

Subject RE: BC Stats Population Number
From Hubert.Denis@statcan.gc.ca
Date Monday, June 18, 2012 9:10 am
To wmpopulationanalysis@Shaw.ca
Cc Vincent.Dale@statcan.gc.ca , Johanne.Denis@statcan.gc.ca

Mr. Munroe,

In the context of the 2004 Equalization Program Renewal, Statistics Canada (STC) was asked by Finance Canada to assess the feasibility of developing and maintaining new statistics related to the property tax base. Amongst these statistics, Finance Canada was looking for population estimates at the municipality level.

In the 2005 feasibility study (report is attached to the e-mail), STC compared three methods that could be used to produce estimates for census subdivisions (CSD). STC also included in its analysis population estimates calculated by three jurisdictions (BC, Québec and NWT).

<<conclusions_to_finance.doc>>

The approach used to evaluate methods involved measuring their performance between the two most recent censuses at the time (1996 and 2001). To do so, we used as a criteria of quality, the error of closure. Error of closure was defined as the difference between the postcensal estimate as of Census Day 2001 and the 2001 Census population counts adjusted for net undercoverage. Errors of closure were calculated for each CSD and results were summarized using MAPE and WMAPE indicators. We then made the assumption that the relative performance of each method would be replicated in the years after 2001.

The 2005 study showed that the CSD-level estimates produced by BC Stats yielded smaller errors of closure than the methods used by STC and were then, based on the "error of closure" criteria, considered to be of a better quality than those produced by STC. Based on this finding, STC took the decision to use BC Stats CSD-level estimates for the purpose of the Property Tax base project. At that time, there was no commitment from BC Stats to inform STC of any future methodology changes. I appreciate your bringing these changes to my attention and I will discuss them with my colleagues in BC Stats.

Regards,

Hubert Denis

Chef / Chief

Section des estimations démographiques / Demographic Estimates Section

Division de la démographie / Demography Division

Statistique Canada / Statistics Canada