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National Focus Groups – Winter 2019 First Cycle

Final Report

Prepared by:
Corporate Research Associates Inc.

Prepared for:
Privy Council Office

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

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Focus Groups – Winter 2019 – First Cycle

Final Report

Prepared for the Privy Council Office

Supplier Name: Corporate Research Associates Inc.

February 2019

This public opinion research report presents the results of focus groups conducted by Corporate Research Associates Inc. on behalf of the Privy Council Office. The first cycle of the study entailed a total of twelve focus groups with Canadian residents 18 to 74 years old between January 15 and February 4, 2019.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Groupes de discussion – Hiver 2019 – Premier cycle.

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Executive Summary

Corporate Research Associates Inc.
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Background and Objectives

The Communications and Consultation Secretariat of the Privy Council Office (PCO) commissioned Corporate Research Associates Inc. (CRA) to conduct public opinion research using qualitative approaches, to explore the perceptions of Canadian adults on the state of current events that relate to the federal government. Findings from the research will be used to develop effective communications strategies and products, to ensure that communications with the Canadian public on important issues remain clear and easy to understand. More specifically, objectives of this first cycle of focus groups aimed to assess opinions and perceptions on the state of the economy and job market, the environment, the Canadian Coast Guard, the management of irregular migrants, and issues most pressing for Canadian youth.

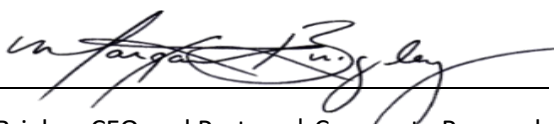
The first cycle of the study consisted of a total of twelve (12) in-person focus groups conducted from January 15th to February 4th, 2019. Two French sessions were conducted in Saint-Hyacinthe (QC) while two English groups were held in each of Peterborough (ON), Coquitlam (BC), St. John's (NL), North York (ON) and Calgary (AB). Focus group participants included Canadian residents between the ages of 18 and 74 years old, with a mix of education, household incomes, and parental responsibilities represented in each group. In each location with the exception of Calgary, focus groups were divided by gender. In Calgary, focus groups were divided by age (18-34 years old and 35+ years old). All participants lived in their respective markets for at least two years. Across all groups, a total of 118 participants took part in this research.

This report presents the findings from the study. Caution must be exercised when interpreting the results from this study, as qualitative research is directional only. Results cannot be attributed to the overall population under study, with any degree of confidence.

Political Neutrality Certification

I hereby certify as a Senior Officer of Corporate Research Associates Inc. that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the **Policy on Communications and Federal Identity** and the **Directive on the Management of Communications**. 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.

Signed _____



Margaret Brigley, CEO and Partner | Corporate Research Associates
Date: February 19, 2019



Key Findings and Conclusions

The following presents a summary of key findings from the *Focus Groups – Winter 2019 – First Cycle* for each topic discussed.

The Economy and the Job Market (all locations)

There is some uncertainty regarding the state of the economy, especially with respect to what is perceived to be an increasingly challenging job market over the past year. The declining number and quality of jobs available is most concerning. At the same time, the future of the job market in the next five or ten years is questioned, and there was a sense that it will continue to be affected by increased automation, outsourcing, recessions, economic migration, cost of housing, and wages not keeping up with the cost of living. In some locations, the low unemployment rate reported by Statistics Canada at 5.6% was felt to be surprisingly low.

Various factors are used to help assess the strength of the economy, with a strong retail environment, low unemployment and the availability of quality, high-paying jobs being most indicative of a strong economy. By contrast, factors that speak to household financial hardship, such as lower household incomes, increased price of goods and services, high bankruptcy levels, high interest rates and inflation were most commonly associated with signs that the economy is doing poorly. There was, however, widespread belief that the Government of Canada can influence the state of the economy, primarily through policy setting, encouraging trade, managing immigration, funding of key industries, setting the interest rate and by adjusting equalization payments to provinces. When provided with a list of seven job-related issues the Government could tackle, participants identified some as being of the highest priority. Wages not keeping up with the rising cost of living was considered a top priority across locations, followed by job security and skills training and retraining.

