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Privy Council Office Continuous Qualitative Data Collection of Canadians' Views – Wave 12 of Focus Groups

FINAL REPORT
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Political Neutrality Statement

I hereby certify as Senior Officer of Ipsos 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.



Mike Colledge
President
Ipsos Public Affairs

1. Executive Summary

Background and Objectives

The Privy Council Office (PCO) is the hub of non-partisan, public service support to the Prime Minister and Cabinet and its decision-making structures. Led by the Clerk of the Privy Council, PCO helps the Government implement its vision and respond effectively and quickly to issues facing the government and the country.

As an advisor to the Prime Minister, PCO brings together quality, objective policy advice and information to support the Prime Minister and Cabinet, including information on the priorities of Canadians. To this end, the Communications and Consultation Secretariat within PCO supports the Prime Minister’s Office in coordinating government communications and setting broad government communications themes and messages, in accordance with government priorities, as determined by the Prime Minister, Cabinet, Cabinet committees and the Clerk of the Privy Council. The Secretariat also works with PCO policy secretariats to advise and support Cabinet and its committees.

In fulfilling its mandate, PCO required an ongoing cycle of qualitative data collection to ensure that it has up-to-date representations of Canadians’ opinions on macro-level issues that are of interest to the government, such as their views on what should be the priorities of the government. Additionally, such research increases the Government of Canada’s understanding of emerging trends, and measures Canadians’ views on key national issues and policy initiatives.

Through the use of an ongoing cycle of focus groups, PCO is gaining a solid understanding of Canadians’ views as they relate to the most important issues facing the country; their perceptions of how the federal government can best address these issues; expectations of actions related to government priorities; and, perspectives on how the government can most effectively convey its efforts in dealing with emerging issues. This research helps inform the development of communications messages, products and dissemination tactics to respond to priority issues. Additionally, the research allows the Government of Canada to develop and refine communications activities to meet the specific needs of Canadians with timely, up-to-date, easily understood information based on the current perceptions of Canadians in the requisite areas.

This twelfth wave of ongoing qualitative research was meant to gather feedback from Canadians on select issues and policy areas that are important to the Government of Canada. The issues discussed during focus groups differed from one location to the next. Topics covered included:

- Government of Canada Actions
- Democracy
- Pensions
- Electric Cars
- Superclusters
- Tax Havens
- Salmon
- Guns

Overview of Methodology

This wave of qualitative research was comprised of a series of 6 focus groups with Canadians aged 20 years old and above, held between December 4th and December 14th. All group discussions lasted approximately two hours and were conducted in the evening, with the first session in each city starting at 5:30pm and the second starting at 7:30pm. These sessions were held in the following locations:

- December 4th- Guelph
- December 7th- London
- December 11th- Winnipeg
- December 11th- Bathurst
- December 12th Vancouver
- December 14th- Trois-Rivières

A total of 12 participants were recruited for each session to ensure that a minimum of eight to ten participants would attend. In total, 122 participants took part in the discussions. All participants received an honorarium of \$75 for attending the sessions at the focus group facilities. The screening questionnaire helped ensure that participants included a good cross-section of the general population, with good mixes of gender, ages, education and income levels, as well as household composition. Additional methodological details can be found in the appendix of this report.

This twelfth wave of research is part of a continuous qualitative research project that will include a total of 144 focus groups to be held in multiple waves over the 2017 calendar year, with the option of renewing the cycle of research for two additional years. The contracted amount for this research project for calendar year 2017 is \$916,865.05, including HST.

Key Findings

Democracy

During an exercise on government actions to improve democracy in Canada, participants favoured actions that had the potential to include programs and initiatives to increase education and knowledge of the political process and government. These were *increasing the level of Canadians’ understanding about democracy* and *increasing voter participation in elections*. When asked about an independent commission to oversee the rules and organization around leaders’ debates, reactions were mixed. Some felt debates were often chaotic and would benefit from more structure and an increased sense of transparency. Others felt that debates were only a small portion of the electoral process, watched by few, and as a result, did not need a commission.

Creative Canada

Participants in Trois-Rivières were questioned as to their awareness of the Government of Canada’s recently announced Creative Canada initiative. Unprompted awareness of the various elements of this initiative was relatively low except for general mentions of Netflix, specifically related to media reports that focussed on Netflix and what some characterized as the “Netflix tax”. Those who expressed familiarity with the issue surrounding Netflix generally referenced the company’s commitment to investing \$500 million dollars in original Canadian productions. Those in support of this Creative Canada initiative most often spoke of the job creation, economic benefits and opportunities for Canadian French language cultural products to flourish and be exported beyond our borders. Those who expressed reservations with the deal, questioned how truly advantageous it would be for Canada’s cultural industry over the long run. For these individuals they questioned whether it was fair that Netflix would not have to pay federal sales tax while other players in the cultural industry (i.e. Canadian telecommunications companies) would.

Pensions

Concerns about retirement security were greater for participants who stated they did not have a workplace pension. Reasons for concern included a changing economy and whether CPP funds will be available when they retire. There was overall agreement in most groups that the best way to secure a stable retirement would be for individuals to save money themselves rather than relying on an employer pension. When discussing the recent filing of bankruptcy by Sears, initially participants were in favour of government action to ensure current and pensioned Sears workers receive their full pensions or pension contributions to date. As the discussion progressed, participants wondered if the government’s reaction to Sears could set a costly precedent, and felt the government should focus on establishing a regulatory framework to prevent similar situations from occurring in the future.

Electric Cars

None of the participants recruited currently owned/operated a fully electric vehicle, mostly due to the perceived costs associated with such vehicles. Many indicated they were going to take a “wait and see approach” for purchasing an electric vehicle. Benefits to electric vehicles mainly focused on environment benefits, as well as the potential of lower operating costs than combustion engine powered vehicles (mentioned by those outside of Ontario). Potential downsides to using electric cars include the

environmental impacts of used electric fuel cells, the high cost of electricity (for those in Ontario), and the impact on the oil and gas industry in Canada. When asked about potential government support most favoured investments in infrastructure and GST rebates.

Superclusters

There was not a lot of unprompted awareness of ‘superclusters’, but once prompted most participants could name at least one. Those in Vancouver and Bathurst however, had a lower awareness, often likening superclusters to single sector economies such as logging communities. Benefits of superclusters included shared resources, combined knowledge, and job creation. Drawbacks included the risk of investing many jobs and resources into a single project. There was an overall favourability towards the \$950 million Superclusters Initiative of the federal government.

Tax Havens

While there was a high level of awareness of the term “tax havens” in all locations, participants were mostly unaware of the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) taking any action on these issues. Participants were divided on the importance of this issue; some felt recovering this money could be well spent on government programs while others were skeptical the money would be recovered. Once provided information on the current efforts of the CRA to crack down on offshore tax havens, participants noted the CRA being on track to recuperate \$25 billion was a great return on the \$1 billion they had invested.

