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# Privy Council Office Continuous Qualitative Data Collection of Canadians' Views – Wave 9 of Focus Groups

**FINAL REPORT**  
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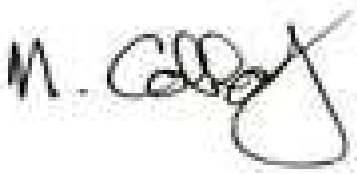
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**Political Neutrality Statement**

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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 seventh 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
- Asylum seekers
- Local Issues
- Housing
- Taxes
- Climate Change
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Disabilities

## Overview of Methodology

This wave of qualitative research was comprised of a series of 12 focus groups with Canadians aged 20 years old and above, held between September 12<sup>th</sup> and September 28<sup>th</sup>, 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:

- September 12<sup>th</sup> – Sherbrooke
- September 13<sup>th</sup> – Saint John
- September 20<sup>th</sup> – Regina
- September 21<sup>st</sup> – Surrey (Vancouver)
- September 25<sup>th</sup> – Montreal
- September 28<sup>th</sup> – Barrie

A total of 12 participants were recruited for each session to ensure that a minimum of eight to ten participants would attend. In total, 121 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 ninth 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

### *Asylum Seekers*

Awareness of asylum seekers crossing the Canada-United States border was relatively high in all locations, however those in Barrie were somewhat less aware. Most thought asylum seekers are coming to Canada because they were afraid of repercussions they could face if they stayed in the U.S. Overall views on asylum seekers can best be described as mixed; some wondered if they had a legitimate reason for entering Canada, while others were concerned about the financial impact on their community as well as resources spent by the federal government that might be better targeted to assist Canadians in need. It should be noted however that participants in Montreal, Sherbrooke and Barrie had more positive reactions to asylum-seekers compared to their counterparts in other cities. More specifically, they expressed pride and appreciation for steps taken by the federal government in order to address this situation.

### *Local Issues*

During a discussion on local issues in Surrey, concerns related to mental health issues, homelessness, cost of housing, drug use, and inadequate transportation infrastructure were most often raised. When further prompted with a list of issues that might be of concern to them, participants’ reactions were mixed. They were not overly concerned with the issues of the relationship between the Port of Vancouver and truckers, and rules around Uber as they could not relate to these issues while other issues such as toll roads and toll bridges in the Lower Mainland, crime, opioids, and housing were seen as important and in need of improvements.

### *Housing*

Housing issues were discussed in Surrey, Montreal and Barrie. When presented with a list of words to describe the Government of Canada’s focus on housing, participants had positive associations with the terms *affordable housing* and *cooperative housing*, associating the terms with subsidized and shared responsibility housing respectively. *Affordable housing* and *cooperative housing* were also the most favoured terms to use for government investments. The terms *public housing* and *not-for-profit housing* were not as familiar to participants overall and tended to have negative connotations associated with them. Participants often used words such as ‘poor’ and ‘run-down’ when reacting to these terms.

### *Taxes*

Participants in Sherbrooke, Saint John, Regina, Montreal and Barrie discussed taxes and changes to the tax system in Canada. Overall, participants in all locations struggled with the information provided. Generally speaking, participants agreed in principle with the idea that the government should work to close loopholes in the tax system that most commonly benefit the wealthiest Canadians. As such most felt proposed changes to the system that addressed this problem were generally appropriate. However, participants were much less likely to be in favour of proposed changes if they meant small business owners, family businesses, and family farms would be negatively affected. Participants in Saint John and Regina noted these individuals were not doing anything illegal but rather, using the system to support themselves and their families.

### *Climate Change*

Those in Surrey were led through a discussion on Government of Canada’s environmental initiatives. Some were aware of carbon pricing and were overall in favour, but were not sure about the specific plan and strategy presented by the federal government. Favoured uses of the funds collected were supporting the transition to alternative energy, direct rebates, and healthcare funding. Participants, unprompted, were concerned with environmental issues such as illegal dumping of garbage, water bottling plants, corporate emissions, and poaching of fish, sea, and marine life among other issues. Of those issues prompted by the moderator, water quality was of most concern to participants.

### *Sustainable Development Goals*

Few participants were familiar with Sustainable Development Goals, in fact, many struggled with what exactly was meant by ‘sustainable development’. Furthermore, there was no clear consensus as to which of the goals presented the Government of Canada should be focusing on. When asked about achievements the Government of Canada should highlight in the international community, our education system, clean water, sustainable cities and healthcare system were suggested. To raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals, participants felt that the government should focus on a social media strategy, along with promotions at local events across the country. Participants offered a range of possible Canadian spokespersons in order to promote Canada’s Sustainable Development Goals. Some favoured a government representative, while others felt a notable Canadian would be more appropriate.

