

# ENVIRONICS RESEARCH

## Qualitative and Quantitative Research on Canada's Economy – Winter 2018 Final Report

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## Executive summary

### Background and objectives

Finance Canada commissioned Environics Research Group to conduct qualitative and quantitative public opinion research among Canadians. The primary objective of the research was to explore current attitudes among Canadians towards such topics as:

- The state of the Canadian economy and Canadians' standard of living;
- The deficit;
- Gender- and equity-based budgeting;
- Taxation policy;
- The workplace of the future; and
- Personal indebtedness and interest rates.

The research objectives are to explore Canadians' overall concerns and perceptions about the current state of the Canadian economy, emerging economic issues and their expectations about the role of the Government of Canada in the economy.

### Methodology

#### Qualitative phase

Environics Research conducted a series of 10 focus groups with members of the general population between December 18, 2017 and January 11, 2018. Two sessions each were conducted in Mississauga, Montreal (suburban), Kitchener, Winnipeg and Vancouver (Tri-Cities). In each community, one session was conducted with lower and middle income Canadians, and one was conducted with higher income Canadians. Eight sessions were conducted in English and two were conducted in French. The sessions were distributed as follows:

Date and time	Group Composition
December 18, 5:30 p.m. EST	Low/middle income – Mississauga, Ontario
December 18, 7:30 p.m. EST	Higher income – Mississauga, Ontario
December 19, 5:30 p.m. EST	Low/middle income – Montreal, Quebec (suburban)
December 19, 7:30 p.m. EST	Higher income – Montreal, Quebec (suburban)
December 19, 5:30 p.m. EST	Low/middle income – Kitchener, Ontario
December 19, 7:30 p.m. EST	Higher income – Kitchener, Ontario
January 10, 5:30 p.m. CST	Low/middle income – Winnipeg, Manitoba
January 10, 7:30 p.m. CST	Higher income – Winnipeg, Manitoba
January 11, 5:30 p.m. PST	Low/middle income – Vancouver (Tri-Cities), British Columbia
January 11, 7:30 p.m. PST	Higher income – Vancouver (Tri-Cities), British Columbia

Groups were conducted with adult Canadians 18 and over; participants included range of age, education, and backgrounds. The groups lasted approximately 120 minutes, and consisted of between eight and 10 participants (out of 11 people recruited for each group). All participants were offered a \$100 honorarium to encourage participation and thank them for their commitment, except groups in Vancouver, where they were offered \$150 as incentives in Vancouver are typically higher and respondents travelled further

**Statement of limitations:** Qualitative research provides insight into the range of opinions held within a population, rather than the weights of the opinions held, as would be measured in a quantitative study. The results of this type of research should be viewed as indicative rather than projectable to the population.

## Quantitative phase

Envirronics conducted a random-probability telephone survey with 2,006 adult residents of Canada, from January 18 to 31, 2018. A survey of this size will yield results which can be considered accurate to within +/- 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Margins of error are larger for subgroups of the population.

The sample was stratified by region to allow for meaningful coverage of lower population areas:

Region (% of population)	Sample Size	Margin of error*
Atlantic Canada (7%)	203	+/- 6.9
Quebec (23%)	501	+/- 4.4
Ontario (38%)	602	+/- 4.0
Prairies/NWT/Nunavut (19%)	400	+/- 4.9
B.C./Yukon (13%)	300	+/- 5.7
CANADA (100%)	2,000	+/-2.2

\* In percentage points, at the 95% confidence level

## Contract value

The contract value was \$161,545.93 (HST included).

## Report

This report begins with an executive summary outlining key findings and conclusions, followed by a detailed analysis of the focus group findings and a detailed analysis of the survey data. Provided under a separate cover is a detailed set of “banner tables” presenting the results for all questions by population segments as defined by region and demographics. These tables are referenced by the survey question in the detailed analysis.

In this report, quantitative results are expressed as percentages unless otherwise noted. Results may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. Net results cited in the text may not exactly match individual results shown in the tables due to rounding.

**Use of findings of the research.** By gauging and analyzing the opinions of Canadians, the Government of Canada gains insights into important policy areas related to the mandate of the department and related services. The information gained through this public opinion research will be shared throughout Finance Canada to assist it when establishing priorities, developing policies, and planning programs and services.

## Key findings – qualitative phase

### A. Overall assessment

Respondents were asked to identify what the federal government has done right or wrong in the last year.

- Participants felt government had performed well when it came to improving relations with First Nations, the apologies offered, and looking after their rights. They also agreed with the legalization of cannabis, unifying the country, and improving Canada's international image and relations with other countries. Other positives for the government were related to immigration and welcoming refugees, and increasing the Canada Child Benefit (CCB).
- Areas where participants felt the government had performed less well over the past year included the handling of asylum seekers, cannabis legalization, climate change and pipelines, the Omar Khadr settlement, water for First Nations, and spending too much or inefficiently.

### B. Focus on Canada's economy

Despite positive trends for noteworthy economic indices, such as the stock market, the unemployment rate and GDP, many felt that at the household level, there were noteworthy struggles including a high and rising cost of living, people living beyond their means and growing household debt. Participants also felt that, despite the help government has provided to young families (such as through increases in the CCB), the middle class was not getting any better, and lower income households were falling further behind.

Considering the past year, participants felt the economy had been stable, if not better. Looking to the future, many felt the economy's health was at risk due to the country's dependency on the U.S. economy and the uncertainties surrounding the NAFTA negotiations. A few mentioned that increasing interest rates could hamper economic growth over the coming year.

When participants were asked whether the economy was currently working for them, those in a good economic position felt the steady economy had helped them. Those who believed the economy was not working for them explained that it was difficult to save for or afford to buy a house, the cost of living was high, and that salaries were decreasing. There was almost no awareness of anything the federal government had done to help people deal with the rising cost of living. After prompting, there was some acknowledgment of the CCB increase.

Most participants are aware that the federal government was currently running a deficit, and many confused the deficit with the national debt. While the deficit was not a major concern for most participants, some participants expressed concern due to the uncertainty of how this would impact their own generation, as well as younger generations' lives in the near future, particularly if it meant increasing taxes. While participants would like to see the deficit decrease, or at least stabilize, some agreed it was unrealistic to balance the budget right away.

The debt to GDP ratio was a concept widely unknown to participants and was difficult to understand. Once described, a few were relieved to hear the ratio was low and had decreased, and since most people were not concerned about the deficit in the first place, any statistic that validated their lack of concern was welcomed.

### C. Gender and equity

There was some vague recollection about the “gender statement” in last year’s budget. While participants agreed that this was well-intentioned and a positive theme, some were concerned that this was just a communications exercise. They struggled with what specific measures in a budget could address economic inequalities between men and women.

- When the concept of a “feminist budget” or a “budget focused on women and girls” was explored in Winnipeg and Vancouver, reaction to the “feminist budget” terminology was quite negative.

There was strong support for increasing the representation of certain groups in society in the workforce (women, youth, First Nations, handicapped), but, similar to the “feminist budget,” participants had difficulty thinking of specific measures that could achieve this. Participants did not like the idea of forcing companies through regulation to respect certain ratios. However, when specifically prompted, the idea of funding entrepreneurship was appealing.

### D. Taxation and cannabis revenues

Overall, there was little or no awareness of any planned taxation changes by the federal government.

- Awareness of “income sprinkling” was very low and was often confused with income splitting. Once explained, most agreed that this practice was unethical even if currently legal; however, many also questioned how a crackdown could be enforced.
- There was no awareness of “passive income investing” and the explanation was difficult to understand for most people. Many simply took the measure to limit the practice at face value and felt that if the practice was, in fact, enabling corporations or individuals to avoid paying taxes, then it should be limited or constrained.
- Awareness was also very low of any government measures to crack down on international tax avoidance, or “tax havens.”

When participants were asked to rank, in order of preference, how they would like the government to allocate new revenue raised from taxing cannabis across six specific areas, the most appealing option was to use the money to increase transfers to provinces to fund health care. There was very little support for using this tax revenue to reduce the deficit or to fund public education about the effects of cannabis. When asked if they would like these revenues to go anywhere else, a popular suggestion involved providing more funding towards rehabilitation, mental health and addiction services, and more funding towards education in general.

### E. Standard of living

Overall, participants had a good feeling about the standard of living in Canada. Many felt that the standard of living was about the same as it was five years ago, although many still felt that despite the short time frame, the situation had worsened. Going back 10 years, many participants tended to lean towards feeling that the standard of living had deteriorated largely because housing and rent were increasingly unaffordable, that the price of food had since increased significantly, that there was an increase in household debt, that salaries had not increased enough, and that jobs were less secure. The gap between the rich and the poor was also thought to be worsening.

There was a lot of pessimism about the next generation's standard of living (except in Montreal). Some feared a more crowded future, with traffic increasing, global warming getting worse and jobs becoming less stable. Many felt that the cost of living, household debt, and vulnerability to mental health issues would continue to increase, that automation and AI would replace jobs, and that there could be environmental disasters, larger or more frequent waves of refugees and possibly nuclear war.

On the positive side, advances in technology could mean improvements in standard of living such as driverless cars and other labour-saving devices. Some felt that future generations would be more tech-savvy, and would become increasingly more skilled in order to properly adapt to automation and artificial intelligence (AI).

#### **F. Workplace of the future**

Participants recognized that to be successful in the economy of the future, more and higher education would be required. Multitasking, job versatility and tech-savviness would all become essential skills. The workplace of the future was seen to be a lonely place with more people working from home, robots taking over and jobs becoming increasingly temporary (e.g. contract work) and unstable.

The Working Income Tax Benefit (WITB) is a refundable tax credit that supports low-income workers. There was little to no awareness of this tax credit, and there were no strong opinions on whether this benefit should come in its current form as a refundable tax credit, or if it should be changed so that it delivers an equivalent benefit through monthly or annual payments.

#### **G. Household indebtedness**

Across all cities, most participants were aware of an increase in interest rates, but this was not seen as particularly impactful on their lifestyle or purchase intentions at this point in time. A major increase down the road could, however, have a detrimental impact on house prices. Those who knew they would be renegotiating their mortgage in coming years were also a little worried about the direction interest rates were taking.

## Key findings – quantitative phase

### A. Priorities for the Government of Canada

When asked to identify the top issue facing the country, top-of-mind without prompting, one-quarter say the economy (including jobs and unemployment); this is the top mention across the country. One in ten or fewer mention other issues, such as health care or the environment/climate change. Combined with second/other mentions, three in ten mention the economy as the top government priority area.

### B. Assessment of the economy

Overall, Canadians remain more positive than negative about the economy as a whole, but express more concern about the state of their provincial or territorial economy, and most have negative views about the price of gas. Close to half think the Canadian economy is good (rate 7 to 10), vs. 36 percent who say this about the U.S. economy, but the gap between the two has narrowed since September 2017, due to a more positive assessment of the U.S. economy.

### C. Personal financial situation

Just over half of Canadians are positive about their personal financial situation (score 7 to 10), and most are neutral or not concerned about imminent job loss in their household. However, it is still notable that close to two in ten give a negative rating (1 to 4) about their financial situation, and one-quarter have heightened concern about potential job loss. Concern is elevated among those in the lowest household income bracket, confirming the impression of focus group participants that lower income households may be falling further behind.

### D. Economic confidence

When presented with a list of economic factors, at least half of those asked feel each have an important (score 7-10) impact on job creations and job loss, and over half or more believe these same factors have a notable impact on Canada's economy in general. NAFTA, government investment in skills training (as an impact on job creation/loss) and infrastructure or the global economy (as an impact on the Canadian economy) are identified as the top mentions. The Canadian economy is felt to be impacted more than job creation/loss by government measures that put money directly to Canadians and the price of oil.