Salmon

Familiarity with the term aquaculture was higher in Vancouver than it was in Bathurst and Trois-Rivières. Many in Vancouver raised specific environmental concerns such as sea lice, and the potential for large amounts of waste to affect the surrounding waters and ecosystems. There was more favourability towards aquaculture practices in Bathurst and Trois-Rivières, especially when participants argued this practice might help protect declining wild fish stocks. During an exercise on important factors to consider for new aquaculture products participants chose environmental impact or health and safety of the fish and of consumers.

Guns

Participants in Bathurst and Guelph were comfortable with current gun control laws in Canada. When asked about a list of potential additional gun control measures participants were in favour of including them, while some participants thought some of the measures were already in place. The measures that generated the most discussion were: *require enhanced background checks for anyone seeking to purchase a restricted firearm, require a permit to transport handguns and restricted firearms, and implement a lifetime ban on gun possession for people who have committed violent crimes.* These measures were seen to be most effective in targeting the increase in gun misuse.

Note on Interpretation of Findings

Qualitative research is designed to reveal a rich range of opinions and interpretations rather than to measure what percentage of the target population holds a given opinion. These results must not be used to estimate the numeric proportion or number of individuals in the population who hold a particular opinion because they are not statistically projectable.

Focus group research on government priorities seeks to provide a deeper understanding of participants’ views, often complementing quantitative findings gathered through survey research. Discussions allow for deep probing on key issues that is not possible with quantitative research. This type of information is essential for the Privy Council Office in its role advising and supporting the Cabinet and its committees.

2. Detailed Findings

This section of the report presents the detailed findings from twelve focus group discussions held in six different locations across Canada. The section is organized thematically to best reflect the varying discussions held from one location to the next. The moderator’s guide was adapted slightly from one location to the next in order to focus on various subject areas. Each iteration of the moderator’s guide can be found in the Appendices.

Themes Addressed

Government Actions

Participants were asked to relate what they had seen, read or heard about the Government of Canada recently. Items spontaneously mentioned covered a broad range of issues and included:

- Prime Minister’s visit to China
- Prime Minister’s apology to the LGBTQ2 community
- Marijuana legalization
- Electoral reform
- Trans-Pacific Partnership
- Prime Minister’s apology to residential school survivors in Newfoundland and Labrador
- NAFTA negotiations
- Softwood lumber negotiations
- Free trade partnership with Europe
- Corporate tax law changes
- New federal indigenous department
- Purchase of new fighter jets
- CRA call centres’ ability to provide accurate information to Canadians
- Disability Tax Credit eligibility for those with Type 1 diabetes
- Phoenix
- Skating rink on Parliament Hill
- Ethics investigation of Finance Minister
- Newly announced Veterans Affairs Canada disability pension plan

Designated (prompted) topics discussed in the focus groups included:

- Democracy
- Creative Canada
- Pensions
- Electric Cars
- Superclusters
- Tax Havens
- Salmon
- Guns

Democracy

Groups in Guelph, London, Winnipeg and Vancouver were asked to discuss elements of democracy in Canada. First, participants were led in an exercise on potential government actions to improve the health of democracy in Canada. The list of actions was as follows: *increase the level of Canadians’ understanding about democracy, increase voter participation in elections, prevent the spread of fake news*

on social media, protect our elections against foreign influence, encourage more women to be involved in the political process, and bring more transparency to third party spending on elections.

Overall, the actions favoured most in all locations were *increase the level of Canadians’ understanding about democracy, and increase voter participation in elections*. Participants often linked these outcomes to improving education and knowledge of the political process and of government, which they acknowledged as important elements of a healthy democracy. For these participants, further educating Canadians on the political process and government could result in increased engagement in the political process. Participants suggested that addressing these two actions would also help manage other issues such as the spread of fake news on social media. Those in Winnipeg suggested an arm’s length non-political entity such as Elections Canada could host a central online hub where political parties can provide links to, and information about, their party and platform. This was suggested as a way to facilitate Canadians to further educate themselves on the election process and the issues of the election.

Prevent the spread of fake news on social media- While discussed in many groups, most participants concluded that it should not necessarily be the priority when seeking to increase engagement in democracy. Some said this was because the spread of fake news was inevitable. Most agreed that a ‘buyer beware’ message around consuming news was the best course of action. A few participants also noted that action on this issue could lead to censoring and over-stepping freedom of speech.

Protect our elections against foreign influence- A few participants were worried about this issue due to concerns identified in the United States. These participants wondered if the same issue could occur in Canada. While important, participants were unsure of the logistics of this action, including potential costs.

Encourage more women to be involved in the political process- Though not discussed in great detail, participants agreed this was an important action. While most indicated this was becoming less of an issue in contemporary society, one suggestion put forward to support this was a financial grant to encourage more women to study politics and government. However, increasing overall education of the democratic process in Canada, rather than a campaign targeted specifically at women, was also considered an appropriate action. During an additional conversation on women in politics, those in Guelph described an approach that would ensure equal opportunities for both men and women through education would be more beneficial overall, rather than one focusing on gender-based outcomes.

Bring more transparency to third party spending on elections- This action received little discussion in all locations as participants felt other actions were more important. Most were not concerned about issues regarding third-party spending during elections. A few participants thought it would be important to know who might have a vested interest in certain political parties, but did not feel this was the most important action to pursue.

Debates

The moderator asked participants’ opinions about creating an independent commission overseeing the rules and organization around leaders’ debates during federal election campaigns, a proposal currently

being discussed in the House of Commons. Overall, participants felt that, at times, debates can be perceived as chaotic. To improve the quality of such debates, participants suggested better discourse and improved moderation during debates, questions to be provided to viewers ahead of the debate, as well as the opportunity for all major parties to participate in the debate.

Overall, there was not strong support for the creation of a commission, however a few felt that a commission could provide additional structure and accountability to leaders’ debates. Participants indicated that they only wanted minor changes to the format of debates, and that a commission was not necessary for these changes to occur. Others felt that debates were only one element of an election campaign, and are potentially only watched by a small number of Canadians. As such, a commission for debates was not considered necessary. Those in Vancouver were slightly more supportive of a commission than participants in other cities. They felt it would add transparency to debates, but like other groups, felt that smaller changes such as allowing all major parties to participate could be implemented without a commission.

Creative Canada

Participants in Trois-Rivières were questioned as to their awareness of the Government of Canada’s recently announced Creative Canada initiative. Unprompted awareness of the various elements of this initiative was relatively low except for general mentions of Netflix, specifically related to media reports that focussed on Netflix and what some characterized as the “Netflix tax”. Those who expressed familiarity with the issue surrounding Netflix generally referenced the company’s commitment to investing \$500 million dollars in original Canadian productions. Participants had little awareness of the details associated with this agreement and had questions about how much of the total \$500 million-dollar investment would be targeted to French language productions or cultural outputs.

