



General Register Office for Scotland
information about Scotland's people

**2006 Census Test
Evaluation of Governance Procedures**

April 2007

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1. Introduction

1.1 This section of the 2006 Census Test evaluation report provides an evaluation of the internal governance procedures adopted by the Programme Support Office (PSO) to manage the 2006 Test. The report does not, in general, provide information on specific cases from the Test as it is a review of the management procedures adopted rather than an evaluation of how each specific issue and risk was resolved.

1.2 It does describe how lessons learned have been used to shape a new system for managing and reporting on the remainder of the 2011 Census Programme. Progress with this is described under 'current position' within each section.

1.3 The overriding statement to make on the 2006 Census Test is that communication between staff could have been better and all staff need to be more pro-active in this area, given the many interdependent areas of the programme. The new system lays down a framework for improving communication and should lead to a more integrated approach.

1.4 The following specific areas are covered in this report:

- Project planning;
- Issue management;
- Risk management;
- Change management;
- Quality review;
- Document storage and sharing;
- Project review & reporting;
- Lessons learned; and
- Financial monitoring

2. Summary of Recommendations

2.1 Project Planning

- Contingency should be built into the programme plan around the key areas of operational delivery, such as printing of Census forms.
- We must endeavour to set realistic dates for policy decisions and adhere to the agreed timetable to deliver them.
- There should be a single programme plan to cover all workpackages, so that interdependencies across the programme can be identified, managed and tracked.

2.2 Issue Management

- We must develop a more formal system for managing issues with clear roles and responsibilities for raising, recording, managing and resolving issues, combined with pre-set tolerance levels for delegated authority and clear escalation routes.

2.3 Risk Management

- Risk descriptions must identify a specific risk so that clear mitigating and contingency action can be identified and ownership assigned. Generalising or combining risks should be avoided.
- We must develop a more formal system for managing risks with clear roles and responsibilities for raising, recording, managing and resolving risks, combined with pre-set tolerance levels for delegated authority and clear escalation routes.

2.4 Change Management

- We must develop new procedures for change management which dovetail with issue and risk management procedures.

2.5 Quality Review

- Product Descriptions proved useful and should be continued with for the remainder of the programme.
- We must develop new procedures for product development & management that provide a more systematic and formal approach and aid improved version control.
- We should consider whether a separate quality assurance role would be an appropriate route to embedding quality across the programme.

2.6 Document Storage and Sharing

- Staff need to learn how to use Lotus Notes and the Census Homepage effectively.
- The Census database should be developed further by the PSO to ensure that programme staff have a clear and structured area in which to store census information.

2.7 Project Review & Reporting

- Given the communication problems in the 2006 Test, the current governance procedures should be reviewed and re-structured to improve communication and take account of new procedures for managing issues, risks, change control and product development & management.

2.8 Lessons Learned

- Procedures for maintaining the Lessons Learned Log should be examined and improved.

2.9 Financial Monitoring

- We must implement a new financial monitoring system that allows work package level expenditure to be monitored.

3. Project Planning

3.1 2006 Test

3.1.1 The PSO prepared a Project Initiation Document (PID) that defined what the objectives of the project were and how we planned to deliver them. The project was aligned to statements on Cost/Resource, Time, Quality, Scope, Risk and Benefits that the 2011 Census Programme Board used to benchmark progress against.

3.1.2 To help identify and track all the work required to deliver the Test, the PSO created a project plan (MS Project) which was baselined in autumn 2004. This was drafted in conjunction with workpackage managers for the project.

3.1.3 The plan contained lengthy contingency time for key operational aspects such as printing of Census forms so that when the inevitable delays occurred, the project would be able to subsume the slippage and remain on target. This worked well and was crucial in ensuring that significant delays experienced in the printing and personalisation of the Census forms did not adversely affect the field timetable.

Recommendation: Contingency should be built into the programme plan around the key areas of operational delivery, such as printing of Census forms.

