Canada Revenue Agency / Agence du revenu du Canada

AGENCY DATA CLEARING HOUSE

2018 Statistics of Income Consultants Panel Meeting – Washington D.C., September 2018

Canada

Background

- In July 2016, The Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) Agency Management Committee directed the Service, Innovation and Integration Branch (SIIB) to explore options for an Agency Data Clearing House.

- A stock-take was launched in December 2016 to identify the number and nature of regular tax and benefit data products released by the CRA each year.

- Meetings were held CRA-wide between May and July 2017 to obtain feedback on the creation and role of the Agency Data Clearing House.

- In May 2018, the Agency Data Clearing House was established as a permanent function in our directorate.

Mandate

The mandate of the Agency Data Clearing House is to ensure tax and benefit data released by the Agency are: accurate; consistent; complete; and, subject to appropriate disclosure controls.

Where it fits
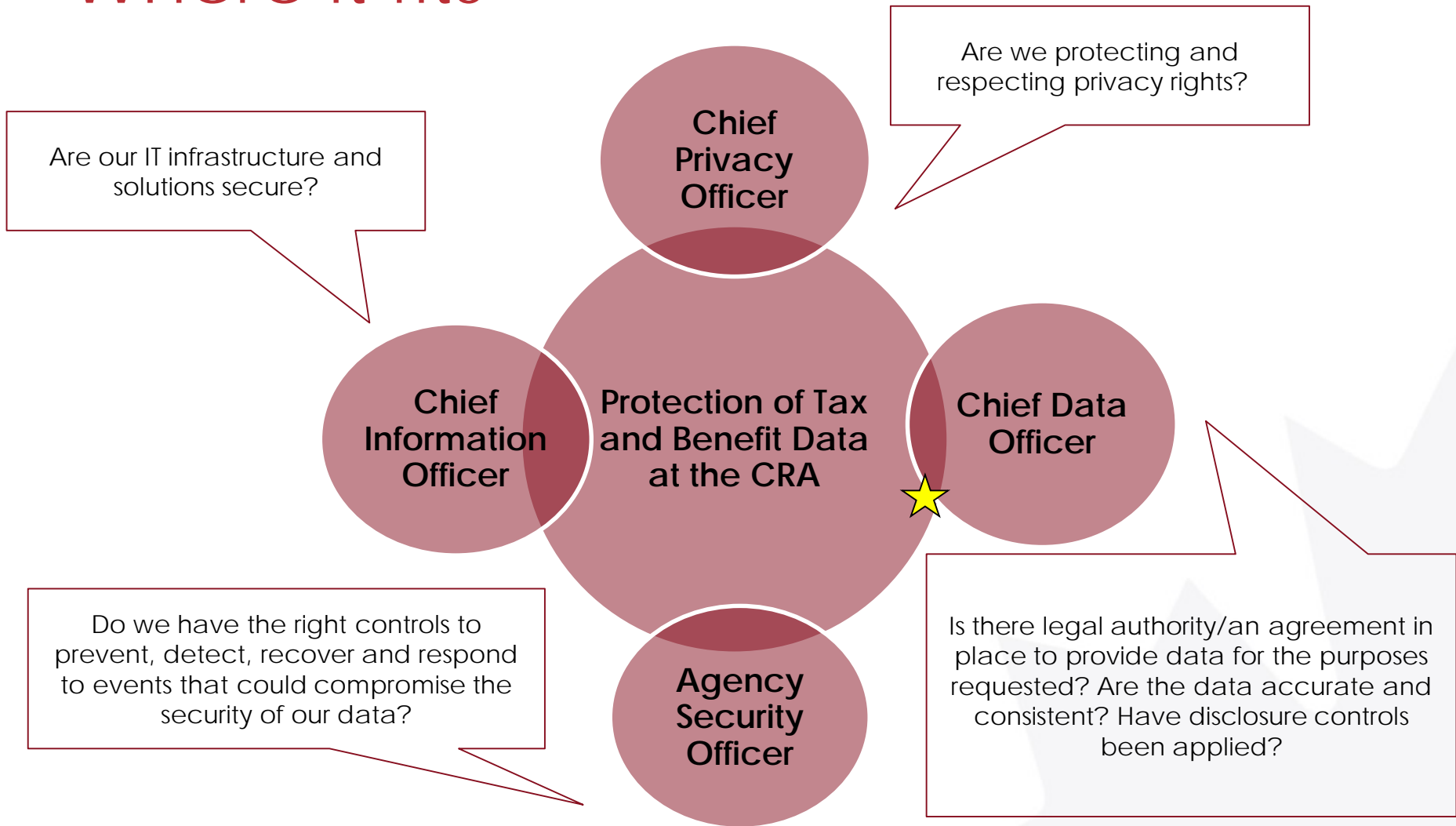
Centralized model

- Data preparation activities <u>centralized in SIIB</u> to ensure a consistent approach and application of standards across all data products and requests

 Data **Quality** Assurance

 Disclosure Controls

 Data **Dissemination**

Corporate responsibilities

- Respond to all external requests (non-government) for tax and benefit data.

- Validate and attest to all tax and benefit data prior to being released publically (see slide 8).

- Facilitate the provision of data that are accurate, consistent, complete and, subject to appropriate disclosure controls.

- Implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), in alignment with the CRA's broader policy suite:
    - Assignment of External Requests for Aggregate Data;
    - Aggregate Data Disclosure Controls;
    - Data Quality Assurance Checklist; and,
    - Data Release Sign-off

- Provide technical training and advice to support all employees involved in the provision of data.

- Build and maintain an electronic registry of all data releases by client, subject matter, frequency, type of data (micro vs aggregate), etc.

Data releases: four streams

Regular & Ad hoc requests under existing agreements

Includes:
- Provinces/territories;
- Federal departments;
- Indigenous peoples

Process:
- Centralized in SIIB with minimal exceptions
- "More of the same"

Ad hoc requests received through priority workflows