When it comes to themes for the federal government to consider when making budget decisions, close to nine in ten give job creation a high important rating (7 to 10). About eight in ten each would prioritize helping women and girls, and the middle class. Three-quarters rate either innovation or science and technology as important. Other themes are rated as important by two-thirds or fewer.

### E. Housing and interest rates

Around half of Canadians agree it would be easy for them to get a home mortgage today; disagreement is higher among those who are having more trouble financially, including younger people and those who are not currently homeowners. Agreement that the recent increase in interest rates would benefit them personally is a minority view, with close to half disagreeing. Again, being able to agree is connected to current level of financial security and being in higher sociodemographic brackets.

Among mortgage holders, around six in ten agree they can easily keep making mortgage payments if interest rates were to rise by half or one percent; however, only around four in ten say this about a two percent increase, and one-third disagree.

#### F. Gender equality

When rated as a theme for government decision-making, gender equality issues are considered important by a great many Canadians. However, consistent with the findings of the focus groups, the language used to describe this issue matters. “Helping women and girls” is rated as important by eight in ten; “gender equality” by two-thirds, and “feminism” by only half, echoing the negative reaction to the “feminist budget” terminology in the focus groups.

There is widespread agreement with statements suggesting gender equality is important for Canada and beneficial to the economy, but somewhat less certainty that women and girls currently enjoy the same opportunities as men and boys, and the connection of sexual harassment and violence against women to the Canadian economy is unclear for many.

## Political neutrality statement and contact information

I hereby certify as senior officer of Environics that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada, and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

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## Introduction

Finance Canada commissioned Envirronics Research Group to conduct qualitative and quantitative research to explore in more detail Canadians' overall concerns and perceptions about the current state of the Canadian economy, emerging economic issues and their expectations about the role of the Government of Canada in the economy. The primary objective of the research was to explore current attitudes among Canadians towards such topics as:

- The state of the Canadian economy and Canadians' standard of living;
- The deficit;
- Gender- and equity-based budgeting;
- Taxation policy;
- The workplace of the future; and
- Personal indebtedness and interest rates.

## Background

The Department of Finance requires research to obtain information on the public environment into which the Government's actions will be communicated. It is important for the Department of Finance Canada to conduct public opinion research to provide a clear and current sense of the evolution of the public mood towards the state of the economy, sense of personal economic well-being and Government actions in the economic sphere, in order to remain current on the public environment into which Government actions will be communicated.

## I. Detailed findings – qualitative phase

### A. Overall assessment

Respondents were asked to identify what the federal government had done right or wrong over the last year. Overall, there was a bit more agreement on the positive actions over the last year than on the negative ones; however, none of these included references to the economy:

- Participants positively recognized the federal government's work to improve relations with First Nations, the apologies offered, and looking after their rights. The legalization of cannabis was also well-perceived, particularly among participants in low-income groups. Unifying the country and improving Canada's international image and relations with other countries were also top-of-mind for participants, more so among high-income group participants. Other pluses for the government were related to immigration and welcoming refugees, and increasing the Canada Child Benefit (CCB).
- Participants' negative perceptions related to the federal government were not strong overall. Some mentions included the handling of asylum seekers, particularly in Montreal and Winnipeg; the management of cannabis legalization; climate change and pipelines; the Omar Khadr settlement; water for First Nations; and wasteful spending (more so among low-income groups).

### B. Focus on Canada's economy

When the discussion focused exclusively on the Canadian economy, there was a general feeling that the economy was doing well according to well-recognized and publicized economic indices, such as the growth in the GDP, the unemployment rate, etc. However, some felt these indices did not tell the full story – many felt that, despite what these economic indices may suggest, the cost of living was high, inflation was high, and people were living beyond their means and accumulating debt. Participants also felt that, despite the help to young families, the middle class was not getting any better, and that lower income households were falling further behind.

Considering the past year, participants felt the economy had been stable, if not better. This sentiment was more common among high-income participants, and was based on the perception that the GDP was growing steadily, that the government had designed policies to improve the economy, that the Canadian dollar had appreciated, or on a general feeling the economy was on the right track. A few participants felt the economy had gotten worse due to increasing housing prices, concerns over a possible housing “bubble” bursting and that wages had not kept pace with the rise in the cost of living.

Looking to the future, many felt the economy's health was at risk due to the country's dependency on the U.S. economy and the uncertainties surrounding the NAFTA negotiations. A few mentioned that increasing interest rates could hamper economic growth over the coming year. In only a few cases pessimism over the country's economic prospects was related to the continued rise in housing prices, inflation, the influx of refugees, and the current deficit-based federal government spending. On a more optimistic note, a few hinted that the economy would do better if the government were to diversify its trade partners and become less dependent on the U.S.

When participants were asked whether the economy was currently working for them, those in a good economic position felt the steady economy had helped them. Those who believed the economy was *not* working for them explained that it was difficult to save for or afford to buy a house, that the cost of living was high, and that

salaries were not increasing. It was common to hear in Kitchener that full-time, permanent job opportunities were scarce, and therefore many young people do not have any benefits or job stability.

- When it came to identifying how the Government of Canada had helped Canadians deal with the rising cost of living, not many participants could think of specific measures. A few participants mentioned the increase in CCB and how it had helped them, while others felt this measure had only helped young families.

### The Government of Canada's deficit

In terms of the financial situation of the Government of Canada, most participants correctly answered that it was currently running a deficit, and a few perceived it as a large deficit. It was common for participants to confuse the deficit with the national debt. While the deficit was not a major concern for most participants, some participants expressed concern due to the uncertainty of how this would impact their own generation, as well as the lives of the younger generation, particularly if it meant increasing taxes. A few expressed some frustration over specific government expenditures, mentioning examples such as the Canada 150 celebrations, military spending and legalizing cannabis.

While participants would like to see the deficit decrease, or at least stabilize, some agreed it was unrealistic to balance the budget right away. Even setting a specific date seemed unrealistic to most, as the economy fluctuated often and depended greatly on other factors. Participants thought it would be a good idea to have a plan on how the budget would be gradually balanced over a period of roughly two to five years.

- Reducing the deficit by cutting spending on things like new infrastructure or the Canada Child Benefit, or transfers to the province for health and education, was not an appealing strategy. Participants in each session pushed back on this option, and felt that there were many other ways to get to a balanced budget and that the options presented were essential, with some participants sensing that funding actually needed to be increased in these areas rather than decreased.

The debt to GDP ratio was a concept widely unknown by participants, and was difficult to understand, regardless of their income or where they lived in Canada. Once described, a few were relieved to hear the ratio was low and had decreased – and, since most people were not concerned about the deficit in the first place, any statistic that validated their lack of concern was welcomed. However, some participants were not reassured since they still felt that a growing national debt was a bad idea, regardless of how the GDP was performing and that this metric was vulnerable to a recession.

### C. Gender and equity

There was some vague recollection about the “gender statement” in last year’s budget. While participants agreed that it was a well-intentioned and positive theme, some were concerned that it was only a communications exercise. They struggled to understand how specific measures in a budget could address economic inequalities between men and women. Participants suggested incentivizing businesses to hire women through “equal pay for equal work,” developing programs to encourage entrepreneurship among women and, after prompting, to make child care more accessible, both financially and in terms of availability. A few suggested increasing maternity leave to help women.

Some thought the government could only address this among its own employees by imposing laws on equal pay. The idea of using a budget to address gender inequality did not make sense and was confusing to participants.

When the concept of a “feminist budget” or a “budget focused on women and girls” was explored in Winnipeg and Vancouver, reaction to the “feminist budget” terminology was quite negative. They thought this language could be seen as offensive to some, and while a budget focused on women and girls received a more positive reaction, many preferred the focus to be on “equality.”

There was strong support for increasing the representation of certain groups in the workforce (e.g. women, youth, First Nations, handicapped) but, similar to the “feminist budget,” participants had difficulty thinking of specific measures that could achieve this. Some suggestions included:

- Creating training programs specifically for these groups;
- Subsidizing education;
- Incenting employers to hire individuals in these groups;
- Rewarding companies that offer internships and apprenticeships; and
- Promoting success stories.

Participants did not like the idea of forcing companies through regulation to respect certain ratios. However, when specifically prompted, the idea of funding entrepreneurship was appealing.

## D. Taxation

Overall, there was little or no awareness of any changes planned to taxation by the federal government.

Awareness of “income sprinkling” was very low. It was often confused with income splitting and would require an explanation by the moderator. Once explained, most agreed that it was an unethical practice even if it was currently legal, and there were lots of questions about how a crackdown could be enforced. Some participants questioned how hard this would be to prove and indicated it would be difficult to figure out how one’s income was being distributed.

There was no awareness of “passive income investing”, and even after the concept was explained, many participants still did not understand the concept. Many simply took the measure to crackdown on the practice at face value and felt that if the practice was enabling corporations and individuals to avoid paying taxes, then it should be limited or constrained. A few argued that it would be difficult for the government to properly apply this measure since there needed to be a clear indication that the investment was not going to be used to grow the business.

Awareness of any government measures to crack down on international tax avoidance, or “tax havens”, was also very low. Some participants questioned how our government would be able to impose rules internationally, how they would know what corporations were doing overseas, and how they would know what other countries were doing.

## Cannabis tax revenues

Participants were asked to rank, in order of preference, how they would like the government to allocate new revenue raised from taxing cannabis across the six following categories:

- Provide the money to provinces through transfers that fund health care;
- Invest in job skills training or retraining;
- Provide funding for public education about the effects of cannabis;
- Use it to reduce the deficit;
- Cut taxes for those in the lowest tax bracket; and
- Provide money to municipalities in order to address their needs.

Results from this exercise revealed the most appealing option was to use the money to increase transfers to provinces to fund health care. Some participants expressed the view that the health care system was currently inefficient and would be further stressed by an aging population, as well as any impacts on health due to the potential increase in cannabis use among Canadians.

When it came to the second most popular measure, three held similar rankings. One of these was the option to cut taxes for those in the lowest income bracket, as they were the most in need of a tax break. This option was almost always more popular in the lower income groups than the higher income groups, and was especially popular in the low-income group in Mississauga.

There was also some preference for providing money at the municipal level in order to address their needs, especially in Winnipeg. Some felt that citizens were more likely to benefit directly if the funds were provided at the municipal level. There was also an appreciation for the fact that many services would be stretched at the municipal level, including law enforcement and social services.

Another option that was moderately appealing involved investing in job skills training and retraining, which also proved more popular in many of the lower income groups.

There was very little support for using this tax revenue to reduce the deficit or to fund public education about the effects of cannabis.

When asked if they would like these revenues to go anywhere else, a popular suggestion involved providing more funding towards rehabilitation, mental health and addiction services. Investing in education in general was also a common suggestion.

## E. Standard of living

Overall, participants had a good feeling about the standard of living in Canada, and felt that they had all the essentials such as food, water, clean air, health care and safety. This also suggested that participants tended to confuse the concept of “standard of living” with “quality of life.”

Participants were asked if life was better or worse five years ago, 10 years ago and how it would be 25 years from now.

- Many felt that the standard of living was about the same as five years ago, although many still felt that despite the short time frame, the situation had worsened.
- Going back 10 years, many participants tended to lean towards feeling that the standard of living had deteriorated, largely because housing and rent were now increasingly unaffordable, that the price of food had increased significantly, that there was more household debt, that salaries had not increased enough and that there was now much less job security. The gap between rich and poor was also thought to be worsening. On the positive side of things, technology was seen as improving our standard of living and making life easier, the global economy was better today than it was 10 years ago, interest rates were lower, and there had been advances in medicine and health care.