### *Disabilities*

When presented with a list of possible Government of Canada actions to support those with disabilities, solutions such as *transportation and mobility solutions*, and *improving access to employment for people with disabilities* were top choices as participants felt these types of solutions would help to improve the overall lives of those with disabilities.

## **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 sixteen focus group discussions held in eight 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:

- Small business tax changes
- Asylum seekers crossing the Canada-US border in Quebec
- Reconciliation with indigenous groups in Canada
- Bombardier
- Netflix investment in Canada’s arts sector
- Marijuana legalization
- Canada-United States relations
- Trade discussions
- Carbon tax
- Government deficit
- Canada 150 Celebrations
- Canadian customs in Barrie
- Reconciliation with indigenous groups
- Tax credits for families and children

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

- Government of Canada Actions
- Local Challenges/Community Specific Issues
- Asylum Seekers
- Housing
- Taxes
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Climate Change
- Disabilities

#### Asylum Seekers

Participants in all locations were first led through a discussion on asylum seekers crossing the Canada-US border. Awareness of the issue was high among participants in all locations with the possible exception of Barrie where familiarity appeared to be somewhat lower. When asked how they had heard about the asylum seekers, participants either noted mainstream media such as television, radio and newspapers, or social media, in particular, Facebook.

Participants were also asked why they thought asylum-seekers were entering Canada. Most participants suggested that asylum seekers were coming to Canada because of concerns that their status in the U.S.



was increasingly precarious and could eventually lead to them being returned to their home country. Participants felt the asylum seekers chose Canada because it was a welcoming country, with a tradition of accepting refugees.

### Different Outlooks

There was much concern expressed with the current situation among participants in all sessions, although this was expressed differently across locations. There was a sense among some that the situation was unmanageable. For the most part, these participants’ apprehension was driven by concerns related to the legitimacy of asylum claims, public safety issues based on a sense that vetting procedures were inadequate or hurried, the potential economic impacts associated with having to care for and house these new arrivals, and the possible loss of local jobs to these new arrivals. Additionally, some participants believed these asylum seekers were unfairly jumping to the front of the immigration queue, and were being processed much more quickly than other groups of immigrants. A number of participants were also unclear about the countries of origin and US residency status of these claimants. Some thought they were Syrian refugees, others thought they were being smuggled into Canada, while others thought they were US residents who had previously been allowed to stay in the US through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

Conversely, a few felt the issue had been overblown and that for the most part concerns were unfounded, that current numbers of asylum seekers simply did not justify the worries expressed by their counterparts – this viewpoint was more pronounced in Montreal, Sherbrooke and Barrie. These participants were also quick to note that in their view the federal government was doing the best they could given the unfortunate and unforeseen circumstances and made a point of expressing their pride in the Canadian government for assisting the asylum seekers.

When probed as to whether provincial governments or the federal government should be primarily responsible for dealing with this situation, most felt that the issue was a federal responsibility and that a unified federal strategy focused on dealing with the situation was required. Few participants had a clear understanding of the asylum application process (e.g. how it was determined if someone could stay in Canada, processing, illegal vs. legal entry etc.). Information provided on the *Third Country Agreement* by the moderator alleviated some of the confusion from participants, in particular about the reasons individuals would choose to cross the border illegally.

### Local Issues

Participants in Surrey were asked about local issues facing them and their community. Unprompted, they spoke very strongly about several issues including; mental health issues and homelessness; drug use, gang violence and perceived lack of police; road congestion and insufficient transit/transportation infrastructure; cost of housing including buying a house, rental prices and availability, and schools operating at full capacity.

The moderator then read a list of local issues, and asked participants to discuss their views on each. The list of issues was as follows: *issues over how the Port of Vancouver treats truckers, rules around Uber, issues around toll roads and toll bridges in the Lower Mainland, crime, opioids, and housing.*

*Issues over how the Port of Vancouver treats truckers-* When asked, several participants had heard of the issue, discussing disputes over money and time, however few felt this was still an issue today. Most agreed that this issue was more relevant two or three years ago.

*Rules around Uber-* Participants seemed to understand this issue from the perspective of a potential user rather than community impact, with many noting they wanted access to the service. No participants expressed concern related to impacts on the local taxi industry.