Those in support of the Creative Canada initiative most often spoke of the job creation, economic benefits and opportunities for Canadian French language cultural products to flourish and be exported beyond our borders. These participants were particularly interested in knowing what proportion of the \$500 million-dollar investment would be targeted to French language productions specifically. For those who expressed reservations with the deal, they questioned how truly advantageous it would be for Canada’s cultural industry over the long run. These individuals questioned whether it was fair that Netflix would not have to pay federal sales tax while other players in the cultural industry (i.e. Canadian telecommunications companies) would. However, those who supported this initiative countered that these types of tax incentives were often used by governments at all levels to attract foreign investments.

Participants were presented with a series of initiatives that the government either has done or could do to support the culture sector. Initiatives presented included:

- Increase funding for Radio Canada
- Increase funding for Telefilm and the National Film Board
- Increase funding for the Canada Council for the Arts
- Make investments to help better support the Canadian music industry, with a focus on francophone artists

- Increase funding for festivals and major artistic events to promote our artists within Canada
- Promote Canadian content internationally at festivals and fairs, to help Canadian content creators sell their products internationally
- Encourage international investors to finance Canadian cultural projects
- Increase funding for the Canada Media Fund, which directly supports the writers, producers, actors, directors and crew of Canadian TV shows
- Promote net neutrality, encouraging other countries and companies to support a free and open internet
- Protect the cultural exemption in Canadian trade deals, including NAFTA, that allows Canada and Québec to restrict the access of international cultural products in local markets

Participants were most likely to express support for efforts focused on promoting Canadian content internationally and encouraging international investors to finance Canadian cultural projects and to a lesser extent, increasing funding for festivals and major artistic events to promote our artists within Canada. Those in favor of promoting Canadian content internationally and encouraging international investments in Canadian cultural projects often said that our cultural outputs should be a source of pride and that further promotion would lead to more opportunities for Canadian creators globally. Those favourable of efforts to attract foreign investment felt this would necessarily mean more money to improve the quality of our cultural content, while lessening the fiscal burden for taxpayers. Increased funding for festivals and major artistic events within Canada was generally seen as an effective way to promote local talent as well as being good for the local economy.

Participants were not as likely to express support for increased funding for Radio Canada, Telefilm Canada and the National Film Board or for the Canada Council for the Arts. In the case of the Telefilm Canada, the National Film Board and the Canada Council for the Arts, participants admitted knowing little about their mandate or their composition and as such, wondered about their contribution to Canada’s cultural sector and Canadian artists. In the case of Radio Canada, concerns focused on bureaucratic processes within the organization and how effectively money spent translated into tangible outcomes for our cultural industries.

Pensions

Participants in all groups were led in a discussion on pensions and retirement security. Participants were also asked for their thoughts on government involvement in company bankruptcy and its impact on pensions. Concerns related to retirement security varied among group participants from one location to the next. Those who indicated having a workplace pension were generally confident that their pension would be there when it came time to retire.

Despite this, many participants, both those with and without workplace pensions said that they had concerns about pension security going forward. These participants spoke of a changing economy and recent cases of lost pensions (the example of Sears was mentioned unprompted in many groups) raised some doubts as to whether other pensions might be vulnerable as well. A few participants also questioned whether the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) would be available to them at their time of

retirement. There tended to be consensus in most groups that the best way of ensuring a secure retirement was likely for individuals to save money for themselves rather than relying on an employer pension. However, many participants were quick to note that many Canadian workers lack the level of financial literacy and foresight to take this on. Asked if they were aware of any recent government interventions related to pensions, a few participants spoke of keeping the eligibility age for Old Age Security (OAS) at 65, rather than raising to 67¹.

Next, participants were led in a discussion on the recent filing of bankruptcy by Sears, and the impact on current and pensioned employees. Initially most participants felt steps should be taken to ensure all current and pensioned Sears workers receive their full pensions or pension contributions to date. As well, many participants supported government involvement in this case as many believed steps needed to be taken to prevent companies from taking these actions. Upon further reflection and discussion, some wondered about the potential precedent that could be set should the Government of Canada act in this case. Many participants felt that despite how unfortunate the current situation was for Sears’ current and former employees, the Government’s focus should be establishing a regulatory framework to prevent similar situations from occurring in the future. Overall, participants agreed that at minimum Sears employees should receive their portion of contributions to the company pension.

Presented with options for government actions regarding pension and bankruptcy (make pensions higher priority in bankruptcy, prevent asset stripping, executive compensation clawback for underfunded pensions, action against wrongful acts for pensions) participants’ views were somewhat mixed.

Initially, most participants liked the first option of making pensions a higher priority, as they felt the employees had served the company, and contributed to their pensions, and therefore deserved as much of their pension as possible. However, once discussions continued many agreed that while this sounded good in principle, such an approach could have unforeseen implications for suppliers, particularly small businesses who may not have the financial wherewithal to survive such a situation without compromising their own operation, as well as individuals who may have invested in these companies. Nonetheless, when questioned further as to the potential impact of such an approach on individual suppliers, many participants simply said these were the risks associated with doing business.

For the most part, participants were not familiar with the concept of ‘asset stripping’. However, when provided with a bit more context, most disagreed with the practice as defined and felt steps should be taken to prevent it to ensure more funds were available to honour pension commitments in the unfortunate case of a bankruptcy. However, some questioned how this might be achieved considering that asset stripping could happen before a company publicly declared bankruptcy, making it very difficult to prevent.

¹ Some participants conflated OAS with the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), or simply referred to the age of retirement for government pensions

Giving more power to government agencies and pensions regulators to take legal action against companies and executives seemed like the option with the most tangible impact. Participants felt this was a good step for the government to take in protecting employees and their pensions.

Clawbacks to executive compensations had mixed results. Those in favour of this approach felt that it was company executives’ responsibility to ensure strong stewardship of their organizations and of their employees and that it was the front-line employees that ought to be compensated first when a company goes bankrupt as they are the backbone of the corporation. Those opposed felt that executives could not always anticipate and/or prevent circumstances leading to corporate bankruptcy. Regardless of perspective, there tended to be agreement that at a minimum if such steps were taken they should target executive bonuses rather than salary. Regardless of thoughts on the level of clawback, participants agreed that this action would/could send a strong message to executives going forward.

Electric Cars

Participants in all locations except Trois-Rivières were asked to discuss their views on electric cars generally and were presented with a series of three potential government strategies intended to encourage Canadians to consider the purchase of an electric vehicle. The strategies presented included: improved infrastructure for electric cars such as more charging stations along highways, setting long-term targets for banning the sale of non-electric cars by 2040, and offering those who purchase electric vehicles the possibility of GST rebates.

