

Metrics of Success



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Organisation: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Country: Canada

Level of government: Central government

Sector: Social protection

Type: Data, Digital, Public Service

Launched in: 2012

Overall development time: 3 year(s)

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Description

The Metrics of Success is a tool that facilitates enhanced monitoring of the asylum system in Canada by enabling users to track refugee claimants as they move through the system from claim date to final decision or removal. The metrics enable users to determine if the asylum system is functioning as intended and to leverage solid evidence upon which programme and policy development can be based.

Previously, stages of the asylum system were monitored in isolation from the overall process, greatly limiting the ability to assess overall system performance. The metrics facilitate a deeper understanding of emerging issues, enabling Canada to better identify targeted, cost effective solutions. Working closely with partners, we can identify and address challenges as they occur, before they are able to seriously impact the system overall.

The metrics also support the development of more effective policies, as well as the efficient application of financial and human resources. With a better understanding of the system, we are more equipped to appropriately direct limited resources to programs and departments.

Why the innovation was developed

- The Metrics of Success was implemented to monitor Canada's asylum system following the introduction of major legislative changes in December 2012.
 - As the steward of this new system, Citizenship and Immigration Canada required a tool that would facilitate the monitoring of the overall system as well as each stage in the system.
 - Prior to the creation of the Metrics, each programme was monitored separately by the lead department, which inhibited effective monitoring and performance measurement of the asylum system overall.
 - The creation of the Metrics, a tool that allows policymakers to track asylum claimants as they move through each stage in the system was the solution to this longstanding problem.
 - Not only did the Metrics allow policymakers to monitor the functioning of the asylum system, it also produced a superior level of collaboration between departments, which respectively gained a greater understanding of their own interconnectivities.
 - This has allowed for more robust policy discussions, better resource allocation and a more effective implementation of the new asylum system.
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Objectives

Develop staff capacity, Enhance transparency, Improve access, Improve effectiveness, Improve efficiency, Improve user satisfaction

- The Metrics of Success were developed to facilitate enhanced monitoring of claimants as they move through the asylum system.
 - The Metrics of Success were required to generate claimant profiles in order to distinguish between various demographic groups. By developing detailed claimant profiles, it was anticipated that working level analysts would better understand the way in which the new asylum system was affecting claimant behaviour, and could implement remedial adjustments as needed.
 - The Metrics of Success was expected to enhance policy making by facilitating information sharing between partners. Increased cooperation and collaboration between partners was anticipated, as data validation and consultation was integral to the implementation of the metrics. Enhanced programme knowledge was expected to lead to better resource allocation and more value for money for departments involved in the asylum system.
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Main beneficiaries

General population, Government bodies, Government staff

- As the steward of the new asylum system, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is the primary user and beneficiary of the Metrics. The ability to develop evidence-based policies and to better allocate resources are two of benefits which accrue to CIC.
- Partner organisations also benefit from the enhanced monitoring of their programmes: Canada Border Services Agency, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Department of Justice and the Immigration and Refugee Board are among the main beneficiaries of the Metrics of Success.
- The Metrics simultaneously generate a bird's eye view of the asylum system and provide detailed evidence of the complex processes that together form the system itself, enabling policymakers to make better decisions.
- The Canadian public is also a key beneficiary of the Metrics, as policymakers direct resources to generate efficiencies in the system, saving taxpayers' money. The public is also able to trust that decisions made on its behalf are rooted in sound evidence.

Results

Efficiency

- The Metrics of Success enable us to pinpoint issues and identify more effective solutions.
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Effectiveness

- By providing a solid evidence base and highlighting linkages between programmes, the Metrics support more effective decision making. We have been able to more clearly identify the impact of frontend security delays on protection hearings. This enables decision-makers to modify target expectations for security screenings in order to better account for the effect on protection hearings and other processes.
 - Importantly, the metrics allowed us to identify the potential cause of an issue which would previously been unavailable to us because there was no way to link the two separate processes. With the Metrics, we were able to both identify the issue and generate a discussion about the most effective solution, with the necessary parties involved.
 - In addition, the Metrics have allowed decision-makers to more effectively allocate financial and human resources by providing evidence of program needs.
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Service quality

Accessibility:

- The Metrics of Success allows unprecedented access to data related to the asylum system. By formulating information sharing agreements with partners, we are able to link each stage of the asylum system and better understand the impact of one stage on another.
- This has allowed us to review the process as a whole to determine its overall effectiveness, whereas previously we were unable to draw such conclusions. Rather, we were able to measure the effectiveness of individual stages with minimal understanding of the influence of one process on another.

Responsiveness:

- The Metrics of Success allow for near-instant monitoring of the asylum system. This facilitates an enhanced level of operational responsiveness as issues are identified quickly as they emerge and decision-makers can implement targeted solutions to address the issues before they expand.

Reliability:

- The Metrics ensure that policy makers can make evidence-based decisions using data that is quality-checked and reliable.
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User satisfaction

- The development of the Metrics has greatly enhanced user satisfaction, as detailed monitoring of the system is now possible. The level of evidence-based decision-making is greatly improved by this innovation.