*Issues around toll roads and toll bridges in the Lower Mainland-* Participants expressed mixed views related to this issue. Some participants were happy with the elimination of tolls on roads and bridges, while others felt there had been a significant increase in congestion on the roads. There was no clear consensus among focus group participants as to whether or not more tolls were necessary.

*Crime-* Participants had a variety of concerns when probed about this issue. These included participants wanting improved border control (especially for drugs), more police, stronger criminal sentences, more efficient justice system (to prevent people from having charges dropped due to their right to a timely trial), and tougher prison experiences.

*Opioids-* All participants were aware of this issue and felt it was very much a local concern. When asked what the Government of Canada could do to improve the situation, participants wanted better border control, clamping down on doctors prescribing opioids, and increased public education. Few had hope that the situation would improve.

*Housing-* Participants wanted more support with this issue, but were not sure what it would look like, offering few ideas. Concerns were focused on an unaffordable cost of living, in both the rental and home ownership markets.

## Housing

Participants in Surrey, Montreal and Barrie were led through a discussion on housing. First, the moderator read a list of terms used to describe housing arrangements and asked participants if they were familiar with the term. Terms tested were as follows: *public housing, co-operative housing, not-for-profit housing, and affordable housing.* Participants were also asked which one they would feel best about the Government of Canada investing in.

*Affordable housing-* This was the most widely recognized term in all groups. For many this term implied subsidized, cheap housing for low income individuals. Participants in Barrie also felt this term was broad and could encompass affordable rental units in a building as well as affordable home ownership, while

those in Montreal were more likely to view this as a term used to identify a specific type of rental unit. This term tended to resonate positively with participants.

*Cooperative housing-* Participants were also very aware of this term, and viewed it as a participatory arrangement with shared responsibility and ownership of the property among tenants. However, several were confused about the details of shared ownership: some likened it to a condominium arrangement with stricter communal rules and cost-sharing agreements, whereas others noted it was a tenant arrangement with shared space rather than shared equity. As was the case for affordable housing, the term cooperative housing was also generally well received by group participants and deemed to be worthy of Government of Canada investment.

*Public housing-* Few were familiar with the term, and for those that were, it had a negative connotation. Participants defined public housing as government supported housing for low or no income individuals, and described it as poor, run-down housing similar to a ghetto, noting a definite stigma attached to this term. For these reasons, this was not a favoured term for the Government of Canada to use when investing in housing programs.

*Not-for-profit housing-* Of all the terms, this was the one participants were least aware of. When probed, it was noted that the sponsor for this type of housing is not in it for profit, however it could also be government supported housing as well. This confusion also made not-for-profit a term that was not favoured.

The moderator then asked participants if they felt housing should be a right in Canada. Overall, participants agreed with this statement; most described housing as a basic human need, similar to food and water. However, participants also agreed there should be limits to the level of government support. Participants were concerned some individuals might take advantage of program efforts, and said those receiving benefitting from housing programs must show initiative or ambition to better their life. Others were not sure what this program would look like.

Next, there was a discussion on the perceived roles and responsibilities of the federal government and provincial governments, municipalities, co-ops and not-for-profits for funding and supporting housing programs. There was no clear consensus here, however on the whole participants agreed it would be counterproductive to have multiple levels of government involved. Most favoured a direct relationship between the federal government, working as the funder, and the local stakeholders as the key beneficiaries; according to participants this approach would best ensure an effective distribution of funding.

Participants had mixed opinions on prioritizing housing issues rather than homelessness. Many saw them as interrelated issues, and wanted funding to be equally divided between the two. Many also felt it made sense to put more money in housing because people need to have a place to live if they are to move off the streets. However, participants felt that mental health and addictions issues were often the root cause of homelessness, and if not addressed, homelessness would continue to be an issue.

## Taxes

Participants in Saint John, Regina, Montreal, Sherbrooke and Barrie were led through a discussion on taxes and changes to the tax system in Canada. First, participants were asked whether they had heard about the proposed tax changes put forth by the Government of Canada. Participants in Saint John were concerned that proposed changes would negatively impact small businesses and physicians specifically. In Montreal and Barrie, participants expressed confusion around the information provided, and thus could not provide opinions on the proposals.