None of those recruited currently owned/operated a fully electric vehicle, however a few participants drove hybrid vehicles. Participants most often stated that their decision not to consider an electric vehicle was due to the perceived costs associated with the purchase of such vehicles. In addition to costs, a number of participants cited issues related to the lack of infrastructure and the limited range of electric vehicles. Others noted that they simply did not know enough about electric vehicles and how they worked and the real benefits they offered over combustion engine vehicles.

Having said this, many participants acknowledged that this was a relatively new industry and technology and that it was likely that many of the concerns previously mentioned (cost, infrastructure, range) would eventually be resolved as interest and sales of electric vehicles grew; however, many simply said they would take a “wait and see” approach for the time being. When asked to consider what benefits would likely come with the purchase of electric vehicles many instinctively mentioned the environmental benefits of electric powered vehicles, while others (particularly those outside of Ontario) felt that the operating costs of these vehicles would be lower than combustion engine powered vehicles.

Despite this, there were those who questioned the real environmental impacts associated with electric cars – often referencing challenges associated with the disposal of used electric fuel cells. Others, particularly those in London and Guelph, were doubtful that these vehicles would be any less expensive to operate given the high costs of electricity in Ontario. When prompted, others expressed concerns about the impact a shift to electric vehicles could/would have on Canada’s oil and gas industry as well as our auto manufacturing sector, particularly if these vehicles were not made in Canada. In response to these concerns, those who held more positive views responded that fossil fuels were in finite supply and

therefore a shift to alternative modes of transportation was inevitable. Others felt that this could in fact be an opportunity for Canada to innovate and become a leader in electric vehicle technology.

Given the choice between government support of infrastructure, a fixed date for phasing out gas powered vehicles, and GST rebates, most favoured investments in infrastructure and GST rebates.

Those who advocated increased investments in infrastructure often stated that this was a necessary first step in making the transition to electric vehicles possible. Without the necessary infrastructure in place, they suggested consumers would be reluctant to consider purchasing an electric vehicle for reasons of convenience. Likewise, for purely economic reasons, manufacturers would be reluctant to transition to producing electric cars without there being a proven and predictable market for them.

Setting a fixed date for the phasing out of gas powered vehicles was generally not well received by most participants. Those who were unconvinced of the benefits of electric vehicles often spoke of the likely impact this would have on Canada’s oil and gas industry more broadly and how this type of action would have real consequences in their local communities (for instance the closing of local gas stations, and a refinery in Saint John, for those in Bathurst). Others saw this as a pressure tactic not likely to be welcomed by many. In addition, many worried that there wouldn’t be sufficient infrastructure in place to support what they saw as such a ‘quick’ transition. Those more positive about the idea of a hard stop most often spoke of similar initiatives taking place in Europe, although they noted that geography and climate in Europe could not be equated with what exists here in Canada. Others yet suggested that the establishment of a hard and definitive target was the only way to ensure an effective transition to this new technology – often stating that if consumers and industry were left to their own devices it could take much longer before the technology took root.

There were mixed reactions to the idea of GST rebates. Participants who favoured this option felt it would be easy to implement and would act as an added incentive for consumers to consider when shopping for a new vehicle. Most agreed with the idea of limiting the rebate to those purchasing lower priced vehicles, though some in London felt that the high costs of electric vehicles, the limited supply and types of electric vehicles currently available (limited options for larger or family friendly vehicles) would likely preclude them from being able to take advantage of such a rebate. Those more familiar with the range of electric vehicles currently on the market were more amenable to the GST rebate option. As an alternative to a straight GST rebate some participants in Bathurst suggested some consideration should be given to an income-based rebate.

Superclusters

In all groups there was a low level of awareness for ‘superclusters’. Participants were then presented with the following working definition of superclusters:

Superclusters are areas that contain a dense concentration of large and small companies, post-secondary schools and research institutions who work together on innovative projects that create new business opportunities and jobs for people in the area.

Having had an opportunity to consider this definition most participants were able to provide an example such as Waterloo, MaRS, or the Smart Park at the University of Manitoba. Those in Vancouver and Bathurst had lower awareness of superclusters compared to those in other cities, after a description was provided. Participants in these cities, tended to think about communities centred around single sector economies such as the car industry or logging communities, rather than multi-disciplinary communities focused on innovation as was understood in other cities.

Those that understood the concept of ‘superclusters’ noted many potential benefits, mainly creating a local centre for innovation. Other benefits included shared resources, combined knowledge, better opportunities, and focussed post-secondary education programs benefiting students and employers. Those who were not as familiar with the concept noted other benefits such as drawing people to previously less popular areas and job creation. A few also felt superclusters were important to produce strong, made in Canada products.

Potential drawbacks of superclusters included investing in the wrong initiative or sector for a supercluster, with participants likening superclusters to an ‘all eggs in one basket’ approach. Given the level of collaboration, investment could be risky, resulting in either a great payoff or a loss of investment and jobs for all working in the supercluster.

To finish the discussion, the moderator asked participants for their opinions on the government of Canada’s recent announcement of the \$950 million Superclusters Initiative for business-led innovation superclusters in Canada. Overall, participants felt superclusters could produce very positive results. In addition, participants felt the investment supporting superclusters would assist Canada to transition from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based one.

Tax Havens

In all locations, nearly all participants were aware of the term “tax haven”. When asked what comes to mind participants discussed the practice of hiding money, individuals not paying their fair share, Panama Papers, the political elite, Cayman Islands, Aruba, offshore investments and Swiss bank accounts.

Most participants were not aware of the Government of Canada or the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) taking any action on the issue of tax havens. When asked about the importance of this issue compared to others, participants were divided. Some felt that individuals will always find a way to evade taxes, and it would be a fruitless investment to try and recover the funds. Others felt that the issue was important because these additional tax funds could be used to fund to other government programs.

Next, participants were read some statistics about the Government of Canada and CRA’s efforts to crack down on offshore tax havens. The statistics were as follows: *the government of Canada has increased the Canada Revenue Agency’s budget by \$1 billion over the last two Budgets, so that they can crack down on offshore tax havens. Since then, the CRA is on track to recuperate \$25 billion in unpaid taxes, they transferred 627 cases surrounding offshore tax havens to criminal investigations, 268 search warrants were executed, and 78 people were convicted.* After hearing these statistics, participants felt that this recovery initiative had a very good return on investment and were happy to hear the CRA was taking

action. A few participants were concerned about the phrase ‘on track’, and wondered if the total \$25 billion would actually be recovered. Of all the statistics shared, the most meaningful to participants in all locations was the figure of \$25 billion that was set to be recovered.