Youth Economic Opportunities (Calgary)

In Calgary, youth were generally under the impression that there are many more opportunities available to today's younger generation than were evident in the past, particularly with increased technology and global trade. That said, there was a clear perception that youth face many challenges that did not exist in the past, most notably in relation to the environment, the cost of living, increased reliance on global relationships, and a decreased focus on resource-based economies. While Canada was recognized as a country largely dependent on its natural resources (regardless of region), today's global landscape places great pressures on that dependence and questions its relevance or appropriateness.

When asked to identify the largest challenges facing younger Canadians, Calgary youth consistently identified finding suitable, full-time employment, the high cost (and resulting debt) of education, as well as a perceived inability to ever own their own home. In addition, participants felt that youth today are generally unable to deal with basic life skills and have a lack of awareness of how to cope with day-to-day living.

When considering how government could help young adults, the greatest emphasis was placed on actions that would help make life more affordable, with priority given to helping young families with the



cost of raising children, making it more affordable for people to buy their first home and relieving student debt.

Factors influencing access to affordable homes are perceived to be the greatest problems impacting youth's ability to own a home and accordingly, it was felt that efforts to ease entry into home ownership, and support the development of more modest sized homes would be helpful. In addition, the introduction of legislation to address foreign buyers' home purchasing and the flipping of homes (without living in a home) were both deemed to be helpful initiatives. Participants voiced unanimous support for a program that makes it easier for first time home buyers to purchase a home.

The Environment (Peterborough, Saint-Hyacinthe, Coquitlam, North York, and Calgary)

The Trans Mountain pipeline, global warming/climate change and ocean plastic pollution were the most mentioned top-of-mind environmental issues. As such, environmental priorities for the Government of Canada included (from among a list of ten action items) investing in clean energy, driving new business opportunities and job creation in industries of tomorrow, addressing plastic pollution in oceans, lakes and rivers, and improving public transit. By contrast, the Government was seen as not having a role to play in funding new charging stations for electric vehicles given the low incidence within the Canadian population for this type of vehicles and a belief that this initiative should be undertaken by electric vehicle manufacturers.

Changes in weather patterns and climate over the past few years were widely reported as having had an impact on people's behaviours and habits. At the same time, it was believed that everyone has a personal responsibility to help reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, with many in the focus groups having already adopted more environmentally-friendly behaviours. A desire to improve the environment for future generations and to save money are the greatest motivators to changing personal behaviours and habits, while the upfront costs, well-formed habits, and the inconvenience of public transit were identified as the strongest barriers.

Although the existence of a plan on putting a price pollution was largely known, knowledge and understanding of what the plan entails was limited. Many referred to it as a "tax" on pollution. Awareness of the Climate Action Incentive was nonexistent in North York. Regardless of knowledge or opinions of climate change issues, there was support for the Government to take a global leadership role on protecting the environment and fighting climate change.

The Canadian Coast Guard (St. John's)

The Canadian Coast Guard enjoyed positive opinions in St. John's, where the focus group included a discussion on this topic. It was widely seen as playing an essential role in Canadians' ocean safety and as being well managed overall. Among a list of six action items for the Coast Guard, ensuring the safety of Canadians at sea was widely seen as an important focus to support the organization's mandate. The renewal of the Coast Guard fleet was also considered important, either by building new ships or retrofitting existing ones with the newest technology.



As such, there is support for the Government of Canada to invest in building or retrofitting ships, including the purchase of new, innovative equipment to modernize the Coast Guard's capabilities. By contrast, opinions were mixed regarding the need to expand the fleet of icebreakers, with limited awareness and understanding of the current situation.