On a broader level, participants in all locations agreed that the government should work to close loopholes in the tax system, and did not seem to have a problem with strengthening the tax system to prevent the rich from taking advantage of such exceptions. When participants viewed the proposed changes in this light, they felt the measures made sense. However, participants in all locations questioned whether changes as proposed would potentially negatively impact small business owners, family businesses, and family farms, particularly for those who were not wealthy. Moreover, some in Regina emphasized that those that currently benefitting from these tax provisions are doing so legally, and are reliant on these features of the tax system to make a living for their family/community. These participants also felt that these individuals were being cast in a negative light, for merely taking advantage of the tax benefits the federal government offered. When prompted about the federal government giving the increased revenues back to small businesses, there was some interest but many were skeptical as to the likelihood of this actually happening.

## Climate Change

Participants in Surrey were also led through a discussion on climate change and the Government of Canada’s initiatives. There was very little knowledge among participants about Government of Canada actions. When asked about the Government of Canada’s plan to address climate change some were aware of a carbon pricing plan, but could not provide any specific details.

When asked about environmental issues affecting their community participants mentioned illegal dumping of garbage/waste, water bottling plants, high levels of emissions from large corporations/polluters, lead in water, poaching of fish, sea and marine life, use of pesticides, and coal dust from trains. Participants were also asked to discuss whether the following issues were of concern to their community: *water quality (drinking water sources and management)*, *air quality (visibility and/or health)*, *pollution*, *transportation*, and *infrastructure*. Participants viewed *water quality* as an issue, in relation to well water and South Surrey water issues. Air quality and pollution were not of significant concern for participants, however transport and infrastructure were important in that participants wanted to see more transit services.

When prompted to discuss carbon pricing further, there was little awareness of carbon pricing plans or of clean technology. However, participants liked the idea of other provinces also having to pay a carbon tax. When asked what should be done with the revenues from carbon pricing the top choices were: investing in programs to help Canada *transition towards cleaner energy sources*, as participants felt this is the direction we should be taking, as well as *providing a direct rebate to the population*, because of the direct benefit to individuals, who are the most likely to spend the money effectively. A few participants

liked *investing in environment initiatives*, as they felt that is what carbon pricing is intended to help, while a few others selected *returning the money to provinces through transfers that fund healthcare* because of its overall importance. No participants selected *funding innovation*.

### Sustainable Development Goals

During a discussion on sustainable development goals participants in all locations were first asked if they had heard of any of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals or the Global Goals. In all locations awareness of the goals was very low, with no participants having any unprompted knowledge of the goals and their specifics. Participants were then given the list of the 17 goals and asked to select which they felt were most important. The list was as follows: *no poverty; zero hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry; innovation and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; life on land; peace, justice and strong institutions; and partnerships for the goals*.

When asked to select the three most important goals from this list there were no clear top choices, even between groups in the same cities. Most cities however felt that a focus on 2-3 goals at a time was reasonable, and maximized the chances of ensuring success in at least a few of the key areas.

Overall the goals were not evaluated in terms of their value as sustainable initiatives but rather as issues participants felt were important for Canada now. This was highlighted in groups with a lack of consensus on top issues, and discussions on how interrelated the goals were. Some felt health-related goals were most important as they would have a spillover impact on other goals, while others selected no poverty and zero hunger. Goals that focused on climate change as well as those that supported education and job opportunities for Canadians were also frequently selected.

The moderator then provided participants with information that Canada has agreed to report on the Sustainable Development Goals, and asks participants which positive things the government should highlight. Participants in all locations felt that Canada should speak proudly on the world stage about our high-quality education system, clean water, sustainable cities, and health. Participants in Montreal and Sherbrooke also highlighted gender equality, and the state of the economy.

Participants were also asked the best way for the federal government to reach Canadians when raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals. Most participants mentioned social media. Some participants in Saint John and Barrie also suggesting promotions at local events such as festivals, while others selected mainstream media such as television and radio as a close second.

To wrap up this discussion participants were asked who they thought would be an ideal Canadian spokesperson for the Sustainable Development goals, listing options such as someone famous, a federal government representative, a provincial government representative, or a local representative. There was no consensus among groups on who the best spokesperson would be. Some felt the Prime Minister or a famous ‘Canadian cultural icon’ such as David Suzuki, Hubert Reeves or Chris Hatfield would be a good fit, some felt the Minister responsible for the file should be responsible for the role. Others felt strongly

that a government spokesperson would not be a good fit because of a perceived bias, preferring a ‘neutral third party’, but did not suggest any examples.

## Disabilities

Participants more readily thought of people with mobility-related issues when they were asked what came to mind when they heard “people with disabilities”. Wheelchairs and associated limitations were discussed at length. However, other disabilities were also mentioned, including blindness and various forms of mental disabilities or illnesses. Some felt that the latter were often forgotten and deserved more attention.