There was some pessimism about the next generation's standard of living – except in Montreal, where participants were more optimistic. Some feared a more crowded future, with traffic increasing, global warming getting worse and jobs becoming less stable. Many felt that the cost of living would increase and make it more difficult for future generations to become homeowners. Some suspect the next generation would need to work more in order to maintain their standard of living, would become more in debt, and would become increasingly susceptible to mental health issues. There were concerns that automation and artificial intelligence would wipe out jobs, and that there could be environmental disasters, larger or more frequent waves of refugees, and possibly nuclear war.

On the positive side, participants suggested that advances in technology could mean improvements to the standard of living of the next generation, such as driverless cars and other labour-saving devices. Some felt that future generations would be more tech-savvy and would be getting progressively more skilled in order to properly adapt to automation and AI.

## F. Workplace of the future

Participants recognized that in order to be successful in the economy of the future, the workforce needed to be more prepared. By this, they meant more and higher education would be required to stay competitive in the job market – for instance, some believed a bachelor's degree would no longer be sufficient. They also believed that the ability to multitask was crucial, as was being able to do more than one job. Many mentioned that it was imperative to be current with the latest technology for their jobs, and that being tech-savvy would become an essential skill. The workplace of the future was seen as a lonely place, with more people working from home, robots taking over, and jobs becoming increasingly temporary (e.g., contract work) and less stable.

Participants were specifically asked about their level of concern with the following five possible challenges moving forward:

- Role of technology, like automation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), etc.;
- Having the right skills for the jobs of tomorrow;
- Having the right education for the jobs of tomorrow;
- “Job churn” (i.e., having many jobs or careers over the course of your life); and
- “Precarious work” (i.e., more and more jobs that are unstable, contract to contract, with few benefits and little job security).

Participants were most likely to be concerned with having job stability and the right education for the jobs of tomorrow. Some thought that programs focusing on technology needed to be included in the education system. Additionally, they thought education requirements for jobs would continue to increase. Some participants felt that job stability was a concern and their job security was a source of stress. Participants revealed that employers were more likely to hire part-time workers with no benefits, or hiring contract workers, particularly in Kitchener.

Having the right skills for the jobs of tomorrow was the next most common concern. Some participants felt that the job market was very competitive, and employers had high expectations of prospective employees. Some felt they were underqualified for certain positions, and that they would require additional training and continuing education.

People struggled to identify what the federal government could do to help. Some suggested an increase in funding for training, encouraging businesses to offer apprenticeships, adjusting the education system so that industry needs were being met, making it easier for more mature workers to retrain or change their careers, and making higher education more affordable.

### **A focus on the Working Income Tax Benefit (WITB)**

The WITB is a refundable tax credit that supports low-income workers. This measure provides important income support to low-income Canadians to improve the return from working. In 2016, the WITB provided more than \$1.1 billion in benefits to over 1.4 million Canadians. There was little to no awareness of the WITB among participants.

- There were no strong opinions on whether this benefit should come in the current form as a refundable tax credit, or if it should be changed so that it delivers an equivalent benefit through monthly or annual payments. Since this mainly benefits lower income Canadians, some felt that a more regular method of disbursement would be more beneficial. A few felt that since it was a tax credit based on the previous year's income, it could only be disbursed at the end of the year once eligibility had been established.

## **G. Household indebtedness**

Across all cities, most participants were aware of an increase in interest rates, but this was not seen as particularly impactful on their lifestyle or purchase intentions. A few who were in the market to purchase a new home were a little concerned that this would further limit their ability to afford a home. There were some concerns that a major increase down the road could burst the housing bubble. Those who knew they would be renegotiating their mortgage in coming years were also a little worried about the direction interest rates were taking.

Very few participants had much to say about the benefits of higher interest rates, but some felt it would only be a positive thing for people who had investments. For those who didn't have any investments, it would have no benefits.

Given a hypothetical scenario where they would receive an extra \$200 per month, priorities were different between low-income and high-income participants. A common priority among lower income participants involved paying down debt, while high-income participants would be more likely to put the money in their savings or towards travel (although many would also use these funds to pay down debt). Another common use

for an extra \$200 per month among both lower and higher income groups included putting it away for their children's education.

## II. Detailed findings – quantitative phase

### A. Priorities for the Government of Canada

*The economy remains the top priority on which Canadians want the federal government to focus.*

Canadians were asked to think about the issues facing the country, and to identify which one they think the federal government should focus on most. This wave's responses echo those of September 2017. The top priority, mentioned by around one-quarter of Canadians (23%), is the economy, and the creation of jobs or reduction of unemployment. As in September, around one in ten respondents feel the priority should be health care (9%) or the environment (including general environmental issues, climate change and global warming – 8%). Fewer mention other specific issues, including immigration and refugees (6%) and education (5%).

**Government priority issues – top priority**

Priority	January 2018 n=2,006	September 2017 n=2,000
<b>Economy/jobs (net)</b>	<b>23%</b>	18%
<i>Economy/economic issues</i>	17%	11%
<i>Jobs/unemployment issues</i>	7%	6%
<b>Health care/hospitals</b>	<b>9%</b>	9%
<b>Environment (net)</b>	<b>8%</b>	9%
<i>Environmental issues</i>	6%	6%
<i>Climate change/global warming</i>	2%	3%
<b>Immigration/refugees</b>	<b>6%</b>	7%
<b>Education/schools</b>	<b>5%</b>	4%
<b>Social issues (general)</b>	<b>4%</b>	3%
<b>Taxes</b>	<b>4%</b>	5%
<b>Government representation/accountability</b>	<b>4%</b>	2%
<b>Crime/national security</b>	<b>3%</b>	4%
<b>Foreign affairs/international trade</b>	<b>3%</b>	5%
<b>Homelessness/poverty</b>	<b>3%</b>	3%
<b>Government spending/budget/deficit</b>	<b>3%</b>	3%
<b>Seniors issues</b>	<b>3%</b>	2%
<b>Aboriginal issues</b>	<b>2%</b>	3%
<b>Income disparity/minimum wage</b>	<b>2%</b>	2%
<b>Cost of living/debt/bills</b>	<b>2%</b>	2%
<b>Affordable housing/housing issues</b>	<b>2%</b>	1%
<b>Infrastructure/roads</b>	<b>1%</b>	1%
<b>Energy/oil and gas issues/pipelines</b>	<b>1%</b>	1%
<b>Other</b>	<b>2%</b>	4%
<b>Don't know/refused</b>	<b>12%</b>	13%

1A. (T) Thinking of the issues facing Canada today, which one would you say the Government of Canada should focus on most?

In all regions of the country, the economy/jobs is the top mention; this is somewhat more salient to men (28%, vs. 19% of women), among those with household incomes above \$150,000 or higher levels of education, and among older Canadians. Health care is most pressing in Quebec (12%) and Atlantic Canada (16%), and among women (12% vs. 6% of men). Interest in the environment is highest in B.C. (12%) and Quebec (14%).

Respondents were given an opportunity to name additional priority areas. These are very consistent with the top mentioned issues. When combined with top mentions, three in ten cite a focus on the economy or jobs, and just under two in ten mention health care and hospitals. Subgroup patterns echo those for the top mention.

#### Government priority issues – priorities

<b>Net: top + other priorities</b>	<b>January 2018 n=2,006</b>
Economy/jobs (net)	31%
<i>Economy/economic issues</i>	23%
<i>Jobs/unemployment issues</i>	9%
Health care/hospitals	16%
Environment (net)	14%
<i>Environmental issues</i>	11%
<i>Climate change/global warming</i>	3%
Immigration/refugees	11%
Education/schools	10%
Social issues (general)	9%
Crime/national security	7%
Government representation/accountability	7%
Taxes	7%
Seniors issues	5%
Homelessness/poverty	5%
Government spending/budget/deficit	5%
Foreign affairs/international trade	5%
Cost of living/debt/bills	4%
Aboriginal issues	4%
Affordable housing/housing issues	3%
Energy/oil and gas issues/pipelines	3%
Income disparity/minimum wage	3%
Infrastructure/roads	2%
Other	4%
Don't know/refused	12%

1A. (T) Thinking of the issues facing Canada today, which one would you say the Government of Canada should focus on most?

## B. Assessment of the economy

### Current state of the Canadian economy

*Just under half have a positive perception of the current state of the economy; just over one in ten have a negative perception.*

Several questions were asked related to current economic well-being. Respondents were asked to use a scale from 1 (terrible) to 10 (excellent) to rate each factor.

When asked to rate the current state of the Canadian economy, just under half say it is good (score of 7 to 10), just under four in ten are neutral (score of 5 or 6), and just over one in ten say it is bad (score of 1 to 4). The perception that the economy is good is statistically unchanged since September 2017.

**Current state of economy**

Date	Positive perception (7-10)	Neutral (5-6)	Negative perception (1-4)
Nov-09	36%	47%	17%
Feb-10	34%	48%	17%
Feb-11	47%	41%	11%
Feb-12	47%	40%	12%
Jan-13	52%	38%	10%
Jan-14	46%	41%	12%
Feb-15	40%	43%	17%
Feb-16	23%	46%	31%
Oct-16	37%	41%	20%
Sept-17	48%	36%	15%
<b>Jan-18</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>13%</b>

*Q2a Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent, how would you rate the following: The current state of the Canadian economy*

Responses are generally similar across most subgroups of the population. Being positive about the national economy (scoring 7-10) is highest in Ontario (53%), B.C. (52%) and Quebec (51%), and lowest in Alberta (32%) and Saskatchewan (31%). Men are more positive (52%) than women (45%). As well, positive perceptions of the economy are highest among younger Canadians (54% age 18 to 34, vs. 46% age 35 and older). Being positive is also linked to higher levels of household income and education, and is higher among Allophones, cellphone only households, and those who say, later in the survey, that their own personal financial situation is good.

## Canadian economy compared to U.S. economy

*Canadians remain more likely to say Canada's economy is good than to say this of the U.S. economy, but the gap has narrowed.*

The Winter 2018 results show Canadians remain more likely to think the Canadian economy is doing well in comparison to the number who consider the U.S. economy to be doing well; however, this gap has narrowed since September 2017, while the proportion thinking the U.S. economy is good has increased somewhat.

**Current economies comparison**

**% positive rating (7-10)**

Date	Canadian economy	United States economy
Nov-09	36%	9%
Feb-10	34%	20%
Feb-11	47%	9%
Feb-12	47%	8%
Jan-13	52%	8%
Jan-14	46%	16%
Feb-15	40%	32%
Feb-16	23%	37%
Oct-16	37%	31%
Sept-17	48%	30%
<b>Jan-18</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>36%</b>

*Q2a/b Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent, how would you rate the following:*

- a) *The current state of the Canadian economy?*
- b) *The current state of the United States economy?*

Positive ratings of the U.S. economy are somewhat higher among British Columbia residents (40%), men (46% vs. 27% of women), those in cellphone only households (43%), those with household incomes of \$150,000 and over (49%) and university graduates (45%). As with the Canadian economy, seeing the U.S. economy as good is linked to a more positive view of one's personal financial situation.