Irregular Migration (Peterborough, Saint-Hyacinthe, Coquitlam, St. John's, North York)

Although there was awareness of an influx of asylum seekers crossing the U.S.-Canada border over the past year, little else was known regarding the situation. Mixed opinions were offered as to the Government of Canada's performance in managing the increase in the number of asylum seekers.

Four possible deterrence measures were presented and discussed during the focus groups. Each option was very briefly explained and participants were asked for their level of agreement or disagreement with each. As possible deterrence measures were presented, participants often expressed that it is a difficult situation and not an easy one to fix. Overall, none of the four deterrence measures presented elicited strong support from participants in any of the locations. The idea of working with a U.S. NGO to manage the influx of daily asylum seekers was perhaps the most agreeable option, as it presented an opportunity for a more structured process, while ensuring that migrants stay in the U.S. until a designated date appeared fair. However, some also expressed concern about the feasibility of this option and how it would be received by the U.S.

Establishing a different way of handling irregular migrant claims by speeding up the review of claims from irregular migrants to allow faster removal of those who do not qualify was considered unjust towards migrants who used the established points of entry, since they thought that the latter would have to wait longer to have their claims processed. This approach was also seen as encouraging potential draw for irregular migrants given that their claims would be processed faster.

There was general disagreement with the third idea that entailed sending asylum seekers back to the U.S. while inviting them to return at a scheduled date, primarily due to a mistrust of the U.S. Administration in how migrants would be treated while they wait. Likewise, there was general disagreement with the option of sending asylum seekers back to the U.S. where, given that it has a well-established legal system that operates within international refugee law, they are able to pursue their claim. This approach was not seen as being aligned with the Canadian values of being welcoming to those in need of assistance.

Despite mixed feelings towards the various options presented, there was a clear belief that the Government of Canada should find ways to process asylum cases faster, even if this costs more money. It was believed that cost-savings would be achieved in the long run. It was also believed that asylum seekers in general should continue to have the right to appeal claim decisions made by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), while mixed opinions were offered regarding whether or not irregular migrants should have access to an appeal.



Introduction

To fulfil its role of providing advice and support to the Government of Canada, the Clerk of the Privy Council Office (PCO) and to departments and agencies on matters relating to communications and consultations, the Communications and Consultations Secretariat of the Privy Council Office commissioned Corporate Research Associates Inc. (CRA) to conduct public opinion research through the use of qualitative research.

The main objective of this research is to explore the perceptions of Canadian adults on the state of current events to assess where public opinion stands on issues of importance. Findings from the research will be used to develop effective communications strategies and products, to ensure that communications with the Canadian public on important issues remain clear and easy to understand.

Specific to the first cycle of the study, the following research objectives apply:

- Assess overall opinions regarding the state of the economy and the job market and identify where government should focus its attention;
- Examine opinions regarding the environment, most notably the increases of green gas emissions, and identify where government focus should be placed;
- Gauge perceptions of the Canadian Coast Guard and identify areas of priorities for the Government;
- Examine opinions as it relates to issues of importance to youth and identify where priority focus should be placed; and
- Understand perceptions regarding irregular immigrants to Canada and review and assess the benefits of various approaches to manage the flow of irregular migrants.

This report presents the findings from the first cycle of the research. It includes a high-level executive summary, the description of the detailed methodology used, the detailed findings of the focus group discussions, and conclusions derived from the analysis of research findings. The working documents are appended to the report, including the recruitment screener and the moderator's guide.



Research Methodology

Target Audiences

The research participants included Canadian residents between the ages of 18 and 74 years old who have lived in their respective markets for at least the past two years. Each focus group included a mix of age, education level and household income, as well as including between 4 and 6 participants who have children at home.

