and Twitter)
- Infostats messaging
- Consultation Guide
- Statistical Announcement (media)
- Invitation emails
- Follow-up emails
- Aboriginal Liaison Advisors' outreach

**Timeline**
- Start January 2017
- Start May 2017
- June 2017
- Start August 2017
- September to December 2017

**Inclusive**

**Transparent**

**Timely**