## Provincial economies

*B.C. and Quebec residents are the most likely to rate their province's economies positively; Albertans and Atlantic Canadians continue to be the most negative.*

Perceptions of the provincial economy vary widely by region. Over half of B.C. residents believe their economy is doing well (7 or higher), followed by Quebec residents (41%). By contrast, those in Alberta (25%) and Atlantic Canada (17%) are significantly less likely to believe their provincial economy is performing well. As with other economic measures, feeling the provincial economy is good is higher among those in higher socio-economic strata and who believe their personal financial situation is good.

**Provincial economies comparison**

% positive rating (7-10)							
Date	B.C.	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	ATL
May-13	37%	76%	77%	40%	32%	33%	21%
Aug-13	43%	79%	85%	39%	34%	30%	22%
Oct-13	50%	79%	78%	44%	36%	26%	29%
Jan-14	40%	79%	85%	43%	33%	24%	25%
Feb-15	49%	36%	63%	29%	33%	18%	19%
June-15	48%	38%	72%	31%	33%	23%	17%
Feb-16	46%	10%	42%	47%	26%	18%	9%
Oct-16	53%	12%	39%	28%	31%	31%	16%
Sept-17	47%	18%	35%		36%	40%	20%
<b>Jan-18</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>17%</b>

Q2c     *Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent, how would you rate the following: the current state of the [PROVINCE] economy?*

## Price of gasoline

*A majority of Canadians give a negative rating to the price of gasoline.*

Over half of Canadians rate the current price of gasoline as bad (1 to 4 on a 10-point scale). One-quarter are neutral, and only around one in seven say it is good (score 7-10).

**Current price of gasoline**

Date	Positive rating (7-10)	Neutral (5-6)	Negative rating (1-4)	Not sure
Sept-17	18%	25%	54%	1%
<b>Jan-18</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>4%</b>

Q2d     *Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent, how would you rate the following: the current price of gasoline*

Rating the price of gasoline as good is still a minority, but higher among Manitobans (26%), those who feel the Canadian economy is good (20%), Allophones (23%), and those who believe their personal financial situation is good (20%).

## C. Personal financial situation

### Rating of personal financial situation

*Just over half think their personal financial situation is good; basically unchanged from September 2017.*

Just over half of Canadians rate their personal financial situation positively (score of 7-10); just under three in ten provide a neutral rating (5 or 6), and just under two in ten say their situation is bad (score 1-4).

**Personal financial situation rating**

Date	Positive rating (7-10)	Neutral (5-6)	Negative rating (1-4)	Not sure
Feb-16	53%	29%	18%	-
Oct-16	51%	30%	18%	1%
Sept-17	51%	30%	16%	3%
<b>Jan-18</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>3%</b>

Q2e *Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent, how would you rate the following: the current state of your own personal financial situation?*

Having a good personal financial situation is reported by half or more in all jurisdictions but Alberta/NT (46%). There is no difference by gender, and in this wave no difference by age. Positive ratings increase as household income increases, from a low of 29 percent among those with household incomes under \$40,000 to a high of 78 percent among households with incomes of \$150,000 or more. Being positive about personal finances is linked to full-time employment or to being retired, to higher levels of education (65% with a university degree) and to being mortgage-free (65%).

### Concern about job loss

*Close to six in ten say they are not concerned about job loss in the next six months; around one-quarter express concern.*

Approximately one-quarter of Canadians express concern that they or someone in their household may lose their job in the next six months; one in ten (10%) are very concerned (give a score of 10). Just under six in ten have little to no concern (just under four in ten – 37% – are not at all concerned) and just over one in ten (13%) express a neutral view.

**Concern about job loss**

Date	Concerned (7-10)	Neutral (5-6)	Not concerned (1-4)	Not sure/Not applicable
Feb-16	29%	12%	58%	1%
Oct-16	27%	14%	58%	1%
Sept-17	24%	11%	58%	7%
<b>Jan-18</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>8%</b>

Q3 *How concerned are you, if at all, that you or someone in your household may lose their job in the next six months? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all concerned and 10 is very concerned.*

Concern about potential job loss is fairly similar across the country in this wave, with Atlantic and B.C. residents expressing the lowest levels of concern. As in previous waves, concern is expressed more by those in the lowest household income bracket (31% with \$40,000 or less) than by more affluent Canadians, which is consistent with

the impression of focus group participants that lower income households may be falling further behind. Being concerned about potential household job loss is also higher among those who have negative views of their personal financial situation (37%), the state of the current economy (34%), Allophones (38%), the unemployed (31%), and those who are either not homeowners (27%) or who still have a mortgage (23%).

## D. Economic confidence

### **Impact of factors on job creation and job loss/on Canada's economy**

*Canadians generally feel many factors affect job creation/job loss and the Canadian economy overall to similar degrees.*

Canadians were read a list of economic factors. Half were asked to indicate on a one to ten scale how much of an impact each has on *job creation and job loss in Canada*, while the other half were asked to use the same scale to assess impact on the *Canadian economy*.

Responses follow generally similar patterns whether Canadians are asked about impacts on the economy in general or on jobs specifically. For both, NAFTA is a top-rated factor. For those asked about job creation and loss, government investment in skills training is equally important to NAFTA, while for those asked about the economy in general, government investment in infrastructure is also key. Canadians asked about the economy in general are more likely than those who focused on jobs to give higher importance to both government measures that provide money directly to Canadians and the price of oil.

#### **Impact of economic factors on jobs or the economy**

**% important impact rating (7-10)**

Factor	Job creation/loss (n=1,001)	Canada's economy (n=1,005)
NAFTA	60%	63%
Gov. investments in skills training	59%	55%
Gov. investments in infrastructure	56%	59%
Gov. investments in science, technology & innovation	56%	56%
Global economy	56%	58%
Level of confidence international investors have in Canada	54%	54%
Business tax rates and regulations	53%	53%
Gov. measures that provide money directly to Canadians	49%	55%
Price of oil	49%	55%

Q4. *How much of an impact do you feel each of the following factors have on [SPLIT SAMPLE: HALF RECEIVE: job creation and job loss in Canada/HALF RECEIVE: Canada's economy]? Please rank each on a 1 to 10 scale where 1 means it does not impact this at all, and 10 means it is a top factor.*

In general, rating most of these factors as being important is higher among those with university degrees, those who feel the Canadian economy is good, and those who indicate their own personal financial situation is good.

As well, the following subgroups are linked to feeling specific factors are important considerations:

- Albertans are the most likely to feel the price of oil, and business tax rates and regulations are important factors.

- Those with higher incomes (\$150,000 or more) tend to assign higher importance to: NAFTA, the global economy, international investor confidence, business taxes and regulations, and the price of oil.
- Assigning more importance to government programs that provide money directly to Canadians is higher among those with lower household incomes and those who are not homeowners.
- Those age 55 and over are somewhat less likely than younger Canadians to rate several factors as important, including international investor confidence, the price of oil, and business tax rates and regulations.

### Importance of themes when making budget decisions

*Job creation is the top theme for the federal government to consider when making budget decisions.*

When presented with a list of themes and asked to rate how important each is for the government to keep in mind while making budget decisions, Canadians give the highest priority to job creation (86%). The second highest rating is for “helping women and girls” (80%), which was presented to one-third of respondents. Just under eight in ten would prioritize the middle class (78%). Half of Canadians were asked about science (74%) and half about innovation (75%), with similar results. Over six in ten also rate as important gender equality (67%), asked of one-third of respondents, and helping Indigenous Peoples (62%), asked of all. Echoing the qualitative findings, feminism (presented to one-third of respondents) is rated as least important for government budget attention, but is still considered important by around half of those asked about it.

**Importance of budget decision themes**

Themes	January 2018
Job creation	86%
Helping women and girls (n=667)	80%
The middle class	78%
Innovation (n=1,002)	75%
Science (n=1,004)	74%
Gender equality (n=671)	67%
Helping Indigenous Peoples	62%
Feminism (n=668)	52%

Q5. *How important is it for the Government of Canada to keep the following themes in mind when making Budget decisions? Please rank each on a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 means it is not at all important and 10 means it is very important.*

Saying each of these is an important issue is higher among Atlantic Canadians, those aged 18 to 34 and people who feel the state of the Canadian economy is at least somewhat good. The following are additional notable subgroup differences:

- Helping Indigenous Peoples is a higher priority among residents of Ontario and those with household incomes under \$100,000.
- Gender equality is rated higher in Quebec and Atlantic Canada, and by those with household incomes under \$150,000.

- That the middle class is important is higher among those under age 55 and those with college diplomas.
- Those who are not homeowners are more likely than homeowners to indicate the following are important: job creation, helping women and girls, science, gender equality, helping Indigenous people, and feminism.

## E. Housing and interest rates

*Close to half say it would be easy for them to get a mortgage today; only two in ten benefit from increased interest rates. Mortgage holders are least likely to feel a two percent interest rate hike could be managed easily.*

All Canadians, whether they are homeowners (63%) or not (36%), were asked to indicate their level of agreement with two statements about mortgages and interest rates; those with a mortgage were also asked an additional question about the impact of a specific potential interest rate increase on their mortgage payments.<sup>1</sup>

Just under half of Canadians agree to some extent that it would be easy for them to get a home mortgage today; just over one-third disagree. Only two in ten indicate agreement that their personal financial situation will benefit from the recent increase in interest rates; close to half disagree, and one-quarter give a neutral response.

Mortgage holders (59% of homeowners, which transcribes to 37% of all Canadians) were asked about the impact of either a half percent, one percent or two percent interest rate increase. There is generally similar agreement (at or just under six in ten) that it would still be easy to keep making mortgage payments with an interest increase of either a half percent or one percent; in both cases, about one-quarter disagree. However, agreement drops to just over four in ten among those who were asked about a two percent increase, with one-third disagreeing and one-quarter giving a neutral response.

### Agreement with statements about mortgages and interest rates

Statements	Agree (7-10)	Neutral (5-6)	Disagree (1-4)	Not sure
It would be easy for you to get a home mortgage today	45%	17%	36%	3%
Your personal financial situation will benefit from the recent increase in interest rates	22%	26%	47%	5%
<b>Base: mortgage holders (each percentage asked of 1/3)</b>				
<i>"It would be easy for you to keep making mortgage payments if interest rates were to rise by..."</i>				
Half a percent (n=260)	56%	19%	26%	0%
One percent (n=260)	60%	16%	24%	0%
Two percent (n=259)	43%	26%	32%	0%

Q8. *Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is strongly disagree and 10 is strongly agree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

Agreement that one could *get a home mortgage easily today* (scoring 7-10) ranges from a low of 39 percent in B.C. to a high of 52 percent in Saskatchewan. Ability to get a home mortgage easily is, understandably, linked to sociodemographic status: being able to easily obtain a mortgage increases along with level of education or household income. It also varies by age (28% age 18 to 34, 53% age 35-54, 49% 55 and over), and is higher

<sup>1</sup> The Bank of Canada raised its benchmark interest rate to 1.25 percent, up from 1 percent, on January 17, the day before the start of interviewing.

among those working full-time or those who are retired. Ability to get a mortgage now is linked to already having a mortgage (55%), or having already paid off a mortgage (61%, vs. those who are not homeowners - 23%). Perceptions of being able to easily get a home mortgage is also lower among Allophones (33%) than Francophones (42%) or Anglophones (47%).

Agreeing their *personal financial situation will benefit from the recent interest rate increase* (scoring 7-10) is still a minority, but somewhat higher among, Quebec residents (29%), those age 55 and over (29%), retired persons (30%), Francophones (27%), homeowners with no mortgage (34%), and those who think the Canadian economy is good (26%) or their own personal financial situation is good (29%).