Research Approach

A total of twelve (12) traditional, in-person focus groups were conducted in Peterborough, Ontario (January 15, 2019), Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec (January 17, 2019), Coquitlam, British Columbia (January 21, 2019), St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador (January 24, 2019), North York, Ontario (January 31, 2019), and Calgary, Alberta (February 4, 2019). In each of the first five locations, one group was conducted with females while the second group included males. In Calgary, groups were divided by age, with one group comprised of those aged 18-34 years and the other group including those 35 years of age or older. Groups in Saint-Hyacinthe were conducted in French, while the discussion in all other locations was held in English.

A total of 12 participants were recruited for each focus group, with a goal of 8 to 10 actually taking part. Across locations, 118 participants attended the discussions. Those who took part in the discussion each received a compensation of \$100 as a token of appreciation for their time, as per market standards. In-person group discussions each lasted 2 hours.

The following provides a summary of participation in each location:

Location	Language	Date	Audience	Time	Number of Participants
Peterborough, ON	English	January 15, 2019	Females	5:30 PM	10
			Males	7:30 PM	10
Saint-Hyacinthe, QC	French	January 17, 2019	Females	5:30 PM	8
			Males	7:30 PM	10
Coquitlam, BC	English	January 21, 2019	Females	5:30 PM	10
			Males	7:30 PM	10
St. John's, NL	English	January 24, 2019	Females	5:30 PM	10
			Males	7:30 PM	10
North York, ON	English	January 31, 2019	Females	5:30 PM	10
			Males	8:00 PM	10
Calgary, AB	English	February 4, 2019	18-34 years old	5:30 PM	10
			35+ years old	8:00 PM	10
Total number of participants:					118



All participants were recruited per industry guidelines and per the recruitment specifications for the Government of Canada. Recruitment was conducted through qualitative panels stored on Canadian servers, with follow up calls to confirm the details provided and to ensure quotas were met. An additional confirmation call was done approximately one day prior to each focus group. Participants were also asked to sign a consent form upon their arrival to the focus group. In each location, participants were asked to show a piece of ID to confirm their identity.

Context of Qualitative Research

Qualitative discussions are intended as moderator-directed, informal, non-threatening discussions with participants whose characteristics, habits and attitudes are considered relevant to the topic of discussion. The primary benefits of individual or group qualitative discussions are that they allow for in-depth probing with qualifying participants on behavioural habits, usage patterns, perceptions and attitudes related to the subject matter. This type of discussion allows for flexibility in exploring other areas that may be pertinent to the investigation. Qualitative research allows for more complete understanding of the segment in that the thoughts or feelings are expressed in the participants' "own language" and at their "own levels of passion." Qualitative techniques are used in marketing research as a means of developing insight and direction, rather than collecting quantitatively precise data or absolute measures. As such, results are directional only and cannot be projected to the overall population under study.



Detailed Analysis

The following section provides an overview of the findings from the focus group discussions.

Top-of-Mind Government Stories

Participants were first asked to briefly describe what they have seen, heard, or read about the Government of Canada recently. Across locations, the most commonly recalled new stories related to the diplomatic situation with China, the Trans Mountain pipeline project, and to a lesser extent, the legalization of cannabis and various recent situations pertaining to immigration.

In Peterborough on January 15th, participants mentioned issues related to China, conflicts between indigenous groups and those wanting to build a pipeline, the implementation of a “carbon tax”, immigration and preparations for an upcoming election.

In Saint-Hyacinthe on January 17th, both groups mentioned stories related to the influx of migrants and asylum seekers crossing the Canada-U.S. border. International diplomatic situations, such as the tensions with Saudi Arabia over Canada offering protection to Rahaf Mohammed and Canadians being imprisoned in China. A few females mentioned having heard about the federal government’s purchase/investment into the Trans-Mountain pipeline project. The disappearance of a Sherbrooke resident in Burkina Faso was mentioned in the male group. One female participant mentioned having seen advertisements last Fall for the Discovery Passes from Parks Canada, while another one mentioned the discussions between the provincial and federal governments to combine the income tax process.

In Coquitlam on January 21st, there were mentions of issues related to China, the Trans-Mountain pipeline, benefit programs, taxes, Canada Pension Plan (CPP), the legalization of cannabis and recent changes to the education curriculum.