3.1.4 Some delays could have been avoided if policy decisions had been made at the time required by the plan. Failure to adhere to key dates, and changes to policy, mainly in the fieldwork area, had a knock-on effect for several workpackages. It is not exactly clear why these key dates were not met, although senior staff responsible for setting policy were split between the 2006 Test and other work. For the remainder of the programme, we must endeavour to set realistic dates for policy decisions and adhere to the agreed timetable to deliver them.

Recommendation: We must endeavour to set realistic dates for policy decisions and adhere to the agreed timetable to deliver them.

3.1.5 Rather than just having a single project plan for the Test, a separate project plan was created within the Data Capture workpackage, which itself was run as a formal project within the Test. This approach did make it difficult for the PSO to track progress and manage interdependencies across the whole project. In this instance this was manageable and so did not pose a threat as such to the Test, but the inherent risks in using this approach for the remainder of the programme are too high given the many more interdependencies that exist for the full programme

Recommendation: There should be a single programme plan to cover all workpackages, so that interdependencies across the programme can be identified, managed and tracked.

3.2 Current position

3.2.1 With these recommendations in mind, a programme plan has been created covering phase 2 of the 7 phase programme (phase 1 being the 2006 Census Test, phase 2 covering work up to award of the Route A contract in January 2008). This was baselined at end March 2007, following the creation of a UK Milestone plan prepared by ONS on behalf of the 3 Census Offices. It should be noted that while GROS has responsibility for delivering the Census programme in Scotland, we are required to adhere to the [Registrars General UK Harmonisation Agreement](#) which aims to harmonise key aspects of the Census operations of the 3 UK Census Offices to the benefit of our stakeholders.

3.2.2 The GROS programme plan will therefore drive the delivery of the Census in Scotland, whilst also ensuring that GROS plays a full role in achieving the objectives of the Registrars General UK Harmonisation Agreement

4. Issue Management

4.1 2006 Test

4.1.1 An issues log was created to record and track progress against issues affecting the 2006 Test. All staff working on the Test were informed of the procedures for raising issues and were provided with editor access to the spreadsheet. These procedures were aimed at keeping the amount of bureaucracy to a minimum, but in reality, the PSO were the only staff who raised issues via the set procedure.

4.1.2 Indeed, in the early part of the project, issues that the PSO were unaware of were not being recorded and therefore not being managed. The PSO were often left to identify and record project issues, making it difficult to pinpoint the nature of the issues, given that the PSO was largely on the periphery of the work affected. This also meant that action required to manage issues was not always clearly defined and ownership was unclear. Poor communication between project team staff also led to a number of issues arising that could have been avoided or resolved quicker.

4.1.3 The situation did improve once 2006 Test Project Team meetings were initiated (see Project Review and Reporting) and it is no coincidence that issue management improved in line with an improvement in communication amongst project team staff.

4.1.4 A recommendation for the remainder of the programme is to develop a more formal system for managing issues, defining clear roles and responsibilities for raising, recording, managing and resolving issues, combined with pre-set tolerance levels for delegated authority and clear escalation routes.

Recommendation: We must develop a more formal system for managing issues with clear roles and responsibilities for raising, recording, managing and resolving issues, combined with pre-set tolerance levels for delegated authority and clear escalation routes.

4.2 Current position

4.2.1 New procedures have been created for managing issues. These were formally signed off, following quality review, on 18th January 2007.

5. Risk Management

5.1 2006 Test

5.1.1 GROS operates a corporate standard for managing risks and the risks raised for the 2006 Test adhered to this. Progress statements on 2006 Test risks were provided to the 2011 Census Programme Board.

5.1.2 Risk management fell somewhat into the same trap as that of issues in that there was uncertainty within the project team as to what constitutes a risk as opposed to an issue. Risks were also in some cases combined into single generalised risk statements that were often vague in their description, making the task of identifying appropriate mitigating and contingency action difficult. For such risks, ownership simply defaulted to Branch Heads whereas more clearly specified risks and subsequent mitigating action would have helped to identify who was best placed to take forward the action required.