Those who think it would be easy to *keep making mortgage payments if interest rates were to rise* (score 7-10) by any percentage is highest among current mortgage holders with higher household incomes or who rate their personal financial situation as good. Being able to endure a two percent increase is a minority among most other subgroups, except for residents of Ontario (52%) and the Atlantic (67%).

## F. Gender equality

*Majorities are in agreement with most statements supportive of gender quality; there is more division for statements about women having equal opportunity now, or if sexual harassment and violence against women negatively impacts the Canadian economy.*

Canadians were read a series of statements about gender equality and asked to indicate their level of agreement with each. Most(over nine in ten) agree that everyone benefits when women and girls have equal access to the skills and education they need to succeed; and around eight in ten also agree that it is important to ensure equal representation of men and women in leadership roles, that a strong middle class depends on women and girls having equal opportunity to contribute fully to the economy, and that it is important for Canada to actively promote gender equality around the world. A smaller majority agree that women and girls currently have the same opportunities to succeed as men and boys (with around two in ten disagreeing to some extent.)

Canadians are most divided about whether there is a negative impact on Canada's economy due to sexual harassment and violence against women: half agree, and most of the remainder are divided between neutrality and disagreement.

### Agreement with statements about gender equality

Statements	Agree (7-10)	Neutral (5-6)	Disagree (1-4)	Not sure
Everyone benefits when women and girls have equal access to the skills and education they need to succeed	92%	5%	2%	1%
It is important to ensure equal representation of men and women in leadership roles	83%	9%	7%	1%
A strong middle class depends on women and girls having equal opportunity to contribute fully to our economy	79%	15%	5%	1%
It is important for Canada to actively promote gender equality around the world	78%	11%	10%	1%
Currently in Canada, women and girls have the same opportunities to succeed as men and boys	57%	24%	18%	1%
Sexual harassment and violence against women are having a negative impact on Canada's economy	49%	24%	23%	4%

Q9. *Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is strongly disagree and 10 is strongly agree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

Agreement with most pro-gender equality statements (score 7-10) tends to be slightly lower in the Prairies; Albertans are more likely to agree that women currently have the same opportunities as men. Agreement with pro-gender equality statements also higher among younger Canadians, although there is no age difference in agreement that a strong middle class depends on women and girls having equal opportunity to contribute. Agreement also tends to be linked to thinking one's personal financial situation, or Canada's, is good.

While strong proportions of men agree with most statements regarding gender equality, women typically agree to a greater extent, except for the statements that women and girls have the same opportunities to succeed as men and boys (more men agree) and that sexual harassment and violence have a negative impact on the economy (no statistical difference).

**Agreement with statements about gender equality**

% positive rating (7-10)
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<b>Statements</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Everyone benefits when women and girls have equal access to the skills and education they need to succeed	91%	94%
It is important to ensure equal representation of men and women in leadership roles	78%	88%
A strong middle class depends on women and girls having equal opportunity to contribute fully to our economy	76%	82%
It is important for Canada to actively promote gender equality around the world	72%	83%
Currently in Canada, women and girls have the same opportunities to succeed as men and boys	61%	53%
Sexual harassment and violence against women are having a negative impact on Canada's economy	47%	51%

Q9. *Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is strongly disagree and 10 is strongly agree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

## G. Conclusions

Canadians largely remain more positive than negative about the country's economy as a whole, but express more concern about the state of their provincial or territorial economy, and most have negative views about the price of gas. They are also more positive than negative about their personal financial situation, and most are not concerned about imminent job loss in their household. However, it should be noted that significant proportions, mainly in lower socio-economic strata, consider themselves to be struggling.

The economy remains an issue of top focus, and it is clear Canadians are interested in having the government focus on policies promoting job creation and helping the middle class.

The recent increase in the interest rate negatively impacts those who are struggling financially. Relatively few Canadians say they will benefit from increased interest rates; those who will benefit tend to be more financially stable, or have a paid-off mortgage. Just under half say it would be easy for them to get a home mortgage today, but again, this is higher among those with more financial security or a paid-off mortgage.

While most Canadians agree with improving gender equality and see this as having far-reaching benefits for the economy, the language used to describe this issue matters a great deal. "Helping women and girls" is regarded most favourably, "gender equality" is more neutral," and "feminism" has acquired negative connotations and may be felt to be confrontational, or putting women above men as opposed to on an equal footing.

## Appendix A: Qualitative methodology

Environics Research conducted a series of 10 focus groups with members of the general population between December 18, 2017 and January 11, 2018.

### Group composition

Two sessions each were conducted in Mississauga, Montreal (suburban), Kitchener, Winnipeg and Vancouver (Tri-Cities). In each community one session was conducted with lower and middle income Canadians, and one session was conducted with higher income Canadians. Eight sessions were conducted in English and two were conducted in French. The 10 sessions were distributed as follows:

Date and time	Group Composition
December 18, 5:30 p.m. EST	Low/middle income – Mississauga, Ontario
December 18, 7:30 p.m. EST	Higher income – Mississauga, Ontario
December 19, 5:30 p.m. EST	Low/middle income – Montreal, Quebec (suburban)
December 19, 7:30 p.m. EST	Higher income – Montreal, Quebec (suburban)
December 19, 5:30 p.m. EST	Low/middle income – Kitchener, Ontario
December 19, 7:30 p.m. EST	Higher income – Kitchener, Ontario
January 10, 5:30 p.m. CST	Low/middle income – Winnipeg, Manitoba
January 10, 7:30 p.m. CST	Higher income – Winnipeg, Manitoba
January 11, 5:30 p.m. PST	Low/middle income – Vancouver (Tri-Cities), British Columbia
January 11, 7:30 p.m. PST	Higher income – Vancouver (Tri-Cities), British Columbia

The groups lasted approximately 120 minutes, and consisted of between eight and 10 participants (out of 11 people recruited for each group).

### Recruitment

Environics developed the recruitment screener and provided it to Finance Canada for review prior to finalizing. Participants were screened to ensure they were invited to the appropriate session according to household income. Participants were also screened to ensure the groups included a mix of gender, education, age, and that they would be comfortable voicing their opinions in front of others. Normal focus group exclusions were in place (marketing research, media, and employment in the federal government, and recent related focus group attendance). All participants were offered a \$100 honorarium to encourage participation and thank them for their commitment, except groups in Vancouver, where they were offered \$150 as incentives in Vancouver are typically higher and respondents travelled further. All groups were video and audio recorded for use in subsequent analysis by the research team – during the recruitment process and at the session sign-in, participants provided consent to such recording and were given privacy and confidentiality assurances.

## Moderation

Two senior researchers were used to moderate all sessions, as follows:

- Rick Nadeau, Senior Associate, moderated all sessions in Montreal.
- Derek Leebosh, Vice President, Environics, moderated all remaining sessions.

All qualitative research work was conducted in accordance with the professional standards established by the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) and applicable PIPEDA legislation.

## Statement of limitations

Qualitative research provides insight into the range of opinions held within a population, rather than the weights of the opinions held, as would be measured in a quantitative study. The results of this type of research should be viewed as indicative rather than projectable.

## Appendix B: Quantitative methodology

### Background and research objectives

Finance Canada identified a need for qualitative and quantitative research to explore in more detail Canadians' overall concerns and perceptions about the current state of the Canadian economy, emerging economic issues and their expectations about the role of the Government of Canada in the economy.

**Use of research:** By gauging and analyzing the opinions of Canadians, the Government of Canada gains insights into important policy areas related to the mandate of the department and related services. The information gained through this public opinion research will be shared throughout Finance Canada to assist it when establishing priorities, developing policies, and planning programs and services.

### Methodology

Environics conducted a telephone survey with 2,006 adult residents of Canada, from January 18 to 31, 2018. A survey of this size will yield results which can be considered accurate to within +/- 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Margins of error vary based on a variety of factors: they are larger for subgroups of the population and for questions where 50 percent of respondents answered one way and 50 percent answered another way. The margin of error typically decreases as the percent for a particular response approaches 0% or 100%. Respondents were informed about privacy and anonymity, and told that the survey was registered with the MRIA National registration system.

### Sample design and weighting

The survey targeted adult Canadians (18 years of age or older) and used an industry-standard “most recent birthday” selection technique to identify a respondent. Cellphone sample was also included and cellphone-only households identified.

The sample was stratified by region to allow for meaningful coverage of lower population areas:

Region (% of population)	Sample Size	Margin of error*
Atlantic Canada (7%)	203	+/- 6.9
Quebec (23%)	501	+/- 4.4
Ontario (38%)	602	+/- 4.0
Prairies/NWT/Nunavut (19%)	400	+/- 4.9
B.C./Yukon (13%)	300	+/- 5.7
CANADA (100%)	2,006	+/-2.2

\* In percentage points, at the 95% confidence level

The survey data were weighted to the national adult population (region, age and gender).

### Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed by Finance Canada representatives and incorporated tracking questions from previous economic surveys. Environics reviewed the questionnaire to ensure appropriate design, and identify

any programming or analysis issues, providing suggestions and guidance on the survey instrument. Both the English and French versions of the final study questionnaire are included in Appendix E. The questionnaire averaged 12 minutes to deliver.

### **Pre-test**

An initial pre-test of 22 interviews (11 in English and 11 in French) was conducted on January 18, 2018 and audited via recordings by Environics and Government of Canada staff. These interviews included standard GC pre-test probing questions. No changes were required.

### **Fieldwork**

Interviewing was conducted by Elemental Data Collection (EDCI) using Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technology. Field supervisors were present at all times to ensure accurate interviewing and recording of responses. A minimum of 10 percent of each interviewer's work was unobtrusively monitored for quality control in accordance with the standards set out by the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA).

Data analysts programmed the questionnaire in CATI then performed thorough testing to ensure accuracy in set-up and data collection. This validation ensured that the data entry process conformed to the survey's basic logic. The CATI system handles sampling dialling, quotas and questionnaire completion (skip patterns, branching and valid ranges). The system also ensures that callbacks are conducted in a timely manner. No number is called twice in a two-hour period. Callbacks are conducted on different days of the week and at different times of the day (i.e., morning, afternoon). This system ensures all scheduled appointments are kept, maximizing the response rate and sample representativeness. Up to eight callbacks were made to reach each person selected in the sample.

### **Quality control**

The questionnaire was programmed on a state-of-the-art Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. EDCI's interviewing facilities permit the constant supervision of interviewers and unobtrusive monitoring of calls, with between 10 and 30 percent of all interviews monitored for quality control purposes. All respondents were offered the opportunity to complete the survey in their official language of choice. All research work was conducted in accordance with the standards established by federal government Public Opinion Research (POR) requirements, as well as applicable federal legislation (Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, or PIPEDA). The survey was registered with the MRIA's research registration system, which permits the public to verify a survey call, inform themselves about the industry and/or register a complaint.

### **Completion results**

The sample for this survey consisted of 2,006 interviews with adult Canadians. The effective response rate for the survey is seven percent.<sup>2</sup> This is calculated as the number of responding participants (completed interviews plus those disqualified because of survey requirements and quotas being filled), divided by unresolved numbers (e.g., busy, no answer) plus non-responding households or individuals (e.g., refusals, language barrier, missed callbacks) plus responding participants [R/(U+IS+R)]. The disposition of all contacts is presented in the following table:

---

<sup>2</sup> This response rate calculation is based on a formula developed by MRIA in consultation with the Government of Canada (Public Works and Government Services).