When asked if they felt the government should be doing more, participants were satisfied with the efforts that were already underway and the projected return on investment of \$25 billion. Some noted that this amount might not be achieved every year the CRA sets out to recover funds. Despite this, they felt that the current approach seemed to be working, and was worth the investment.

Salmon

Participants in Bathurst, Trois-Rivières and Vancouver were asked to discuss their views on aquaculture more broadly and open net-pen and closed containment salmon farms more specifically. They were also presented with a brief handout exercise in which they were asked to rank a series of three considerations about open-pen salmon farms in order of how important they should be when making decisions about new projects.

Participants in Bathurst, Trois-Rivières and Vancouver were mostly aware of the term aquaculture. Familiarity with the topic, at least on an unprompted basis tended to be somewhat lower in both Bathurst and Trois-Rivières than it was in Vancouver. A few participants, particularly those in Vancouver, were familiar with the issue, including open net-pen salmon farms. These participants raised many pros and cons, including specific environmental concerns such as: the potential for contamination of wild salmon stocks due to escaping non-native farmed fish, sea lice, the unwanted effects on local mammal and bird populations (Vancouver) and the potential for large amounts of waste that could affect surrounding waters and related ecosystems. Participants in Vancouver were less favourable and more guarded with regards to this practice than were their counterparts in Eastern Canada. Concerns in Vancouver tended to focus on the potential for unwanted and environmentally adverse effects aquaculture could/does bring about.

Despite expressing some concerns, participants in Bathurst and Trois-Rivières for their part, remained generally favourable with the idea and felt it would be a good idea to invest in more production for years to come. As mentioned previously, many participants in Vancouver as well as a few in Bathurst were opposed to the practice early in the discussion due to environmental and safety (consumer safety) concerns. These individuals would prefer fish to be harvested in the wild.

There was a relative softening of views (particularly in Bathurst) when others in the room countered that wild fish stocks were decreasing as the global population continues to grow and reliance on this food source increases. Faced with the reality that it may become impossible to meet the needs of entire populations around the world without some form of commercial production, participants in both Bathurst and Vancouver felt stronger oversight of current practices was needed to ensure fish were safe for consumption and that the surrounding waters and sea life would suffer minimal impact.

Participants in Trois-Rivières were mostly unaware of aquaculture beyond broad generalities. Only one participant displayed minimal familiarity with the topic and believed it was a good idea to increase

production in the future. Because participants knew nothing of current practices and had heard nothing about either positive or negative sides of the issue, the discussion was rather limited.

Rank Exercise

When asked to rank the most important factors to consider when deciding on new projects, most participants in all three locations chose either environmental impact or health and safety of the fish and of consumers (Vancouver). They were often discussed in unison, as they were seen to be closely interlocked. Those who selected environmental impact as their top priority often talked of the need to ensure that consumers would have access to safe products that could be sustainable over time, while those who selected the health and safety of the fish often used the same reasoning. In the end, it was about protecting the health of consumers and the health of surrounding sea life. Economic concerns were of lesser concern in Bathurst and Vancouver but ranked somewhat higher in Trois-Rivières, in part because participants were unaware of environmental concerns or criticisms.

Participants were relatively non-committal regarding the possibility of banning open net-pen salmon farms. Many said they did not know enough about the issue to advocate strongly for one position or the other. Most in Bathurst and Trois-Rivières felt that if the economic cost of closed containment was so high that producers might go out of business or make the products too expensive for consumers, this ban was not worth it. If closed-containment could be done without doing severe damage to the industry, then they would likely support it. Not knowing what the impact would be, they were mostly noncommittal.

Several participants in Vancouver felt closed containment farming would be the preferred option. According to these participants this approach would help to mitigate many of the environmental impacts that result from open net-pen salmon farms. Having said this, similarly to views expressed by their counterparts in both Bathurst and Trois-Rivières, many in Vancouver felt they would need more information about the issue to form a solid opinion.

Guns

Participants in Bathurst and Guelph were led in a brief discussion on gun control laws in Canada. First, participants were asked if they felt the gun control laws in Canada should be made stricter, less strict, or kept as they are. Overall, participants felt that the gun control laws should be kept as is, noting there was an appropriate amount of screening processes in place. Some participants noted that they held this view because they did not have much knowledge of the gun control laws in Canada, and as a result had not encountered anything they felt needed to be changed.

Next participants were read a list of possible gun control measures. They were as follows:

- *Require enhanced background checks for anyone seeking to purchase a restricted firearm*
- *Require purchasers to show a license when they buy a firearm*
- *Implement UN firearms regulations requiring the marking of all guns being made in Canada or imported to Canada*
- *Require a permit to transport handguns and restricted firearms*

- *Implement a lifetime ban on gun possession for people who have committed violent crimes*

Overall, all of the proposed measures were supported by participants. Some participants assumed several of these measures were already in place. The changes participants felt were most important were: *require enhanced background checks for anyone seeking to purchase a restricted firearm, require a permit to transport handguns and restricted firearms, and implement a lifetime ban on gun possession for people who have committed violent crimes*. Participants selected these measures as they felt they targeted the causes of gun misuse.

Those in Bathurst did not see any arguments against the proposed measures, although those in Guelph noted that there was a possibility these measures may incentivise individuals to purchase guns illegally. Participants were generally unable to volunteer any other changes they would like to see.

3. Appendix

Appendix A. Detailed Research Methodology

This twelfth wave of qualitative research was comprised of a series of 12 focus groups with Canadians aged 20 years old and above, held between December 4th and December 12th, 2017. All group discussions lasted approximately two hours and were conducted in the evening, with the first session in each city starting at 5:30pm and the second starting at 7:30pm. These sessions were held in the following locations:

- December 4th—Guelph
- December 7th—London
- December 11th—Winnipeg
- December 11th—Bathurst
- December 12th—Vancouver
- December 14th—Trois Rivières

A total of 12 participants were recruited for each session to ensure that a minimum of eight to ten participants would attend. In total, 122 participants took part in the discussions. All participants received an honorarium of \$75 for attending the sessions at the focus group facilities. The screening questionnaire helped ensure that participants included a good cross-section of the general population, with good mixes of gender, ages, education and income levels, as well as household composition. Additional methodological details can be found in the appendix of this report.

Group participants were meant to be representative of the Canadian population aged 20 years and above in all locations. They were recruited using a formal recruitment screening questionnaire administered via a telephone interview. The screening questionnaire helped ensure that participants included a good cross-section of the general population, with good mixes of gender (half men and half women in all groups), ages, education and income levels, as well as household composition. The fully-detailed recruiting questionnaire is presented in Appendix B.

The recruitment screener was devised by Ipsos in collaboration with PCO and in accordance with the specifications of the project authority, the Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research – Qualitative Research (<http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/rop-por/rechqual-qualres-eng.html>) and following all Market Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) standards and guidelines for the conduct of qualitative research. All groups were moderated by an Ipsos research professional.