Recommendation: Risk descriptions must identify a specific risk so that clear mitigating and contingency action can be identified and ownership assigned. Generalising or combining risks should be avoided.

Recommendation: Develop risk management procedures to provide a more structured process for identifying and managing risks, with clarity on the relationships between risks and issues.

5.2 Current position

5.2.1 The PSO has undertaken a review of all programme risks. Clearer risk statements have been produced which has allowed identification of appropriate and clear mitigation and contingency statements. The risks have subsequently been filtered into sub-groups to make it easier to identify risks affecting the same area of the programme. The full benefit of this approach will be realised later in the programme given that the majority of risks have a long timeline, however early identification of the appropriate mitigating action and clear ownership of these risks will help towards reducing the likelihood of many risks occurring

5.2.2 This review preceded the introduction of new procedures for managing risks, which were formally signed off, following quality review, on 22th January 2007.

6. Change Management

6.1 2006 Test

6.1.1 The PSO developed procedures for change management aimed at introducing as much automation as possible so as to reduce the burden on staff involved in the process.

6.1.2 The procedures were underused however as there were only 4 formal requests for change during the project, despite a number of changes being made to signed off products. Again, this is likely due to a lack of awareness from project staff as to what constitutes a 'change'. Because of this, the system could not be rigorously tested in a live environment, although the procedures worked well for the 4 changes we did have.

6.1.3 The procedures covered in-house arrangements for managing change and therefore did not impact on arrangements with external contractors delivering key services for the project. Contractual change control will be a key factor for the remainder of the programme and GROS domestic procedures will have to work alongside contractors' procedures.

6.1.4 While the procedures worked well, the introduction of a new management and reporting system means that new and extended change management procedures are required for the remainder of the programme.

Recommendation: We must develop new procedures for change management which dovetail with issue and risk management procedures.

6.2 Current position

6.2.1 New procedures have been created for managing change. These were formally signed off, following quality review, on 1st February 2007.

7. Quality Review Procedures

7.1 2006 Test

7.1.1 A key part of developing the project plan was to identify all the products from the 2006 Test that would require quality review and to build in time for this. The PSO ensured that a quality review date was allocated for each and every product before it could be signed off as fit for purpose. To help with the latter, the PSO trialed the use of product descriptions, aimed at defining what the purpose of each product was and what the quality requirements were **before** the product was developed. The product descriptions worked well but unfortunately this was initiated too late in the process for a number of products such as field staff recruitment and payroll forms.

Recommendation: Product Descriptions proved useful and should be continued with for the remainder of the programme.

7.1.2 In terms of the quality review procedures, the PSO published a flowchart diagram to all staff to show how the system would work and who was responsible for what at the various stages. A quality log was also created so that each product was identified and could be tracked through quality review so that we knew when products had been signed off and could be passed to the printing contractors.

7.1.3 Whilst the actual procedures worked well, the main problem was that quality review was not given the priority it deserved by project team staff who became too busy to take part despite time being allocated to do so in the project plan. This meant that for many products, the same small number of staff had to review a large number of products in a short timescale. The PSO, rather than managing the process, became heavily involved in the review of products, to the detriment of work to help manage the project in other areas.

7.1.4 In addition, products were put forward for quality review that were not ready (e.g. they contained spelling errors, or were inconsistent with other related products) and this proved very time consuming and frustrating for those carrying out the reviews.

7.1.5 In other instances, 2001 documentation was simply updated for the 2006 Test without proper scrutiny; this led, for example, to outdated payroll policy being taken into the 2006 Test documentation, resulting in GROS having to honour the (fortunately minor) monetary implications.

7.1.6 While new procedures for product development & management are required to address these issues and tie in with the new 3 tier management and reporting system, work will be required to embed quality across the programme as a whole.

Recommendation: Develop new procedures for product development & management

Recommendation: Consider whether a separate quality assurance role would be an appropriate route to imbedding quality across the programme.