## Completion results

	TOTAL	Landline	Cell
<b>Total Numbers Attempted</b>	<b>120,138</b>	<b>28,051</b>	<b>92,087</b>
<b>Out-of-scope - Invalid</b>	<b>56,372</b>	<b>6,828</b>	<b>49,544</b>
<b>Unresolved (U)</b>	<b>39,135</b>	<b>10,271</b>	<b>28,864</b>
<i>No answer/Answering machine</i>	39,135	10,271	28,864
<b>In-scope - Non-responding (IS)</b>	<b>3,947</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>2,481</b>
<i>Language barrier</i>	623	262	361
<i>Incapable of completing (ill/deceased)</i>	427	239	188
<i>Callback (Respondent not available)</i>	2,897	965	1,932
<b>Total Asked</b>	<b>20,684</b>	<b>9,486</b>	<b>11,198</b>
<i>Refusal</i>	15,735	7,360	8,375
<i>Termination</i>	308	129	179
<b>In-scope - Responding units (R)</b>	<b>4,641</b>	<b>1,997</b>	<b>2,644</b>
<i>Completed Interview</i>	2,006	919	1,087
<i>Non Qualified - CELL PHONE NOT SAFE</i>	29	0	29
<i>Non Qualified - AGE</i>	119	0	119
<i>Non Qualified - Quota Full</i>	2,487	1,078	1,409
<b>Response Rate (%)</b>	<b>7.28</b>	<b>9.41</b>	<b>6.21</b>
<b>Incidence</b>	<b>43.22</b>	<b>46.02</b>	<b>41.11</b>

The final incidence is 43% using the formula (*completes / (quota full + completes + non-qualified)*):

$$2,006/(2,487 + 2,006 + 148) = 43.22\%$$

## Non-response bias analysis

The table below presents a profile of the final sample, compared to the actual population of Canada (2016 Census information). Due to age quotas set for the survey, the proportion of people aged 55+ interviewed is slightly lower than in the population; this was corrected by age weighting. The final sample also somewhat underrepresents those with high school or less education, which is a typical pattern for telephone surveys in Canada (e.g., individuals with more education are more likely to respond to telephone surveys). Use of cell sample and setting age quotas minimized non-response of younger respondents compared to land line-only surveys.

**Sample profile**

	Sample*	Canada (2016 Census)
<b>Gender (18+)</b>		
Male	50	49
Female	50	51
<b>Age</b>		
18-34	28	27
35-54	39	34
55+	33	39
<b>Education level <sup>α</sup></b>		
High school diploma or less	28	35
Trades/college/post sec no degree	36	36
University degree	36	29

\* Data are unweighted and percentaged on those giving a response to each demographic question

<sup>α</sup> Actual Census categories differ from those used in this survey and have been recalculated to correspond. Statistics Canada figures for education are for Canadians aged 25 to 64 years.

## Appendix C: Moderation guide

**Environics Research**  
**Focus Groups on Canada's Economy – Winter 2017/18**  
**Finance Canada – FINAL**  
**PN9733**

### **1. Introduction to Procedures (10 minutes)**

Welcome to the focus group. We want to hear your opinions. Feel free to agree or disagree. Even if you are just one person among ten that takes a certain point of view, you could represent a lot of people who feel the same way as you do.

You don't have to direct all your comments to me; you can exchange ideas and arguments with each other too. There are some observers watching the session on the other side of the two way mirror and they are part of the research team.

We are also video-taping this session to help me write my report. The video will only be used internally to analyse the research and will not be released to anyone else. I may take some notes during the group to remind myself of things also. Anything you say here will remain confidential and anonymous and any comments you make will not be linked to you by name in any reporting we do on this project.

I should also mention that I work for a public opinion research company. I do not work for the Government of Canada, which is the client that commissioned the research.

The host/hostess will pay you your incentives at the end of the session. Please turn off your cellphones.

Let's go around the table so you can each introduce yourselves to the group. Tell us your name and a little bit about yourself, such as what kind of work you do if you work outside the home and who lives with you in your house.

### **2. Warm-up – General context (5 minutes)**

Let's get started with a broad question. As you know we have three level of government in Canada – federal, provincial and municipal. I want to focus specifically on the federal government. Could you each write down on paper what you think is the number one thing you think the federal government has been getting right over the last year? Then could you each write down what's the number one thing you think the federal government has been getting wrong in the last year?

Let's hear what people wrote. What did people say was the thing the government has gotten right?

What has the government gotten wrong?

### **3. Canada's Economy (15 minutes)**

I want to focus a bit more on economic issues. How would you say the Canadian economy as a whole is doing these days?

Would you say that things are better or worse than they were a year ago?

**IF BETTER OR WORSE:** In what way?

How do you think the economy will be in coming year? Do you think things will get better or worse next year?  
Why? Why not?

Let's look at the economic situation from a more personal perspective. To what extent would you say the overall economy is working for you (or not working for you)? Why do you say that?

Has the Government of Canada taken any steps to help people like you deal with the rising cost of living? What have they done? How has that benefitted you?

Now, I want to shift focus a bit to the Government of Canada's financial situation. First of all, what is the government's financial situation? Do they have a surplus or a deficit, that is to say that they have spent more than they took in in revenue?

In fact, the federal government has been running deficits for each of the last few years. How do you feel about that? Is it something that is a very major concern for you personally or is not that big a deal?

**IF CONCERNED:** Why does the deficit concern you?

How important is it to you that the government make sure that the deficit doesn't get any bigger?

What about gradually reducing it year over year?

There are basically two ways for a government to reduce the deficit – one is to increase revenues by raising taxes. Another is to spend less. If reducing the deficit were to mean cuts in spending on things like new infrastructure or the Canada Child Benefit or transfers to the province for health and education, would you be OK with that?

Should the federal government set a target date in the future when the budget will be balanced? If so, how many years down the road should that be?

Has anyone ever heard of a "debt to GDP ratio"? If yes, what is it?

In fact, the "debt to GDP ratio" means what our accumulated national debt is as a percentage of the growth rate of the Canadian economy. Currently, even though the federal government has an annual deficit, some economists say that our economy is growing fast enough that the overall national debt is stable and manageable. Had any of you heard that before?

What do you make of that? Does that reassure you when it comes to the deficit?

Do you feel that as long as the debt to GDP ratio is getting smaller from year to year, we are in good shape?

**4. Gender and equity budgeting (10 minutes)**

Last winter the Government of Canada brought in its 2017 budget. That budget included a “Gender Statement” that it would try to make sure that Budget decisions and policies would also address economic inequalities between men and women. Had any of you heard about that?

What do you think about the idea of the federal budget also addressing inequalities between men and women? Is that a good idea? Is it realistic?

ADDED TO JANUARY GROUPS:

What if the government told you their budget was to be a “feminist budget,” what would that mean to you? How would you feel about this?

ADDED TO JANUARY GROUPS:

And, what if the government said their budget would centre on “women and girls”? What would that mean to you? How would you feel about that?

ADDED TO JANUARY GROUPS:

What do you prefer in terms of how the theme of the budget is described? A “feminist budget” or a “budget centred on women and girls”?

Imagine that you were putting together the budget for the federal government. What specifically would you include in it that could accomplish this goal (addressing gender inequality)?

**PROBE:** What about something like investing in child care so that more women can participate in the workforce?

As you may know, some groups in Canadian society are underrepresented in the workforce. These include women, Indigenous Peoples, younger Canadians and persons with disabilities. Or even if they have jobs they are often not as good or as well paying. What could or should the federal government do to address this?

**PROBE:** What about programs to support entrepreneurship among these groups? Laws to make workplaces more inclusive and accommodating?

**5. Taxation (20 minutes)**

Have any of you heard anything about the federal government making changes to taxation policy? **IF YES**, what have you heard?

Have any of you heard anything about a proposal to limit the “income sprinkling”? What have you heard? **NB:** Income sprinkling lets high-income people use a private corporation to reduce their personal taxes by sharing their income with family members who don’t work in the business, by putting them on the payroll.

Is it a good or a bad idea to crack down on “income sprinkling”?

Have any of you heard of something called “passive income investing”? If yes, what is it? Is it something the government should crack down on?

Explanation: Some individuals can gain a benefit by retaining passive investments in a corporation, taking advantage of the fact that corporate income tax rates are much lower than personal tax rates for higher-income individuals. This is a problem when an individual holds money inside a corporation, not to invest it in growing the business, but simply to shield it from the higher personal tax rate. Since this sort of arrangement is not available to someone who collects a paycheque every two weeks, it can mean gaining a tax advantage over them.

Has anyone heard anything about the federal government cracking down on international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance? What have you heard?

As you know, cannabis is in the process of being legalized in Canada. Once it is legalized, it will also be taxable and the federal government will get new revenue. Here is a list of things that the new revenue from taxes on cannabis could be spent on. **CIRCULATE LIST** Please rank your preferences from preferred (ranked as a "1" to least preferred, ranked as a "5").

Let's go through these one by one. How many of you ranked each as the top priority? Why?

- Provide the money to provinces through transfers that fund health care
- Invest in job skills training or retraining.
- Provide funding for public education about the effects of cannabis.
- Use it to reduce the deficit.
- Cut taxes for those in the lowest tax bracket.
- Provide money to municipalities in order to address their needs

Besides the options on the sheet in front of you, are there other things you'd like the federal government to do with the revenue from cannabis?

## **6. Standard of Living (15 minutes)**

I want to now talk about how you feel about our overall standard of living in Canada. First of all, can anyone define what we mean by "standard of living"?

How would you say the current standard of living for Canadians compares to the standard of living Canadians had 5 years ago? How many of you think the standard of living now is BETTER than it was 5 years ago? How many thinks is WORSE now? How many think it's the same?

What about 10 years ago? Better off worse? Worse Off? Same?

RECORD ON FLIP CHART

In what ways are we now better off?

And in what ways would you say we are worse off?

What about looking ahead to the standard of living of the next generation – let's say 25 years from now? Do you think the next generation will be better off, worse off, or about the same as we are? **SHOW OF HANDS**

And in what ways do you feel they will be better off and in what ways do you feel they will be worse off? What about the factors on the flip chart?

Is there anything else that is not on our flip charts here that you would add as ways in which the next generation of Canadians will be better or worse off 25 years from now in terms of standard of living?

## 7. Workplace of the Future (10 minutes)

Now let's discuss the workplace of the future. What things come to mind when you think about what work will look like 10 years from now and how it could be different from the way it is today?

What types of things will influence our ability to succeed in the workplace of the future?

Here is a list of things that could have an impact on the future of work. Thinking about your own career path, how concerned are you with each of these things moving forward. Please score each item on a 5-point scale where 1 means "not concerned about this at all" and 5 means "very concerned about this".

How many of you scored [INSERT LIST ITEM] a 4 or a 5 on the 5-point scale [**SHOW OF HANDS**]?

- Role of technology, like automation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), etc.
- Having the right skills for the jobs of tomorrow
- Having the right education for the jobs of tomorrow
- "Job Churn" (i.e., having many jobs or careers over the course of your life)
- "Precarious work" (i.e., more and more jobs that are unstable, contract to contract, with few benefits or job security)

What specifically do you think the Government of Canada should do to help Canadians prepare for the future of work?

**PROMPT:** What about investing in training programs? Making Canada more of a leader in innovation and technology?

Has anyone heard of the Working Income Tax Benefit (WITB)?

**IF ANYONE HAS HEARD OF IT:** How would you describe the WITB to someone in one sentence? You can write it down first and then tell us what you came up with

In fact, the WITB is a refundable tax credit that supports low-income workers. This measure provides important income support to low-income Canadians to improve the return from working. In 2016, the WITB provided more than \$1.1 billion in benefits to over 1.4 million Canadians.