In St. John’s on January 24th, a few in each group recalled general stories about the Government of Canada’s recent purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline, announcements related to Canada’s Food Guide revisions, and changes to the CPP contribution allowance. A variety of other topics were each identified by one or two participants, including the increased price of legalized cannabis, Canada having given refugee status to Rahaf Mohammed, and diplomatic issues with China, including the recent arrest of Canadians.

In North York on January 31st, participants mentioned the legalization of cannabis, the recent acceptance of a young female immigrant to Canada, the introduction of the new \$10 bill, a lack of initiatives being undertaken by the federal government, rebates on renewable energy, and a cut in social assistance payments.

In Calgary on February 4th, participants across age groups primarily recalled stories relating to the Trans-Mountain pipeline, including the inability to move oil within Canada, its impact on the western economy, and a perceived too high of a price paid for the pipeline. In addition, consistent mention was



made of current trade turmoil between Canada and the U.S., and Canada and China, as well as ongoing disputes between Alberta and B.C. A wide range of other topics were mentioned by a number of participants in each group including carbon taxation, legalization of cannabis, summer job funding, equalization payments and a Canadian being given refugee status.

Participants in Coquitlam, North York, St. John's and Calgary were asked if they had heard anything about the Canada Food Guide. Many participants, with prompting, had heard something, recalling various aspects of the new Guide. Specific elements mentioned included the following:

- Removal of dairy / milk from the guide
- That the guide is “mostly vegetable” (one half)
- Less meat, less dairy
- Lessening of the meat component (to ¼)
- Drink choice is now water (instead of juice)
- Recommendation to lower the amount of sugar consumed
- A move away from specific serving sizes
- Increased importance of plant-based proteins
- Focusing on the importance of family meal-time
- Recommendations were based on scientific evidence, not recommendations from industry

Participants generally held favourable opinions on the announcements related to the revised Canada's Food Guide and were anticipating its public release. A number of participants felt that the new Guide was reflective of what nutritionists have been saying for years.

The Economy

State of the Economy

Signs of a strong retail environment were most commonly identified as evidence of a healthy economy, while signs of household financial hardships were most commonly indicative of a bad economy.

Participants in all locations were asked to describe what is entailed when assessing the state of the economy. In general, participants noted a number of consumer-related indicators as key issues related to the economy such as housing, the cost of consumer goods such as gas and food, amount of consumer debt and availability of jobs / employment / unemployment, and job security. In addition, more macro and business-related factors were consistently identified as helping to assess the state of the economy including the Government's budget, inflation rate, the state of the stock market, businesses' success or



failure, income taxes (going up or down), the Canadian dollar exchange rate, and the amount of homelessness.

A “good economy” was generally described as one with a **strong retail environment**, where people spend on goods and services as well as real estate. Increased construction, busy stores and shopping centres, and consumer spending confidence were considered overt signs of a good economy. Low interest rates and a strong Canadian currency were also considered by Saint-Hyacinthe participants as signs of economic wealth.

In most locations, a strong economy was often associated with low unemployment and the availability of higher-paying jobs, thus resulting in a higher household income. In Calgary participants considered a good economy to be synonymous of a strong resource-based economy.

Other indicators less commonly mentioned included increased business start-ups, lower levels of homelessness, fewer requests for social assistance/mental health services, balanced government finances, good relationships with other countries, strong immigration, a lack of “desperation” among young people, and a low unemployment rate. Although mentioned in other locations as well, mentions of housing affordability were more common in Coquitlam.

A “bad economy” was generally considered as exhibiting specific signs of **household financial hardships**, notably the reduction of household spending, increased personal debt, increases in the prices of goods and services, higher levels of homelessness, increases in the number of business and personal bankruptcies, higher interest rates and inflation, and a general sense of insecurity among consumers.