7.2 Current position

7.2.1 A comprehensive Product Development & Management system has been developed for 2011. This was signed off, following quality review, on 12 January 2007.

8. Document storage and sharing

8.1 2006 Test

8.1.1 Issues existed with document sharing and storage in the 2001 Census, whereby products were scattered across shared IT drives with uncertainty around which were owned by whom and what the latest versions were. No consistent approach had been developed or employed and the PSO saw this as a risk to the 2006 Test.

8.1.2 The GROS corporate software for document sharing is Lotus Notes and the PSO therefore saw this as the appropriate place to develop a single repository for all Census documentation. However, following discussion with project team staff, it was apparent that a significant proportion did not find this software intuitive and preferred to keep their documentation on personal & shared drives.

8.1.3 To encourage more staff to use Lotus Notes, the PSO created a new 'user friendly' homepage to enable staff to locate and store key 2006 Test project documentation. This included links to work package categories for staff to store all related information in a shared environment. Despite this, Lotus Notes was grossly under-used by project staff for the 2006 Census Test

8.1.4 As a direct consequence, later in the project when most of the products were coming up for quality review, there were several instances where project staff either could not tell which was the latest versions or were unaware where they were stored. Therefore we had not learned our lessons from 2001.

8.1.5 This also had a detrimental effect on communication, although this was not the only reason for poor communication. However, there was a notable improvement once each Branch started to use Lotus Notes to publish notes of meetings to all other project staff.

8.1.6 GROS recently undertook a review of the document management system and it was decided that Lotus Notes would continue to be the corporate tool for this purpose. Therefore a recommendation for 2011 is that staff need to learn how to use Lotus Notes and that the Census Homepage and associated database should be developed further by the PSO to ensure that programme staff have a clear and structured area in which to store census information.

Recommendation: Staff need to learn how to use Lotus Notes and the Census Homepage

Recommendation: The Census database should be developed further by the PSO to ensure that programme staff have a clear and structured area in which to store census information.

8.2 Current position

8.2.1 The PSO carried out a secondary revamp of the Census Homepage in summer 2006 with input from each Branch as to their requirements. The page now provides an improved user friendly interface with clear links to key programme information. More importantly, work has also been done on the database 'behind the homepage' to create a Product Library to store all products that have been signed off.

8.2.2. Work will continue to structure the database to support the new procedures for managing & reviewing the programme, including the 3 tier management structure. Following this, staff will be asked for their views on how else the database could better reflect their requirements.

8.2.3 Consideration will also be given to carrying out awareness training for staff on how to navigate the homepage and how to publish and search for documents. This may involve assistance from the Business Services Team.

9. Project Review & Reporting

9.1 2006 Test

9.1.1 Up until January 2005, Fieldwork Branch had been busy preparing work package strategies for the 2006 Test, whilst colleagues in the IT support area had little involvement due to other work pressures. This had led to a lack of communication across key areas where several Branches required to have an input to the workpackage strategies. To ensure that this did not continue once IT support staff came formally onto the project, the PSO set up the 2006 Test Project Team in January 2005.

9.1.2 The remit was to drive the 2006 Census Test through to a successful conclusion by providing a forum for sharing information across the project and discussing and resolving project issues. The PSO chaired these meetings and drafted the notes, which were published on Lotus Notes to all project team staff to aid better communication and keep everyone up to speed with the latest position. At that stage Branches also began to publish notes of internal Branch meetings on Lotus Notes which again helped to sustain a flow of information.

9.1.3 Although communication remained an issue to some degree after the 2006 Test Project Team was set up, it did gradually improve and this helped to keep the project on target both in terms of scope and time. Therefore this should be seen as having had a positive impact on the successful outcome of the Test.

9.1.4 The PSO's intention was to meet regularly with workpackage managers during the Test period to review progress against the plan and, in doing so, to try to identify potential issues before they came to the fore. In general this approach worked well and the PSO was able to keep track of the project and offer a holistic view to the Programme Manager and the Census Programme Board.