Has anyone or anyone's family member received the WITB? What are benefits of WITB? Are there any drawbacks?

What type of person do you think would benefit from WITB?

Should WITB come in the form of a refundable tax credit as it currently is, or should it be changed so that it delivers an equivalent benefit through a monthly or annual cheque?

**8. Household Indebtedness (10 minutes)**

I want to ask now about indebtedness – which means the total amount of debt, including mortgages, student loans, credit cards or lines of credit, among others, that you might currently hold.

Who has heard that interest rates went up recently on loans like mortgages and lines of credit? [**SHOW OF HANDS**]

Has the recent increase in interest rates had any impact on you at all? Has it changed your lifestyle or your intentions to buy anything?

To what extent are any of you worried about rising interest rates down the road? Why? What would it mean for you personally if interest rates went up significantly?

Could higher interest rates also be a good thing?

**9. Wrap up (5 minutes)**

Let me leave you with a small exercise while I go to the backroom to see if my colleagues have any other questions for you: If you had an additional \$200 each month, what would you do with it? I need you to be honest here! Write your thoughts down in front of you...we will discuss when I get back.

We have covered a lot of topics today and really appreciate you taking the time and energy to come down here and give your opinion. Your input is very important and insightful. To conclude, I wanted to ask you whether you have any last thoughts that you want to give the Government of Canada about today's topic.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

**Handouts**

# Cannabis tax revenues

Here is a list of things that the new revenue from taxes on cannabis could be spent on.

Please rank your preferences from most preferred (**1**) to least preferred (**6**).

- A. Provide the money to provinces through transfers that fund health care
- B. Invest in job skills training or retraining
- C. Provide funding for public education about the effects of cannabis
- D. Use it to reduce the deficit
- E. Cut taxes for those in the lowest tax bracket
- F. Provide money to municipalities in order to address their needs

# Workplaces of the future

Thinking about your own career path, how concerned are you with each of these things moving forward?

Please score each item on a 5-point scale where 1 means “not concerned about this at all” and 5 means “very concerned about this”].

## A. Role of technology, like automation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), etc.

1	2	3	4	5
Not concerned about this at all			Very concerned about this	

## B. Having the right skills for the jobs of tomorrow

1	2	3	4	5
Not concerned about this at all			Very concerned about this	

## C. Having the right education for the jobs of tomorrow

1	2	3	4	5
Not concerned about this at all			Very concerned about this	

## D. “Job Churn” (i.e., having many jobs or careers over the course of your life)

1	2	3	4	5
Not concerned about this at all			Very concerned about this	

## E. “Precarious work” (i.e., more and more jobs that are unstable, contract to contract, with few benefits or job security)

1	2	3	4	5
Not concerned about this at all			Very concerned about this	

## Appendix D: Recruitment screener

December 8, 2017

**Environics Research Group Limited**  
**Focus Groups on Canada's Economy**  
**Finance Canada**  
**PN9733**

**Recruitment for Group Discussion**

Respondent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home #: \_\_\_\_\_

Business #: \_\_\_\_\_

Group #: \_\_\_\_\_

Recruiter: \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP 1 Mississauga Monday, December 18 5:30 pm Low/middle income	GROUP 2 Mississauga Monday, December 18 7:30 pm High income	GROUP 3 Montreal (suburban) Tuesday, December 19 5:30 pm Low/middle income	GROUP 4 Montreal (suburban) Tuesday, December 19 7:30 pm High income
GROUP 5 Kitchener Tuesday, December 19 5:30 pm Low/middle income	GROUP 6 Kitchener Tuesday, December 19 7:30 pm High income	GROUP 7 Winnipeg Wednesday, Jan. 10 5:30 pm Low/middle income	GROUP 8 Winnipeg Wednesday, Jan. 10 7:30 pm High income
GROUP 9 Vancouver (Tri-Cities) Thursday, Jan. 11 5:30 pm Low/middle income	GROUP 10 Vancouver (Tri-Cities) Thursday, Jan. 11 7:30 pm 7:30 pm High income		

**Eleven recruits per session. \$100 incentive, except Groups 9 and 10 in Vancouver where it will be \$150.**

*High income" is defined as anyone with a personal annual income of over \$80,000 or anyone in a household with multiple incomes with an annual household income of over \$100,000. In Montreal and Winnipeg, a personal income of over \$60,000 or a household income of over \$80,000 also counts as "high income"*

Hello/Bonjour, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ from Environics Research. We are calling today to invite participants to attend a focus group discussion we are conducting on behalf of the Government of Canada exploring issues around the current state of the Canadian economy. This study is a research project, not an attempt to sell or market anything. Your participation in the research is completely voluntary, confidential and your decision to participate or not will not affect any dealings you may have with the government.

The format is a “round table” discussion led by a research professional. A video tape of the session will be produced for research purposes. The tapes will be used only by the research professional to assist in preparing a report on the research findings and will be destroyed once the report is completed. All information collected, used and/or disclosed will be used for research purposes only and administered as per the requirements of the Privacy Act.

The session will last a maximum of 2 hours and you will receive a cash gift as a thank you for attending the session. May we have your permission to ask you or someone else in your household some further question to see if you/they fit in our study? This will take about 5 minutes.

NB: If a participant asks for information on the research company conducting the research they can be told: Environics Research is located at 33 Bloor Street East, Suite 900, Toronto Ontario and can be reached at 416-920-9010.

Yes.....**1 – CONTINUE**

No.....**2 – THANK AND TERMINATE**

**1. Are you or is any member of your household or your immediate family employed in:**

	No	Yes
A market research, communications or public relations firm, or an advertising agency		
Media (Radio, Television, Newspapers, Magazines, etc.)		
A federal or provincial government department or agency		
A political party		

IF YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE – THANK AND TERMINATE

**2. INDICATE:**

Male                    1                50/50 split

Female                 2

**3. How many people, including yourself, live in your household?**

One                    ASK Q. 4

Two                    SKIP TO Q. 5

Three                  SKIP TO Q. 5

Four or more          SKIP TO Q. 5

IF ONLY ONE PERSON IN HOUSEHOLD ASK:

- 4. Which of the following categories best corresponds to your total personal annual income, before taxes, for 2017?**

**READ**

01 - Under \$30,000	GROUPS 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9
02 - \$30,000 to \$60,000	GROUPS 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9
03 - \$60,000 to \$80,000	GROUPS 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9
04 - \$80,000 to \$100,000	GROUPS 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10
05 - \$100,000 to \$150,000	GROUPS 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10
06 - \$150,000 and over	GROUPS 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10
99 - REFUSE/DK/NA	TERMINATE

\*NB: IN MONTREAL AND WINNIPEG THE HIGHER INCOMES CUT OFFS ARE LOWER (\$60k instead of \$80k) THAN IN THE OTHER CITIES

ASK ALL FROM HOUSEHOLDS WITH MORE THAN ONE PERSON

- 5. Which of the following categories best corresponds to the total annual income, before taxes, of all members of your household, for 2017? READ**

01 - Under \$30,000	GROUPS 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9
02 - \$30,000 to \$60,000	GROUPS 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9
03 - \$60,000 to \$80,000	GROUPS 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9
04 - \$80,000 to \$100,000	GROUPS 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10
05 - \$100,000 to \$150,000	GROUPS 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10
06 - \$150,000 and over	GROUPS 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10
99 - REFUSE/DK/NA	TERMINATE

\*NB: IN MONTREAL AND WINNIPEG THE HIGHER INCOMES CUT OFFS ARE LOWER (\$80k instead of \$100k) THAN IN THE OTHER CITIES

ASK ALL FOR GROUPS IN MONTREAL

- 6. What part of the Greater Montreal area do you live in?**

NB: Montreal participants must be from off-island suburbs such as Laval, north shore suburbs such as Terrebonne, St. Eustache, Repentigny, etc. or south shore suburbs such as Brossard, La Prairie, St. Lambert, Longueuil, Chateauguay, etc.

**7. What part of the Greater Vancouver area do you live in?**

- 01 – Coquitlam
- 02 – Port Coquitlam
- 03 – Port Moody
- 04 – Other      **TERMINATE**

NB: Vancouver participants must be from Tri-Cities (Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody)

ASK ALL

**8. We have been asked to speak to participants from all different ages. So that we may do this accurately, may I have your exact age please? \_\_\_\_\_ . WRITE IN**

- |                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Under 18           | TERMINATE |
| 18-24 years of age | 1         |
| 25-34 years of age | 2         |
| 35-44 years of age | 3 GET MIX |
| 45-54 years of age | 4         |
| 55-64 years of age | 5         |
| 65-74 years of age | 6         |
| 75 years or more   | TERMINATE |

**9. Could you please tell me what is the last level of education that you completed? GET MIX**

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Some High School only.   | 1 |
| Completed High School    | 2 |
| Trade School certificate | 3 |
| Some Post secondary      | 4 |
| Completed Post secondary | 5 |
| Graduate degree          | 6 |

**10. Are you working (CHECK QUOTAS)?**

- |                           |                                      |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Full Time (35 hrs. +)     | 4 minimum                            |
| Part Time (under 35 hrs.) | 2 maximum                            |
| Homemaker                 | 1 maximum                            |
| Student                   | 1 maximum GROUPS 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, ONLY |
| Retired                   | 2 maximum                            |
| Unemployed                | 1 maximum GROUPS 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, ONLY |

**11. What is your current occupation?**

Type of Job

Type of Company

IF MARRIED ASK: WHAT IS YOUR SPOUSE'S OCCUPATION?

Type of Job

Type of Company

TERMINATE IF OCCUPATION RELATES TO EXCLUSIONS IN Q. 1

**12. What is your ethnic background?**

IN MISSISSAUGA, SUBURBAN MONTREAL AND TRI-CITIES VANCOUVER Recruit at least two per group who are of non-European descent or who are other visible minorities (i.e., Chinese or South Asian, but could include aboriginal people or Afro-Canadians as well). In Kitchener and Winnipeg, there is no minimum but it would still be desirable to have some.

**13. Participants in group discussions are asked to voice their opinions and thoughts, how comfortable are you in voicing your opinions in front of others? Are you... (read list)**

Very comfortable                    1- MINIMUM 5 PER GROUP

Fairly comfortable                    2

Not very comfortable                3 TERMINATE

Very uncomfortable                 4 TERMINATE

**14. Have you ever attended a focus group or a one-to-one discussion for which you have received a sum of money, here or elsewhere?**

Yes            1                    MAXIMUM 5 PER GROUP

No            2                    (SKIP TO Q.15)

IF YES ASK:

**15. When did you last attend one of these discussions?**

(TERMINATE IF IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS)

**16. How many focus groups or one-to-one discussions have you attended in the past 5 years?**

(SPECIFY)

IF 5 OR MORE, TERMINATE.

**17. Sometimes participants are also asked to write out their answers on a questionnaire. Is there any reason why you could not participate? If you need glasses to read, please remember to bring them. (Add hearing impairment.)**

Yes                  1 TERMINATE

No                  2 CONTINUE

NOTE: TERMINATE IF RESPONDENT OFFERS ANY REASON SUCH AS SIGHT OR HEARING PROBLEM, A WRITTEN OR VERBAL LANGUAGE PROBLEM, A CONCERN WITH NOT BEING ABLE TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY.

**18. I would like to invite you to attend the focus group session where you will exchange your opinions in a moderated discussion with other Canadians from your community. The session will be taped and observed but your participation will be confidential. Do you consent to take part in the focus group?**

Yes                  1 CONTINUE

No                  2 TERMINATE

**19. We will contact you again before the date of the session to confirm your attendance. Do you consent to this?**

Yes                  1 CONTINUE

No                  2 TERMINATE

INTERVIEWER TELL RESPONDENT

PLEASE BRING ALONG SOME FORM OF IDENTIFICATION AS YOU MAY BE ASKED TO SHOW IT.