Participants instinctively mentioned a whole slew of obstacles faced by people with disabilities. Once more, issues related to mobility were raised first. Access to buildings and various forms of transportation were seen to be lacking, which participants associated with isolation and despair on the part of people with disabilities. Participants also talked about the difficulty in finding fulfilling jobs and in being accepted by other members of society, especially for those suffering from mental illness and other forms of mental disabilities (e.g. Down syndrome or mild forms of autism).

A handful of participants had heard of the federal government’s new plan for caregivers, but could not name other recent policies to assist people with disabilities. Still, many participants felt that there were a lot of programs and policies in place to help these individuals live better lives. They believed that all programs may not be sufficiently funded, but that they the government was not ignoring these people. All agreed that it was important for the government to do all it could to help those people and encourage employers to hire them.

Participants were provided with a list of actions that the government could take to support those with disabilities and asked which were the most important ones. The list was as follows: *improving building accessibility for people with disabilities; improving access to employment for people with disabilities; improving transportation options (including air, train, ferry and bus) for people with disabilities; and improving government customer service for people with disabilities.*

Some participants favoured transportation and mobility solutions while others felt improving access to employment for people with disabilities would provide independence, respect, confidence and equality. Participants had not heard of any specific, ongoing federal programs to support individuals with disabilities, but there was general acknowledgement that the Government of Canada was supporting these individuals in some capacity.

The discussion then shifted to a conversation about accessibility in the workplace. Participants were asked whether they felt organizations that do not increase accessibility to their buildings should be fined, and whether they agreed or not that the Government of Canada should provide infrastructure funding solely to buildings and projects that are accessible to Canadians with disabilities. On the whole, participants felt this was a reasonable position.

### 3. Appendix

#### Appendix A. Detailed Research Methodology

This seventh wave of qualitative research was comprised of a series of 12 focus groups with Canadians aged 20 years old and above, held between September 12<sup>th</sup> and September 28<sup>th</sup>, 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:

- September 12<sup>st</sup>–Sherbrooke
- September 13<sup>th</sup> – Sant John (NB)
- September 20<sup>th</sup> – Regina
- September 21<sup>st</sup> – Surrey (Vancouver)
- September 25<sup>th</sup> – Montreal
- September 28<sup>th</sup> – Barrie

A total of 12 participants were recruited for each session to ensure that a minimum of eight to ten participants would attend. In total, 121 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 Drummondville 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:

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
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	<b>CONTINUE</b>
No	2	<b>CONTINUE</b>

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	<b>MAX. 1/3 PER GROUP</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO Q1</b>

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

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
-----	---

No 2

Q3) How many people above the age of 18 are there in your household?

One 1  
More than one 2

Q4) Could you please tell me what is the last level of education that you have completed?

Some high school	1	}	<b>ENSURE</b>
Completed high school	2		<b>GOOD</b>
Some College/University	3		<b>MIX PER</b>
Completed College/University	4		<b>GROUP</b>
RF/DK	9		

Q5) What is your current employment status?

Working full-time	1	}	<b>MAX 3 PER GROUP</b>
Working part-time	2		
Self-employed	3		
Retired	4		
Currently not working	5		
Student	6		
Other	7		
DK/RF	9		

Q6) [IF EMPLOYED/RETIRED] What is/was your current/past occupation?  
\_\_\_\_\_ **(PLEASE SPECIFY)**

Q7) 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]**?

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

**Q8) DO NOT ASK – NOTE GENDER**

Male	1	} ENSURE 50-50 SPLIT
Female	2	

**Q9) 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:

	Date	Facility / Hotel
Sherbrooke	Sept. 12	<b>Sept24 1268, rue Prospect Sherbrooke, QC</b>
Saint John (NB)	Sept. 13	<b>Saint John Trade &amp; Convention Centre, 1 Market Square, Saint John, NB. Rooms : Montagu 2 &amp; 3</b>
Barrie	Sept. 14 POSTPONED TO SEPT 28TH	<b>Holiday Inn Barrie Hotel &amp; Conference Centre, 20 Fairview Rd, Rooms: Georgian and Huronia</b>
Montreal	Sept. 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Ad Hoc Recherche 400 de Maisonneuve Blvd West, Suite 1200</b>
Regina	Sept. 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Brown Communications 2275 Albert Street</b>
Surrey (Vancouver)	Sept 21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Vancouver Focus 1080 Howe Street Suite 503</b>