Other factors mentioned by a few participants included cuts to funding of arts and education, as well as spending on infrastructure (hospitals and roads for example) going down. The poor state of the automotive industry and declining exports were mentioned in Peterborough, and in North York and Calgary, an increase in crime was noted. In St. John’s, outmigration was another sign of a poor economy, especially as young people leave the province to find work elsewhere. In Calgary, further mentions included a reduction of foreign investment.

There was a general sense that the Government of Canada is able to influence the state of the economy through various measures, including setting policies, determining trade, determining the level of immigration, allocating funding and support for certain industries, and the setting of interest rates. In Calgary, it was felt that the federal government can have a great influence on interprovincial relations and should positively influence cross provincial trade. Further participants believed an inability to do so, particularly in relation to cross-country pipelines, was detrimental to the country. In St. John’s, it was also believed that the federal government can provide economic support to provinces through equalization payments. By contrast, some felt that the economy is largely driven by the actions of private-sector organizations, as well as more global factors and the economies of other countries (namely the U.S. and China), and therefore the Canadian government has less influence.



Job Market

With a few exceptions, Canadians were concerned with the job market, which was believed to have recently worsened, although they were hopeful for the future.

Participants were asked to individually jot down a few words on their exercise sheet, describing the current job market. In all locations, the bulk of comments were negative, with participants noting that both the number and quality of jobs had declined, and that good opportunities for those with an education were challenging to find. Of note, in Calgary, participants consistently described the current job market as poor, albeit better than it was a few years ago. Across locations, many participants noted a 'chicken and egg' difficulty of being able to gain the experience required by many jobs, in order to be able to apply for certain jobs. Finally, many participants indicated that while jobs are available in select regions, the pay was lower than needed in order to afford life's necessities.

In terms of describing the current state of the job market, participants in St. John's described job shortages, while those in Saint-Hyacinthe felt that there was a workforce shortage of higher-paying jobs.

When asked to compare the current job market with the situation from one year ago, opinions varied based on the location of the focus groups. In both Peterborough, Calgary and Coquitlam, there was a sense that while there are jobs available, that the quality of jobs has declined, and that more people are having to work multiple part-time jobs in order to make ends meet. Participants mentioned a lack of good paying jobs, with people with a high degree of education unable to find meaningful work. More so, in Calgary it was felt that many high-paying, full-time jobs have disappeared, with a greater prevalence of lower paying, part-time jobs.

In Saint-Hyacinthe, the situation described was somewhat different. It was believed that while good paying jobs were available, they were increasingly difficult to secure given the more stringent requirements for higher qualifications and work experience. At the same time, permanent, full time positions were being replaced with contract positions. Despite these shortfalls, there was a sense that the market is growing and that employers in low-paying industries struggle to fill positions. In Saint-Hyacinthe, the economy was considered strong, with low unemployment rates and improved working conditions for the workforce.

Some participants noted that the job market varies depending on the part of the country, with a thriving job market in Alberta, for example, and less strong areas, such as Peterborough and St. John's, where factory closures (GM and GE mentioned particularly) and industry demise (oil and gas) resulted in increased unemployment. Comparing the job market to a year ago, many felt that it has been stagnant, with only a few finding it to be either better or worse. St. John's is perhaps the exception, where nearly all participants felt that the situation had worsened. In Calgary, there was a general perception that the job market was a little better than a few years ago, but is currently weak, with many people having to hold multiple part-time jobs to make ends meet.



Across locations, opinions were a little more mixed with respect to how the job market has changed over the past five years, suggesting that perceptions of a worsening economy were more recent. Some participants noted that technology had changed the job market over the last five years. Again, St. John's participants were more likely than in other locations to believe that the economy had worsened within this time frame.

In Saint-Hyacinthe, participants noted that the improved economic situation was fairly recent. It was mentioned that apart from large infrastructure projects in or around Montreal (e.g., the new Champlain bridge and real estate construction in downtown Montreal) there have been few large investment projects in the region over the past five years.