Development

Design

The Metrics of Success was developed to address challenges that emerged as working level policy analysts attempted to clearly identify and assess the causes and scope of the issues that plagued the previous asylum system. Analysts found that the data required to fully measure system performance did not exist. As well, data related to many of the stages within the system were not available to CIC analysts, as these stages were operated by other departments. With inadequate data and an inability to gather appropriate data from partners, the idea for the Metrics was developed by these working level analysts and directors.

Design time: 2 year(s)

Testing

- The Metrics of Success draws from the Refugee Claimant Continuum (RCC), which stores the statistical data provided by partners needed to conduct analysis and is continually tested and improved.
- Employees of CIC are continually testing and verifying the data that they receive, applying business rules and consulting with their counterparts in each department.
- Following a series of technical verifications, a second round of testing is conducted by policy analysts, who extract the data in order to perform their analysis. Questions or concerns are raised with the technical analysts and with partners in order to ensure that the data is accurate.
- Further consultations with partners occur during the report writing period to support the identification of new data needs and provide an opportunity for additional validation of existing data outputs.
- If needed, new business rules are developed to generate new data queries that allow additional dimensions of the asylum system to be monitored and measured.
- Monthly updates ensure that data is up to date, new dimensions are added and the system is continually improved.

Testing time: 6 month(s)

Implementation

Tools used:

- The Metrics of Success was developed in close collaboration and consultation with partners.
- Formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) signed by partner departments outlined information sharing requirements, expectations and standards for each department. As well, these MOUs included agreements on the ways in which this information would be used and reported by CIC.
- A Performance Measurement Strategy was also developed, which outlined the programme policies and targets for each stage of the asylum system and allowed for periodic review of the targets to ensure that they are reasonable and appropriate for each measurement.

Resources used:

- Funding for the Metrics of Success was generated through the Refugee Reform budget set aside in Canada's 2010 Federal Budget, which also resourced two units within CIC to develop the RCC and the Metrics.
 - As well, several units within partner departments were also involved in providing the data to Citizenship and Immigration to be included in the database, and they continue to be consistently involved.
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Diffusion

- Due to the effectiveness of the Metrics of Success, other branches within Citizenship and Immigration Canada have begun to develop their own databases to facilitate their own evidence-based analysis.
 - In particular, the Citizenship Branch has developed its version of a claimant database. Similarly, requests were received from Operations Performance Management Branch to replicate the Metrics of Success for their operations monitoring.
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Challenges and solutions

- There have been challenges in removing data discrepancies and in fixing data errors in the Refugee Claimant Continuum, which undergoes several steps before it is received by the analysis team. To address this issue, new data governance structures and communications processes have been developed to ensure that all parties are aware of the data needs.
 - Challenges have also emerged with regard to differing reporting expectations between partners. In these cases, the Performance Measurement Strategy has been helpful in resolving issues, as it clearly outlines targets and expectations for each Metric. It has also been revised to be more inclusive or clear, as needed.
 - It also became clear that the business rules applied to each indicator were essential for accurate reporting. These business rules have been thoroughly consulted by the technical and analysis teams at CIC and partners to ensure that there is a shared understanding of definitions.
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Partnerships

Actors related to Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Other Public Sector

The Metrics of Success relies heavily on the provision of operational data by partners; namely: Research and Evaluation Branch and Operational Management and Coordination Branch at Citizenship and Immigration Canada; Immigration and Refugee Board; Canada Border Services Agency; Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Department of Justice. As well, each performance report generated by the metrics is validated and approved by partners.

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

- The Metrics of Success enabled an unprecedented degree of asylum system monitoring for the whole of government.
 - Countries considering developing a similar tool should be aware that an overall governance structure with consistently applied Terms of Reference is critical to long term success.
 - Governments should clearly outline targets and measurements, which are agreed upon by all parties before reporting begins.
 - Similarly, business rules for the data shared should also be agreed upon.
 - Governments should expect a period of transition when the reporting period begins, and should potentially allot one to two months for a trial period to test and validate the data sources.
 - Governments should engage in extensive collaboration between analysts and IT experts to ensure that both parties are aware of the capabilities and potential limitations.
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Conditions for success

- A governance structure consisting of senior managers is required to ensure organisational buy-in between partners that is also rooted in formal, legal agreements.
 - A high level of information sharing and collaboration is required between all partners, the basis of which should be a formal information-sharing agreement that outlines expectations and standards.
 - A common understanding of the objectives of enhanced monitoring is essential to ensure that reporting reflects the needs and expectations of partners.
 - A solid agreement on business rules and their application is needed to ensure that the data extracted fulfills the reporting requirements and is consistent with policy and regulations.
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Other information

The Metrics of Success has received two awards:

The Refugee Reform Team at Citizenship and Immigration was awarded the Deputy Minister's Achievement Award in 2013, in part due to the creation of the Metrics of Success, which it described as "an innovative new data system and framework for monitoring the implementation of the new system at every incremental step to ensure timely adjustments as well as robust evaluation."

The Refugee Reform Policy and Program Implementation Team was also awarded the Public Service Award of Excellence in the Innovation category in 2013. This award specifically referenced the Metrics of Success as part of the rationale for the creation of the Innovation category.