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!**

**Appendix C. Discussion Guides**

**SHERBROOKE MODERATOR’S GUIDE- SEPTEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup> 2017**  
**SAINT JOHN (NB) MODERATORS GUIDE- SEPTEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup> 2017**  
**REGINA MODERATOR’S GUIDE- SEPTEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup> 2017**  
**SURREY MODERATORS GUIDE – SEPTEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup> 2017**  
**MONTREAL MODERATOR’S GUIDE- SEPTEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup> 2017**  
**BARRIE MODERATOR’S GUIDE- SEPTEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup> 2017**

Sep 12 – Sherbrooke  
Sep 13 – Saint John  
Sep 20 – Regina  
Sep 21 – Surrey  
Sep 25 – Montreal  
Sep 28 – Barrie

**INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)**

**WARM-UP (5 minutes)**

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

**ASYLUM SEEKERS (20 minutes)**

- Who here has heard about asylum seekers crossing the Canada-US border? (show of hands)
  - How did you hear about this story?
  - What news source or news sources have you heard about asylum seekers from?
  - And what specifically have you heard about asylum seekers crossing the Canada-US border?
- As far as you know, what happens to these individuals after they cross the border?

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE MODERATOR:**

If an individual comes into Canada through a designated port of entry at a land border and makes an asylum claim, the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) assesses whether they can enter Canada.

If an individual illegally crosses into Canada (e.g. walks across a field into Canada), once they are in Canada, they are arrested by the RCMP and transferred to CBSA for an immigration examination. The individual can make an asylum claim.

- Why do you think these asylum seekers are choosing to cross the border illegally into Canada?
- Because seven different Canadian provinces share a land border with the US, many asylum seekers are crossing into different parts of the country. Some say each province should develop their own strategy for dealing with the individuals that have crossed into their own territory. Others say the

federal government has a responsibility to deal with all asylum seekers that enter the country no matter where they cross the border. Which do you agree with more?

- Looking specifically at the federal government, do you generally think the Government of Canada is doing a good or a bad job of managing recent increases in the number of asylum seekers in Canada?
  - What is the federal government doing well to manage this issue?
  - What does the federal government need to change in how they are approaching the issue?
    - PROBE: Better border security? Accept more asylum claims?
- I would like you to imagine that your city was near the Canada-US border and individuals who were crossing the border nearby were being housed in your community while their asylum claims are being processed. What impact, if any, do you think that would have on your community?
  - What impact, if any, do you think this would have on you personally?

**LOCAL ISSUES (20 minutes)    SURREY ONLY**

- Do you feel the Government of Canada pays enough attention to Surrey?
  - Why do you say that?
  - Can you think of specific examples of things they have done that have had a positive or negative impact on Surrey? (write on flip board – one column for positive, one for negative)
- What are the largest local issues facing people in Surrey?
- I’m going to read a few local issues to you, and I want to know if this is an issue that you’ve heard a lot about or not? (for each, see if it’s top-of-mind, if it is, gauge how many people in group are aware of it, ask what they’ve heard, how they feel about it)
  - Issues over how the Port of Vancouver treats truckers
  - Rules around Uber
  - Issues around toll roads and toll bridges in the Lower Mainland
  - Crime
    - PROBE: What types of crime are the largest concern?
  - Opioids
    - PROBE (if it’s a concern): What should the Government of Canada do on Opioids?
  - Housing
    - What, if anything, are the type of housing challenges facing people in Surrey?

**HOUSING    SURREY, MONTREAL AND BARRIE**

- I’m going to read you a few different terms that are used around housing. For each, please indicate if this is a term you are familiar with (by show of hands). (then ask some who put up hand to explain it in their own words)
  - Public housing
  - Co-operative housing
  - Not-for-profit housing
  - Affordable housing



- Having heard these four terms, which one would you feel best about the Government of Canada investing in? (even if you don’t know what all of them are specifically, let me know which one feels right to you based on how you feel about the terms)
- Should housing be a “right” in Canada?
  - How would you feel about the Government of Canada declaring that housing is a “right”?
- If the Government of Canada is investing in housing, does it make more sense for them to select housing projects they can work on directly with municipalities, co-ops, and not-for-profits, or should they transfer funds to the provinces and give provincial governments the freedom to decide how it is spent?
  - PROBE: What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of each approach?
- How does the issue of homelessness compare to the other housing challenges we’ve just talked about, as a Government of Canada priority? Knowing that the Government has limited resources, should they focus more on the housing issues we just discussed, focus more on homelessness, or split their focus and resources between the two?