In accordance with the Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research – Qualitative Research, and the MRIA guidelines for the conduct of qualitative research, Ipsos informed participants of their rights under Privacy Law. Ipsos provided participants with details specific to the conduct of the groups, and obtained their consent for audio/video taping of the discussion, the presence of observers, explained the purpose of the one-way mirror, basic rules about privacy and confidentiality

including the fact that tapes will be destroyed according to MRIA guidelines, and that participation was voluntary.

As is standard with qualitative research done on behalf of the Government of Canada, the following conditions were also applied for all participants recruited for this study:

- They had not participated in a discussion group within the last six months;
- They had not attended, in the past two years, a focus group discussion or in-depth interview on issues related to the topic at hand;
- They had not attended five or more focus groups or in-depth interviews in the past five years;
- At least one third of the participants recruited for each group must never have attended a group discussion or in-depth interview before;
- They had a sufficient command of English (or French for the Trios Rivieres groups) to fully participate in the focus group sessions; and,
- They or their family are not employed in any of the following:
 - A research firm
 - A magazine or newspaper
 - An advertising agency or graphic design firm
 - A political party
 - A radio or television station
 - A public relations company
 - Federal or provincial government

As with all research conducted by Ipsos, contact information was kept entirely confidential and all information that could allow for the identification of participants was removed from the data, in accordance with the *Privacy Act* of Canada.

Appendix B. Recruitment Guide

**Recruitment Screener
Government of Canada
RECRUIT 12 FOR 10**

Hello, my name is _____. I'm calling from Ipsos, a national public opinion research firm. On behalf of the Government of Canada we're organizing a series of discussion groups with Canadians to explore current issues of importance to the country. A variety of topics will be discussed and we are interested in hearing your opinions.

EXPLAIN FOCUS GROUPS. About ten people like you will be taking part, all of them randomly recruited just like you. For their time, participants will receive an honorarium of \$75. But before we invite you to attend, we need to ask you a few questions to ensure that we get a good mix and variety of people. May I ask you a few questions?

- Yes **CONTINUE**
- No **THANK AND TERMINATE**

Participation is voluntary. No attempt will be made to sell you anything or change your point of view. The format is a “round table” discussion lead by a research professional. All opinions expressed will remain anonymous and views will be grouped together to ensure no particular individual can be identified.

S1) Do you or any member of your household work in or has retired from:

	YES	NO
Market Research or Marketing	1	2
Public Relations or Media (TV, Print)	1	2
Advertising and communications	1	2
An employee of a political party	1	2
An employee of a government department or agency, whether federal or provincial	1	2

IF “YES” TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, THANK AND TERMINATE

S2) Are you a Canadian citizen at least 20 years old who normally resides in the [INSERT LOCATION] area?

- Yes 1 **CONTINUE**
- No 2 **THANK AND TERMINATE**

S3) How long have you lived in [CITY]? _____

TERMINATE IF LESS THAN 2 YEARS

S4) Are you the head or co-head of your household?

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	CONTINUE

S5) Have you ever attended a consumer group discussion, an interview or survey which was arranged in advance and for which you received a sum of money?

Yes	1	MAX. 1/3 PER GROUP
No	2	GO TO Q1

S6) How long ago was it? _____

TERMINATE IF IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS

S7) How many consumer discussion groups have you attended in the past 5 years?

TERMINATE IF MORE THAN 4 DISCUSSION GROUPS

ASK ALL

Q1) Could you please tell me what age category you fall in to? Are you...

Under 20	0	THANK AND TERMINATE
20-24 years	1	} ENSURE GOOD MIX PER GROUP
25-34 years	2	
35-44 years	3	
45-54 years	4	
55-64 years	5	
65+ years	6	
Refuse	9	THANK AND TERMINATE

Q2) Do you currently have children under the age of 18 living in the house with you? [**RECRUIT MIX**]

Yes	1
No	2

Q2a) Do you currently have children under the age of 13 living in the house with you? [**RECRUIT MIN 3 per group**]

Yes	1
-----	---

Under \$20,000	1	}	Ensure good mix by...
\$20,000 to just under \$ 40,000	2		Recruiting 2-3 from the below
\$40,000 to just under \$ 60,000	3		\$40K category
\$60,000 to just under \$ 80,000	4		Recruiting 3-4 from the between
\$80,000 to just under \$100,000	5		\$40 and \$80K category
\$100,000 to just under \$150,000	6		Recruiting 5-6 from the above
\$150,000 and above	7		
DK/RF	99		

Q9) **DO NOT ASK – NOTE GENDER**

Male	1	}	ENSURE 50-50 SPLIT
Female	2		

Q10) If you won a million dollars what would be the first two things you would do with the money? **(MUST HAVE TWO RESPONSES TO ACCEPT. TERMINATE IF FLIPPANT, COMBATIVE OR EXHIBITS DIFFICULTY IN RESPONDING)**

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 OR IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN.

During the discussion, you will be audio- and videotaped. This taping is being done to assist us with our report writing. Also, in this room there is a one-way mirror. Sitting behind the mirror may be Government of Canada staff, including members of the staff from the department that sponsored this research, and by staff members from Ipsos. This is standard focus group procedure to get a first-hand look at the research process and to hear first-hand your impressions and views on the research topic.

Do you agree to be observed for research purposes only?

Yes	1	THANK & GO TO INVITATION
No	2	THANK & TERMINATE

******(IN EACH LOCATION, PLEASE ENSURE TWELVE (12) PARTICIPANTS ARE RECRUITED FOR 8-10 TO SHOW)******

[Read to Stand-by Respondents]

Thank you for answering my questions. Unfortunately, at this time, the group you qualify for is full. We would like to place you on our stand-by list. This means that if there is an opening in the group, we would then call you back and see if you are available to attend the discussion. May I please have a daytime contact number, an evening contact number and an email address, if you have one, so that we can contact you as soon as possible if an opening becomes available?

[RECORD CONTACT INFO]

[Read to Screened in Respondents]

Wonderful, you qualify to participate in one of these group discussions which will take place on, (DATE) @ (TIME) for no more than 2 hours. The Government of Canada is sponsoring this research. All those who participate will receive a **\$75** honorarium as a thank you for their time.

Do you have a pen handy so that I can give you the address where the group will be held? It will be held at:

We ask that you arrive at least 20 minutes early to be sure you locate the facility and have time to check-in with the hosts. Prior to being admitted into the focus group room you will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement, failure to do so will result in you being denied participation in the focus group session for which you have been selected. Payment of the incentive is contingent on participation in the focus group sessions.

In addition, we will be checking your identification prior to the group, so please be sure to bring two pieces of government issued photo identification with you (i.e. driver’s license, health card or other). Also, if you require glasses for reading, please bring them with you.