**20. Please bring along some form of identification as you will be asked to show it. Only you may attend, you cannot send a substitute. The session is 2 hours in length, but we are asking that all participants arrive 15 minutes prior to the start time of the session. Are you able to be at the research facility 15 minutes prior to the session time?**

Yes                  1 CONTINUE

No                  2 TERMINATE

I would like to invite you to a group discussion on \_\_\_\_\_. The session will last 2 hours in total and you will receive \$100 to thank you for your participation. (**NB: Incentive will be \$150 for the Tri-Cities Vancouver sessions**)

**Location:**

Mississauga – Monday, December 18 (5:30-7:30 and 7:30-9:30pm)

InfoQuest

6655 Kitimat Rd., Mississauga

(905) 567-9009

Montreal – Tuesday, December 19 (5:30-7:30 and 7:30-9:30pm)

CRC Montreal

1610 Rue Ste-Catherine Ouest, Bureau 411

1-800-932-7511

Kitchener - Tuesday, December 19th (5:30pm and 7:30pm)  
Metroline  
7 Duke Street West, Suite 301  
(519) 584-7700

Winnipeg – Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> (5:30-7:30 and 7:30-9:30pm)  
NRG Research Group  
213 Notre Dame Ave., Suite 804  
1-888-265-2422

Vancouver – Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup> (5:30-7:30 and 7:30-9:30pm)  
CRC Vancouver  
1398 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
1-866-455-9311

**INTERVIEWERS:** Tell respondent that it is a small group and anyone who does not show or cancels at the last minute will compromise the project. Make sure they know we feel their opinions are valuable and we are serious about finding out what they have to offer.

**NOTE:** PLEASE TELL ALL RESPONDENTS THAT THEY WILL RECEIVE A CONFIRMATION CALL THE DAY PRIOR TO THE SESSION. IF FOR SOME REASON THEY HAVE NOT HEARD FROM US THEY SHOULD CONTACT US AT \_\_\_\_\_ . IF THEIR NAME IS NOT ON THE ATTENDANCE FORM THEY WILL NOT BE ADMITTED TO THE GROUP. IF A RESPONDENT HAS ANY OTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH, THEY SHOULD ALSO CONTACT US AT THIS NUMBER.

## Appendix E: Survey questionnaire

January 2018

### ***Finance Canada Survey on Attitudes towards Canada's Economy (Winter)***

Hello/Bonjour, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am calling from Environics on behalf of the Government of Canada. We are conducting a survey of attitudes and opinions of Canadians 18 years of age and over. Would you prefer that I continue in English or French? Préférez-vous continuer en français ou en anglais ? (**IF NEEDED:** Je vous remercie. Quelqu'un vous appellera bientôt pour mener le sondage en français.)

English	1
Français	2

The survey takes about 12 minutes and your responses will be kept entirely confidential and anonymous. If at any time during the survey you would prefer not to answer a specific question, you are allowed to do so.

Your decision to participate is voluntary. This call may be monitored or recorded for quality control purposes. This survey is registered with the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRI) and the information provided will be administered according to the requirements of the Privacy Act.

**IF LANDLINE SAMPLE:** May I please speak with the person in your household who is 18 years of age or older and who has had the most recent birthday? Would that be you? [IF THAT PERSON IS NOT AVAILABLE ARRANGE CALLBACK]"

**IF CELLPHONE SAMPLE:** Are you at least 18 years old?

#### **IF CELL PHONE SAMPLE ASK A AND B**

**A      Are you in a safe place to talk – for example not operating a motor vehicle?**

Yes	[RE-INTRODUCE YOURSELF, IF NECESSARY]
No	[ARRANGE CALLBACK DATE/TIME]

**B      At home, do you have a traditional telephone line other than a cellphone?**

Yes	CHECK AGAINST QUOTA
No	CHECK AGAINST QUOTA

**[IF LANDLINE RECORD REGION FROM SAMPLE]**

**[IF CELL PHONE SAMPLE ASK C]****C In which province or territory do you live? DO NOT READ LIST**

- |                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| Newfoundland          | 1  |
| Prince Edward Island  | 2  |
| Nova Scotia           | 3  |
| New Brunswick         | 4  |
| Quebec                | 5  |
| Ontario               | 6  |
| Manitoba              | 7  |
| Saskatchewan          | 8  |
| Alberta               | 9  |
| British Columbia      | 10 |
| Yukon                 | 11 |
| Northwest Territories | 12 |
| Nunavut               | 13 |

**D Gender [DO NOT ASK: record based on interviewer observation]**

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| Female | 1 |
| Male   | 2 |

**MAIN SURVEY*****Assessments of Economy***

- 1A. (T) Thinking of the issues facing Canada today, which one would you say the Government of Canada should focus on most? [CAPTURE FIRST MENTION]**

[NO PRE-CODED LIST - INTERVIEWER NOTE: TOP ANSWER MUST BE RECORDED FIRST. ALL OTHER RESPONSES WILL BE RECORDED ON THE NEXT SCREEN.]

99 – [DO NOT READ] Don't know/Refused – SKIP TO Q.2

- 1B. (T) Are there any others? [IF NECESSARY: Thinking of the issues facing Canada today, which one would you say the Government of Canada should focus on most?]**

RECORD VERBATIM - [MULTIPLE MENTIONS]

99 – [DO NOT READ] Don't know/Refused

- Q2. (T) Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent, how would you rate the following: [RANDOMIZE b TO f] REPEAT SCALE AS NEEDED**

- a. the current state of the Canadian economy?
- b. the current state of the United States economy?
- c. the current state of the [PROVINCE] economy?
- d. the current price of gasoline?
- e. the current state of your own personal financial situation?

Terrible 1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

Excellent 10

VOLUNTEERED

Not sure 99

**Q3. How concerned are you, if at all, that you or someone in your household may lose their job in the next six months? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all concerned and 10 is very concerned.**

Not at all concerned	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9
Very concerned	10
VOLUNTEERED	
Not applicable/Retired/Not working	98
Don't know	99

### **Economic Confidence**

**Q4. How much of an impact do you feel each of the following factors have on [SPLIT SAMPLE: HALF RECEIVE: job creation and job loss in Canada/HALF RECEIVE: Canada's economy]? Please rank each on a 1 to 10 scale where 1 means it does not impact this at all, and 10 means it is a top factor.**

**(RANDOMIZE)**

1. Government investments in infrastructure
2. Government investments in science, technology, and innovation
3. Government measures that provide money directly to Canadians like the Canada Child Benefit, and Guaranteed Income Supplement
4. Government investments in skills training
5. Business tax rates and regulations
6. The level of confidence international investors have in Canada
7. The global economy
8. The price of oil
9. The North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA

**Q5. How important is it for the Government of Canada to keep the following themes in mind when making Budget decisions? Please rank each on a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 means it is not at all important and 10 means it is very important.**

**(RANDOMIZE)**

1. The middle class
2. Job creation
3. Helping indigenous people
4. (SPLIT 50/50) Science/Innovation
5. (SPLIT 33/33/33) Feminism/Helping women and girls/Gender equality

**Housing and Interest Rates****Q6. Are you a homeowner?**

IF NEEDED: "Own your home" includes those who are making mortgage payments to own their home.

Yes 1

No 2

VOLUNTEERED

Neither (living with parents, relatives, etc.) 3

Don't know/Refused 9

**Q7. [ASK IF Q6=1] Do you have a mortgage on your home?**

Yes 1

No 2

VOLUNTEERED

Don't know/Refused 9

**Q8. Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is strongly disagree and 10 is strongly agree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- a. It would be easy for you to get a home mortgage today
- b. [ASK IF Q7=1 (have a mortgage)] It would be easy for you to keep making mortgage payments if interest rates were to rise by [(SPLIT 33% each) half a percent/one percent/two percent] tomorrow
- c. Your personal financial situation will benefit from the recent increase in interest rates

Strongly disagree 1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

Strongly agree 10

VOLUNTEERED

Don't know 99

## ***Gender equality***

**Q9.** Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is strongly disagree and 10 is strongly agree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

1. A strong middle class depends on women and girls having equal opportunity to contribute fully to our economy
  2. It is important to ensure equal representation of men and women in leadership roles
  3. Everyone benefits when women and girls have equal access to the skills and education they need to succeed
  4. Currently in Canada, women and girls have the same opportunities to succeed as men and boys
  5. Sexual harassment and violence against women are having a negative impact on Canada's economy
  6. It is important for Canada to actively promote gender equality around the world

Strongly disagree 1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
Strongly agree 10  
**VOLUNTEERED**  
Don't know 99

## DEMOGRAPHICS

READ: And now a few final questions for demographic purposes.

**E In what year were you born?**

(RECORD YEAR - XXXX)

9999 – DO NOT READ: Don't know/Refused

[IF PREFERS NOT TO PROVIDE A PRECISE BIRTH YEAR, ASK:]

**Would you be willing to tell me in which of the following age categories you belong? READ LIST**

18 to 34	1
35 to 49	2
50 to 54	3
55 to 64	4
OR 65 or older?	5
[DO NOT READ] Refused	99

**F What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed? READ LIST – STOP READING WHEN REACHING THE RESPONDENT'S CATEGORY**

Grade 8 or less	1
Some high school	2
High School diploma or equivalent	3
Registered Apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma	4
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	5
University certificate or diploma below Bachelor's level	6
Bachelor's degree	7
Post graduate degree above bachelor's level	8
[DO NOT READ]	
Prefer not to answer	99

**G What language do you speak most often at home? READ LIST — ACCEPT ALL THAT APPLY**

English	1
French	2
Other	3
[DON'T READ] Don't know/Refused	99

**H Which of the following categories best describes your current employment status? Are you... READ LIST – ACCEPT ONE ANSWER ONLY – STOP READING WHEN REACHING THE RESPONDENT'S CATEGORY**

Working full-time, that is, 35 or more hours per week	1
---	---

Working part-time, that is, less than 35 hours per week	2
Self-employed	3
Unemployed, but looking for work	4
A student attending school full-time	5
Retired	6
Not in the workforce [FULL-TIME HOMEMAKER, UNEMPLOYED, NOT LOOKING FOR WORK])	7
[DO NOT READ]	
Other -- DO NOT SPECIFY]	98
Refused	99

I **Which of the following categories best describes your total household income? That is, the total income of all persons in your household combined, before taxes. READ LIST – STOP READING WHEN REACHING THE RESPONDENT'S CATEGORY**

Under \$20,000	1
\$20,000 to just under \$40,000	2
\$40,000 to just under \$60,000	3
\$60,000 to just under \$80,000	4
\$80,000 to just under \$100,000	5
\$100,000 to just under \$150,000	6
\$150,000 and above	7
[DO NOT READ] Refused	99

J **Are there any children under the age of 18 currently living in your household?**

Yes	1
No	2

K **And, finally, to better understand how results vary by region, may I have your 6-digit postal code?**  
ACCEPT FIRST THREE DIGITS IF THAT IS ALL RESPONDENT IS WILLING TO GIVE

\_\_\_\_\_ [FORMAT A4A 5B5]

999999 – DK/NA

This survey was conducted on behalf of the Department of Finance Canada, and is registered under the Federal Access to Information Act. Thank you very much for your participation.

**RECORD:**

**Language of interview**

English	1
French	2