### **TAXES (20 minutes)**

- Have you heard anything about Government of Canada consultations on proposed tax changes that would impact private corporations? In this context, private corporations could include small businesses, as well as incorporated professionals, such as doctors.
  - PROBE: What have you heard? What specifically is being proposed?
  - PROBE: What type of people would be affected?
  - PROBE: Are you aware of any differences in treatment between employees versus people who run their own business – including professionals such as doctors who incorporate themselves?
- I am going to read out descriptions of some of the changes being proposed. *For each one, ask if participants think the change will make the tax system more or less fair, and WHY?*
  - Right now, owners of private corporations – many of which are small businesses – can split income with adult family members, and reduce the total income tax paid, whether or not those family members are contributing to the business. The more family members that are doing this, the less tax they all pay. Some are suggesting the Government should allow income to be paid to family members only to the extent they’re contributing to the corporation’s business.
  - Private corporations can use an investment portfolio for the purpose of upgrading their business in the future. By doing so they benefit from being able to generate passive investment income on a higher amount of capital compared to an unincorporated self-employed individual, because the corporate income tax rates are generally lower than

personal income tax rates. However, some incorporated business owners put money in these portfolios which they ultimately use for their retirement or personal expenses, not business expenses. Some are suggesting the Government should take away the tax advantage in these situations.

- Only one-half of capital gains are included in a taxpayer's income. Some individuals therefore use a series of share sale transactions to turn what would otherwise be income or dividends into a capital gain, so that it is taxed at a lower rate. Some are suggesting the Government should prevent this practice.
- Altogether, what do you think the impact of these changes would be?
  - Would they make the tax system more fair?
  - Do you see any potential drawbacks?
  - Do you see this as the Government “closing tax loopholes”?
  - Do you see this as the Government “attacking small business”?
  - Do you see this as the Government using these changes as a “cash grab”?
- In total, do you think these tax changes are more about closing tax loopholes used by the richest Canadians, or about increasing taxes on small business?
  - (if small businesses) If the revenue raised by these changes went back to small businesses in the form of a tax cut, or innovation grants, would that change the way you feel about them?
- Are there any changes you would make to these tax change proposals? Anything else you think needs to be included in them?

**CLIMATE CHANGE (25 minutes)**

**ASK IN SURREY**

- What have you heard about the Government of Canada’s plan to address climate change?
- How do you think the government’s plan to address climate change affects you? Your family? Your community?
- How do you think your community should act on climate change?
- What other environmental issues do you think should be top of mind for the Government of Canada? What environmental issues are affecting your community?
  - PROBE AS NECESSARY:
    - water quality (drinking water sources and management)
    - air quality (visibility and/or health)
    - pollution
    - transportation
    - infrastructure

- The government’s plan to combat climate change includes investments in the development of clean technologies. How do you see the development of clean technologies affecting the economy?
  - PROBE AS NECESSARY: Do you think clean technologies can lead to economic growth?
  - PROBE: Some say clean technologies have the potential to create new opportunities in Canada’s resource sectors, increase the productivity and competitiveness of Canadian businesses, and create new employment opportunities, while also improving environmental performance. Knowing this, do you feel differently about the economic impact the climate change plan might have?

### Carbon Pricing

- (IF PREVIOUSLY RAISED): Some of you mentioned the Government of Canada’s national plan on carbon pricing
- What have you heard recently (in the last 6 months) about the government’s plan?
  - How did you hear about it?
  - What news source or news sources have you heard about the government’s plan from?
- How much attention have you been paying to the national plan on carbon pricing? Why is that?
  - What kind of priority do you place on this topic?
  - PROBE AS NECESSARY: How relevant is the plan on carbon pricing to:
    - Yourself or your family
    - Your community/region
    - Your province
- What do you think about putting a price on carbon? Is it a good idea? A bad idea? How so?
  - Do you think this will affect the competitiveness of Canadian firms?
    - PROMPT AS NECESSARY: (As you may know) the US has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement. Do you think this will make Canadian businesses more competitive than US firms, less competitive, or have no impact?
  - Do you think this will affect:
    - The Canadian economy? How so?
    - The middle class? How so?
- The federal government has said it will implement a carbon tax in provinces that have not yet put a price on carbon emissions, beginning in 2018. **Revenues remain in the jurisdiction of origin** [EMPHASIZE, MUST BE INCLUDED]. Each jurisdiction can use carbon-pricing revenues according to their needs, including to address impacts on vulnerable populations and sectors and to support climate change and clean growth goals.
- How do you feel about the federal government implementing a carbon tax in provinces that do not set one up?
- What do you know of your province’s approach to the carbon pricing plan?