As we are only inviting a small number of people, your participation is very important to us. We have invited you to participate based on the questions we went through a moment ago, so we ask that you do not send a representative on your behalf should you be unable to participate. **IF FOR SOME REASON YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND, PLEASE CALL SO THAT WE MAY GET SOMEONE TO REPLACE YOU.** You can reach us at 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx at our office. Someone will call you the day before to remind you about the discussion.

What would be a good time to reach you?

And at what telephone numbers?

May I please get your name? ON FRONT PAGE

Thank you very much for your help!

Location	Time	Date
Guelph Holiday Inn Guelph Hotel & Conference Centre 601 Scottsdale Drive Tweedsmuir Room = participants McCrae Room = viewers	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	December 4 th
London Insights 546 Adelaide Street North	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	December 7 th
Winnipeg NRG Research Group Suite 804-213 Notre Dame Ave	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	December 11 th
Vancouver Vancouver Focus 1080 Howe Street , Suite 503	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	December 12 th
Trois Rivières Hotel Gouverneur Trois Rivières, 975 rue Hart Salon Rimouski (participants) Salon Chicoutimi (observers)	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	December 14 th
Bathurst Atlantic Host Hotel 1450 Vanier Blvd Salon C = participants Room 205 = clients	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	December 11 th

Appendix C. Discussion Guides

December 4 – Guelph

December 7 – London

December 11 – Bathurst

December 11 – Winnipeg

December 12 – Vancouver

December 14 – Trois-Rivières

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

GC NEWS (5 minutes)

- What have you seen, read or heard about the Government of Canada lately?

DEMOCRACY (20 minutes) DO NOT ASK IN TROIS-RIVIÈRES OR BATHURST

- I’m going to give you a handout with some actions the Government of Canada could take to potentially improve the health of democracy in Canada. I want you to give them a thumbs up or thumbs down if you think this is something the government should do, and then circle the one or two you feel are most important.
 - Increase the level of Canadians’ understanding about democracy
 - Increase voter participation in elections
 - Prevent the spread of fake news on social media
 - Protect our elections against foreign influence
 - Encourage more women to be involved in the political process
 - Bring more transparency to third party spending on elections
- On this list, is there anything you feel the government should NOT do? Why?
- What do you feel is most important on this list? Why?
 - And what could the Government of Canada do to help make this happen?
- PROBE (if not brought up): And what specifically could the Government of Canada do to increase voter participation in elections?
- How important is it to encourage more women to be involved in the political process?
 - What could the Government of Canada do to encourage this?

- There is currently a proposal being discussed in the House of Commons to create an independent commission to oversee the rules and organization around leaders’ debates during federal election campaigns.
 - Do you think this is needed?
 - What do you like about how debates are currently organized?
 - What do you think needs to change about how debates are currently organized?

CREATIVE CANADA (40 minutes) IN TROIS-RIVIÈRES ONLY

- IF NOT MENTIONED: Have you heard anything about the Creative Canada announcement? What have you heard?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED

The Government of Canada recently announced the launch of Creative Canada, which involves:

- Investing in Canadian creators, cultural entrepreneurs and their stories
- Promoting discovery and distribution at home and globally. This includes an agreement with Netflix:
 - to create Netflix Canada – a permanent film and television production presence here in Canada, the first time that the company has done so outside the United States.
 - To invest a minimum of \$500 million in original productions in Canada, in both official languages, over the next five years.
- Strengthening public broadcasting and local news
- Now that I’ve described it, does anyone remember hearing anything about it?
- How do you feel about this?
- What type of impact do you feel it will have?
- How do you feel about Netflix investing \$500 million for Canadian productions?

Overall, of the following options, what do you think should be the top priority for the federal government when supporting Canada’s culture industry?

- Protecting and promoting our stories and culture.
- Promoting our cultural content at home to ensure a strong domestic market.
- Promoting our cultural content abroad so it can reach new markets.

HANDOUT:

- I’ve got a handout with various actions that the government either has done or could do to support the culture sector. I’d like you to put a thumbs up beside each one that you think the government should be doing and a thumbs down beside each action that you think would be a bad idea.
- Increase funding for Radio Canada

- Increase funding for Telefilm and the National Film Board
- Increase funding for the Canada Council for the Arts
- Make investments to help better support the Canadian music industry, with a focus on francophone artists
- Increase funding for festivals and major artistic events to promote our artists within Canada
- Promote Canadian content internationally at festivals and fairs, to help Canadian content creators sell their products internationally
- Encourage international investors to finance Canadian cultural projects
- Increase funding for the Canada Media Fund, which directly supports the writers, producers, actors, directors and crew of Canadian TV shows
- Promote net neutrality, encouraging other countries and companies to support a free and open internet
- Protect the cultural exemption in Canadian trade deals, including NAFTA, that allows Canada and Québec to restrict the access of international cultural products in local markets

Now I’d like you to circle the top 2 or 3 that you think would be the best approaches for the government to pursue.

DISCUSS A FEW POLICIES THAT WERE CIRCLED:

- What *specifically* do you like/dislike about this action?

PENSIONS (30 minutes) NOTE: 20 MINUTES FOR GUELPH

- Let’s talk about retirement security. Are you concerned about being able to save enough money for retirement?
 - (If yes) How concerned are you?
- Who here has a workplace pension?
 - (If you have a pension plan) Are you confident that you will be able to access it when you retire?
 - (If confident) How confident are you?
- Have you heard of anything the Government of Canada has done recently regarding pensions?
- Have you heard any news about pensions being affected by bankruptcy of companies?
 - If yes, what have you heard about this topic?
- Recently, Sears Canada filed for bankruptcy and closed their stores in Canada. Under current bankruptcy laws, they must sell all their assets to pay back creditors, including retirees who collect pensions from Sears. However, pensioners are not the highest priority creditors and there is unlikely

to be enough money to fully pay out all the pensions of retired employees. Experts expect that pensioners will eventually have to settle for receiving a small portion of the pension money they had planned to receive.

- Do you think the Government of Canada should intervene in any way? How so?
 - PROMPT AS NECESSARY: Do you think the Government of Canada should intervene to ensure Sears Canada pensioners are able to receive the full value of their pension plan?
 - (If yes) what specifically do you think the Government should do to accomplish this?

I now want to talk about some actions the Government of Canada could take.

- Should the Government of Canada change bankruptcy laws so that pensioners are given a higher priority in the future when companies go bankrupt and have to pay back creditors?
 - Can you think of any negative impacts that might result from this change in the laws?