In Calgary, the current job market was considered unstable, volatile, tough and suppressed. While many people are working, there is a perception that they are making less than they were and have to hold multiple part-time jobs. Further, with lack of stability in the oil and gas sector, there is a saturated, underpaid workforce, given the significant number of layoffs in recent years.

Looking ahead, participants anticipate that there will be further changes to the job market in the next five to ten years, with many being highly concerned that the job market will worsen due to outsourcing of jobs, an impending recession, the compound effect of wages not keeping up with the cost of living and the cost of housing forcing migration of workers to different parts of the country (mentioned in Coquitlam). Outmigration was also a continued concern for participants in St. John's. That said, many participants were hopeful about the future.

In Saint-Hyacinthe, the state of the future job market was not defined in terms of being better or worse, with most not providing a prediction. That being said, it was believed that the workforce and working environment would continue to evolve. Most notably, it was believed that teleworking would become more prevalent, that employee loyalty would decline, that there would be an influx of immigrants into the local workforce, that artificial intelligence would become more common, and that the workforce would need to be increasingly educated to keep up with these technological changes.

In Calgary, there were mixed perceptions of the future. While some felt adamant that oil is Alberta's economy and its success is largely dependent on provinces working together, others believe that oil is not going to be what it was in the past and diversification is needed. Regardless, participants are hopeful for a better future, but believe change is needed to ensure a stable oil economy.



Government Priorities Regarding the Job Market

Although economic priorities differed by location, wages not keeping up with the rising cost of living was considered a top priority across locations, followed by job security and skills training and retraining.

Participants were each provided with a list of seven issues related to ‘jobs’ and asked to select the two or three they thought was most important for the Government of Canada to pay attention to. The choices provided were the following:

- Jobs disappearing
- Job security
- Lack of jobs
- Lack of job opportunities for young people
- Lack of opportunities for career advancement
- Skill training and retraining
- Wages not keeping up with the rising cost of living

Overall, ***wages not keeping up with the rising costs of living*** was considered among the most pressing issue regardless of location. Participants generally did not see or experience wage increases that are above the cost of living, thus being under the impression that their purchase power is diminishing. In Coquitlam and North York, the cost of housing was considered to be the major factor leading to the increase in the cost of living. More generally, it was considered that addressing this issue was an important consideration to creating or supporting a strong economy.

Job security was also identified by participants in Peterborough, Saint-Hyacinthe and North York as a topic of importance for the federal government, but less so in other locations. Those who felt it was a key issue to be addressed were concerned about the high number of part time work and the closure or move of companies, as well as an increase in contract and part time workers rather than secure, full-time jobs. Most felt it was an important issue to address, given its impact on the quality of life and level of personal stress. It was also believed that an economy is strengthened by a strong level of job security, as people’s confidence in their personal or household well-being is often influencing their level of spending.

Skills training and retraining was also a topic considered of importance among participants, notably in Peterborough and Saint-Hyacinthe. It was believed that ensuring that the workforce remains relevant and able to adapt to new technology is an important consideration to a strong economy. At the same time, focusing on skills enhancement was considered as having a positive impact on personal self-confidence and as a way to be ready for the future.

Jobs disappearing was mentioned in Coquitlam and in Peterborough as a key issue due to participants having witnessed jobs not being replaced when retirements occur as well as mergers of companies (with accompanying layoffs), and jobs moving offshore. Although not mentioned by a majority, those who felt strongly about this issue in North York indicated that an increase in homelessness and factories closing



were concerning signs of jobs disappearing. In St. John's, although this was not identified by most as being a pressing issue, many indicated that the demise of the oil and gas industry in the province has resulted in increased unemployment and outmigration.

The ***lack of job opportunities for young people*** was mentioned among the top priorities in St. John's and Calgary. It was believed that economic outmigration in Newfoundland and Labrador has primarily affected younger people who are entering the workforce, and participants expressed concern regarding the resulting negative impact on the province's long-term economy.