Includes:
- Media Relations;
- Issues Management;
- Ministerial correspondence;
- Executive Correspondence & Parliamentary Affairs

Process:
- Validation and Chief Data Officer attestation – see next slide.

External requests (non-government)

Includes:
- Think tanks & professional associations
- Academics;
- General public/industry
- Municipalities
- etc.

Process:
- All external requests for data assigned to SIIB

Proactive releases

Includes:
- CRA open data publications
- CRA corporate reports

Process:
- Increase the number of data publications
- Insert validation and attestation process into existing timeframes for corporate reporting

Validation & attestation function

The Clearing House function/CDO **is** validating and attesting to the following prior to release:

- ✓ All tax and benefit data circulated publically
- ✓ The methodology used to produce the data
- ✓ The application of disclosure controls and contextual notes.

The Clearing House function/CDO **is not** validating or attesting to the following:

- × Case specific requests (e.g. income verification)
- × Corporate financial data
- × Non-tax and benefit program performance metrics (e.g. average processing time, # audits completed, # telephone calls, # of visits to a webpage, etc.)
- × Regular or ad-hoc statistical data products released under existing agreements
- × Employee data
- × Highly sensitive/secret program data

Next Steps

- Transfer of responsibility and resources to SIIB – 2018-2019 to 2019-2020

    o About 240 more data products – going from 380 to 620.

    o Internal resource reallocation tbd.

    o Obtain greater access to CRA source systems and databases.

    o Validation of all ad hoc requests for tax and benefit data – volume TBD. SIIB alone responded to 400+ in 2017-2018 up from 300+ in 2016-2017.

Challenges

- Identifying specific data products to be centralized
- Alignment of skills with job requirements
- Competition for resources – staffing & attrition
- Sheer volume of data being released – maintaining accuracy, responsiveness, and consistency.
- Front-end process design - legacy systems and tax forms not necessarily designed with the value of data in mind.

Discussion and considerations

1. How does the Data Clearing House model compare to the SOI way of provisioning data?

2. What advice would you give CRA analysts and officials?

3. Have we missed any opportunities for improvement?

4. Other questions?