GUELPH SECTION ENDS HERE

- Does your opinion change if this would increase borrowing costs for companies, and result in more companies going bankrupt? Has anyone heard of the term “asset stripping”?
 - Asset stripping is a practice where company assets are sold off for profit. If these assets are sold before the bankruptcy process, that leaves less money left to pay off pensioners. How would you feel about the Government of Canada changing bankruptcy legislation to prevent asset stripping?
- A pension deficit is a situation where a pension plan has less money available than what it will be required to pay out. Do you think regulators should have the power to clawback executive compensations if a company has a big pension deficit?
- Do you think the Government of Canada should give more power to government agencies and pension regulators to take legal action against companies and executives that act wrongful with respect to pension funding?
 - Does it matter if they can only do this for federally incorporated companies & pensions, but not provincial companies & pensions?
- Of the four proposals we just talked about (make pensions higher priority in bankruptcy, prevent asset stripping, executive compensation clawback for underfunded pensions, action against wrongful acts for pensions), which one do you think would do the most to protect pensions? Why?

ELECTRIC CARS (20 minutes)

DO NOT ASK IN TROIS-RIVIÈRES

- Does anyone here own an electric car?
- Would anyone consider buying one for your next car?
 - If YES – Why?

- If NO – What is holding you back?
- Should the federal government take steps to encourage Canadians to purchase electric cars?
- One thing the government could do would be to improve the infrastructure for electric cars – like building more charging stations along highways. How would you feel about this?
- Another thing the government could do would be to set a long-term target for banning the sale of non-electric cars? How would you feel about that?
 - PROBE: Are you concerned that could hurt Canada’s oil and gas industry? That it could hurt Canada’s auto industry?
 - How would you feel about setting 2040 as the target? So, from 2040 onwards, all new cars sold in Canada must be electric?
- Another approach could be to offer GST rebates, so that you wouldn’t pay tax when you purchase electric cars. How would you feel about that?
 - Some people have said this would only benefit the richest Canadians who can afford electric cars. Do you agree with that?
 - PROBE: What if the government only provided the rebate for cars which cost under a certain amount?
- Of the three strategies I listed – infrastructure for electric cars, setting long term targets for banning sales of non-electric cars, and GST rebates, which is the best approach?
- Would any of these three encourage you to purchase an electric car?

SUPERCLUSTERS (10 minutes)

DO NOT ASK IN TROIS-RIVIÈRES

- Who here has heard the term “supercluster” before? (show of hands)
 - Can you explain what a supercluster is? How would you define it?
- CLARIFY AS NEEDED: Superclusters are areas that contain a dense concentration of large and small companies, post-secondary schools and research institutions who work together on innovative projects that create new business opportunities and jobs for people in the area.
- Can you think of any examples of superclusters in Canada?
- Overall, do you think superclusters are a good idea or a bad idea?
 - What might be the benefits of having superclusters in Canada?
 - What might be the downsides?

- The Government of Canada recently announced an Innovation Superclusters Initiative investing up to \$950 million over five years to support business-led innovation superclusters in Canada. Do you think this is a good idea?
 - Why or why not?

TAX HAVENS (20 minutes)

- Are you familiar with the term “tax haven”? What comes to mind when you hear this?
- Have you heard anything about offshore tax havens lately?
- Have you heard about anything the Government of Canada or The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) is doing about this issue?
- Compared to other issues, how important an issue is it for the federal government to crack down on offshore tax havens?

- I’m going to read some statistics to you:
 - The Government of Canada has increased the Canada Revenue Agency’s budget by \$1 billion over the last two Budgets, so that they can crack down on offshore tax havens. Since then the CRA, is on track to recuperate \$25 billion in unpaid taxes.
 - They transferred 627 cases surrounding offshore tax havens to criminal investigations
 - 268 search warrants were executed
 - 78 people were convicted

- How do you feel about how the CRA is handling offshore tax havens after hearing this?
- Of all the statistics I just read, which one do you think is most meaningful?
- Do you feel like they are doing enough, or do they need to do more?

SALMON (20 minutes)

ASK ONLY IN VANCOUVER, BATHURST AND TROIS-RIVIÈRES

- Who is familiar with the term “aquaculture”?
 - Can you explain what aquaculture is?

- CLARIFY AS NEEDED: Aquaculture is the farming of fish and other aquatic plants and animals. People typically set up enclosures off the ocean coast and grow the aquatic stock in there, often feeding it and preventing predators from getting to it, before harvesting.
 - How do you feel about aquaculture?
 - Canada has a small aquaculture industry compared to other countries, but a very long coastline. Would it be a good thing or a bad thing if this industry grew larger in Canada?

- Who is familiar with what open net-pen salmon farms are?
 - *(if not provide explanation) These are netted cages set up along the coast by salmon farms. The salmon are contained in them, but thanks to the ocean currents the salmon receive oxygen while their waste gets carried away.*
 - How do you feel about open net-pen salmon farms?

HANDOUT

- I’d like you to rank the following three considerations about open-pen salmon farms, in order of how important they should be when making decisions about new projects: (RANK1-2-3)
 - Environmental impact
 - Health/safety of the fish
 - Economic impact

Discuss each of the three factors.

- Are there other considerations we haven’t discussed?
- Some have criticisms of open net-pen salmon farms, such as:
 - Their waste gets deposited in the ocean, potentially impacting the ocean ecosystem around them
 - Farmed salmon can get diseases such as sea lice, which is then transferred to wild salmon
 - They can attract predators like seals and sea lions, who can become entangled in nets
- Are any of these a concern to you? (PROBE on which one specifically)
- Some have proposed banning open net-pen salmon farms, and insisting that all salmon farms use closed containment. Under this system, salmon farms are moved out of the ocean into vats of water which is regularly cycled, treated, and cleaned.
 - How would you feel about a law which would force open net-pen salmon farmers to transition to closed containment?
 - Closed containment is significantly more expensive than open net-pen farming. Are you worried this could harm an important industry?

GUNS (15 minutes) ASK ONLY IN BATHURST AND GUELPH

- Do you feel gun control laws in Canada should be made more strict, less strict, or kept as they are?
 - PROBE IF MORE/LESS STRICT: What specifically needs to be more/less strict?
- I’m going to read you a list of possible gun control measures:
 - Require enhanced background checks for anyone seeking to purchase a restricted firearm
 - Require purchasers to show a license when they buy a firearm
 - Implement UN firearms regulations requiring the marking of all guns being made in Canada or imported into Canada
 - Require a permit to transport handguns and restricted firearms

- Implement a lifetime ban on gun possession for people who have committed violent crimes
- On balance, would these changes be good or bad?
 - Which of these measures, if any, is MOST important? Why?
 - Is there anything on this list the government should NOT do? Why?
- What is the strongest argument in favour of these types of gun control measures?
- What is the strongest argument against these measures?
- Do you think any other changes are needed to gun control laws in Canada?

CONCLUSION (5 minutes)