- What do you see as the strengths? The drawbacks?

#### HANDOUT

- What should the revenue be used for?
  - PROBE: Do you think the revenue should be used to:
    - Provide a direct rebate to the population
    - Fund innovation
    - Invest in environmental initiatives
    - Invest in programs to help Canada transition towards cleaner energy sources
    - Return the money to provinces through transfers that fund healthcare

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE MODERATOR:**

The Government of Canada has stated the following:

- Canada is committed to creating a cleaner, more innovative economy that reduces emissions and protects our environment, while creating well-paying jobs for the middle class and those working hard to join it. The government understands that the economy and the environment go hand in hand. That is why we must take action on carbon pollution now—to strengthen the middle class today and preserve our planet for posterity

#### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (20 minutes)**

- How many of you have heard of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals or the Global Goals? What, if anything, do you know about them?

PROVIDE INFO AS NECESSARY: In September 2015, Canada, along with the 193 member states of the United Nations, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#### HANDOUT:

- I’ve got a handout of the 2030 Agenda’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals. I’d like you to think about implementing these goals within Canada:
  - First, I’d like you to indicate whether you think the Government of Canada should:
    - Focus on all 17 goals at the same time
    - Focus only on those goals where Canada could stand to improve
    - Focus on a 2-3 goals every year until 2030
    - Or something else?
  - Next, I’d like you to rank the top three most important goals: RANK 1-2-3

No poverty  
Zero hunger  
Good health and well-being  
Quality education  
Gender equality  
Clean water and sanitation  
Affordable and clean energy  
Decent work and economic growth  
Industry, innovation and infrastructure  
Reduced inequalities

Sustainable cities and communities  
Responsible consumption and production  
Climate action  
Life below water  
Life on land  
Peace, justice and strong institutions  
Partnerships for the goals

[\(17 Sustainable Development Goals \(External link\)\)](#)

- For the overall Government of Canada approach, which option did you select?
  - Why did you pick this approach?
- What did you pick as your top goal?
  - WHY is this goal important?
  - What specifically needs to be addressed for this goal?
- Canada has agreed to report on the Sustainable Development Goals to the United Nations in July 2018. If you were heading the Canadian delegation and helping draft Canada’s report, what would be your over-arching messaging about Canada?
  - What would be the positive things to say?
  - What would be some of the challenges to highlight?
- If the federal government were trying to raise awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals, what would be the best way to reach you?
  - Online/social media? Where/how?
  - Mainstream/traditional media? Where/how?
  - Through other channels or media? Please explain.
- 
- If Canada had a spokesperson for the Sustainable Development goals, who do you think would be the best person to do this?
  - Someone famous? Like who?
  - Someone at the federal government level? Like who?
  - Someone at the provincial government? Like who
  - City/area? Like who
  - Other?
- 

**DISABILITIES (25 minutes)**      **DO NOT ASK IN SURREY**

- I want to talk about disabilities for a bit. When you think about people with disabilities, what specific types of disabilities come to mind?
- What are the largest challenges facing Canadians with disabilities?
- Are you aware of any actions the Government of Canada has taken to help Canadians with disabilities?

- Which of the following types of actions do you think would be most important for the government to take: (*show of hands, then discuss WHY it’s important*)
  - Improving building accessibility for people with disabilities
  - Improving access to employment for people with disabilities
  - Improving transportation options (including air, train, ferry, and bus) for people with disabilities
  - Improving government customer service for people with disabilities
- Is there something else missing on this list that the Government of Canada needs to do to help Canadians with disabilities?
- Compared to other priorities, how important do you feel it is for the government to introduce legislation touching on these issues?
  - (*if important*) WHY?
- Should workplaces be encouraged to hire people with disabilities?
- Should employers be responsible for making workplaces more accessible to people with disabilities, or should it be up to the government to provide funding for this?
  - Thinking about building accessibility, if companies or organizations do not make their buildings more accessible to people with disabilities, should they be fined?
- How would you feel about the Government of Canada only providing infrastructure funding to buildings and projects that are accessible to Canadians with disabilities? So, for example, the government would not fund new transit buses and platforms which are not accessible?

**CONCLUSION (5 minutes)**