9.1.5 The Board were provided with 'Snowflake' progress reports in which the PSO highlighted exceptions to the PID statements on Cost/Resource, Time, Quality, Scope, Risk and Benefits. While exceptions were fairly rare, the PSO did highlight the main issues affecting the programme and reported on how the 2006 Test Project Team were managing these.

Recommendation: Given the communication problems in the 2006 Test, the current governance procedures should be reviewed and re-structured to improve communication and take account of new procedures for managing issues, risks, change control and product development & management.

9.2 Current position

9.2.1 Communication was probably the major issue of the 2006 Test and certainly the one that caused most angst among project staff. To remedy this, the PSO undertook a study into how communication could be improved and how this would interact with the supporting governance procedures such as issue, risk and change management.

9.2.2 This has culminated in a new 3 tier management system of Integrated Project Teams (IPTs), a Programme Delivery Team (PDT) and the 2011 Census Programme Board, to promote an integrated approach to delivering the remainder of the programme. This new system was approved by the 2011 Census Programme Board in January 2007 and terms of reference for each tier have been agreed.

10. Lessons Learned Log

10.1 2006 Test

10.1.1 A lessons learned log was created by the PSO to enable project staff to capture problems that had been resolved or where an improvement could be made for the 2009 Rehearsal. This was published on Lotus Notes as an intended valuable source of information for evaluating the 2006 Test.

10.1.2 In all, 19 lessons were captured. However, the PSO had to work hard to get staff to see the benefit in using this. In addition, some of the lessons learned entered were more akin to live project issues and should have been raised in that manner. That said, there were some useful points made and these have been used to help inform the 2006 Test evaluation as planned.

Recommendation: Procedures for maintaining the Lessons Learned Log should be examined and improved.

10.2 Current position

10.2.1 The PSO will undertake a review of the lessons learned log, with an aim of stressing the importance to programme staff of capturing lessons as they happen.

11. Financial monitoring

11.1 2006 Test

11.1.1 In conjunction with work package managers, the PSO pulled together estimated expenditure for the duration of the project, by work package. This was tracked against monthly financial monitoring reports (SEAS) by cost centre to provide the Census Programme Board with a current running total against estimate and a projection of the final position.

11.1.2 While the PSO was able to deliver this information, doing so was resource intensive and not an appropriate use of resource given that SEAS should be able to do this for us. However, SEAS information is normally provided at an aggregate

level, against account codes which do not permit any detailed analysis (by workpackage) of the figures. Indeed, because we profile expenditure at account code level, it is virtually impossible to track expenditure at workpackage level, which should be a prerequisite in evaluating whether a workpackage has been value for money to the Census programme.

11.1.3 While these procedures worked up to a point, the PSO recognised that improvement was required and subsequently drafted proposals for an improved system which were discussed with the GROS finance team. These proposals included the creation of Census-specific costs centres, account codes and sub-analysis codes. The latter would allow the PSO to track workpackage level expenditure across the programme. This system was agreed and implemented for the start of the 2006-07 financial year, too late for the 2006 Test but will be used to monitor Census expenditure for the remainder of the programme.

Recommendation: Implement a new financial monitoring system that can be integrated with the SEAS that allows work package level expenditure to be monitored.

11.1.4 Outturn figures for the 2006 Test project stand at £2.18m against an original estimate of £2.24m (staff costs accounted for £1.13m of this).

11.2 Current position

11.2.1 Since 1 April 2006, the PSO has been allocating a sub-analysis code (workpackage id) to each requisition docket raised against a Census cost centre. However, there has been a delay in obtaining sub analysis level reports from the SEAS system due to delays in the GROS finance team setting up the appropriate templates. This is now in place for the 2007-08 year with back-dated information available for 2006-07.

11.2.2 The PSO has also been involved in calculating the GROS % share of UK costs, which will be used in our 2007 Spending Review bid. Work has still to be done to allocate costs to each work package identified in the 2011 programme plan and this too will be used as a component to our 2007 Spending Review bid.