In general, the ***lack of jobs*** and the ***lack of opportunities for career advancement*** were considered less of a priority across locations, with the exception of Calgary where the lack of jobs was mentioned among the most pressing issues. With a shrinking economy in recent years, many people are not working in their trained sector and there was a general perception that the presence of quality jobs was lacking.

When asked about the current unemployment rate, participants in North York and Calgary guessed at levels between 4 and 15%. When told about the actual unemployment rate (5.6%, the lowest level since Statistics Canada started measuring comparable data over 40 years ago), participants were incredulous, thinking that neither the quality, nor nature of the jobs (i.e. full or part time) was taken into consideration. In Calgary, participants were especially critical of this claim considering it misleading, artificial and not an accurate representation of the Alberta situation.

Youth Economic Opportunities

In Calgary, participants were asked to comment on various topics related to youth economic opportunities.

Youth Situation

While youth recognize that they have more opportunities than those of previous generations, they also face challenges unique to their generation.

Participants were asked if they thought that younger Canadians have it easier or harder than past generations. While youth were generally under the impression that there are many more opportunities available to the younger generation than were evident in the past, particularly with increased technology and global trade, there was a clear perception that youth face many challenges that did not exist in the past. Unique challenges particularly relate to the environment, affordability in a high-cost economy, increased reliance on global relationships, and a decreased focus on resource-based economies. In particular, while Canada was recognized as a country largely dependent on its natural resources regardless of region, today's global landscape places great pressures on that dependence and questions its relevance or appropriateness.

Some older participants felt strongly that it is misplaced to ask if younger Canadians have it easier or harder, since the challenges for each generation will always be different.



Opinions were mixed when asked if the Government of Canada pays more or less attention to young people, compared to older age groups. Some felt that baby boomers are the primary force that demands Government's attention, while a few older participants believed the younger generation will rely on government and a more government-dependent generation given the high debt load incurred for education and lack of opportunities. While many have become well-educated, they are not able to realize gainful employment that allows them to address the significant debt loads they have incurred.

When asked what the Government has done that benefits younger Canadians, Calgary participants across age groups were generally unable to identify many specific initiatives. In fact, mentions typically included only education grants and legalization of cannabis, which was mentioned in jest by some older participants.

Youth Challenges and Opportunities

Key challenges facing youth in Calgary include finding suitable full-time employment, the high cost (and resulting debt) of education, as well as a perceived inability to own their own home.

Participants who are 18 to 34 years old were asked additional questions regarding challenges and opportunities young people face today.

When asked what the largest challenges facing younger Canadians are these days, Calgary youth consistently identified employment, the high cost of education, and the high debt load they have due to student loans. Other challenges included the high cost of home ownership and a perceived inability to own their own home someday. Most, in fact, were unsure if they would be able to ever own their own home given the high cost of home ownership and the general unavailability of affordable homes. In addition, participants felt that youth today are generally unable to deal with basic life skills and have a lack of awareness of how to cope with day-to-day living.

Participants were shared a list of some things the government could do to help young people and asked to rank which they felt required priority focus. These items included:

- Creating jobs for students so they can get work experience
- Helping young families with the cost of raising children
- Increasing skills training and apprenticeship programs
- Making it more affordable for people to buy their first home
- Relieving student debt
- Strengthening the Canada Pension Plan to help people save for retirement

Of the six items presented, youth placed the greatest emphasis on actions that would help to make life more affordable, with priority given to helping young families with the cost of raising children, making it more affordable for people to buy their first home and relieving student debt.



Helping young families with the cost of raising children was considered an area requiring increased focus. It was felt that the high price of daycare is cost prohibitive to many and as a result it is financially practical for a parent to stay at home rather than secure employment after maternity / parental leave is completed. Suggested actions for helping young people included increasing the child care benefit, making daycare more affordable, and reinstating income splitting.

Making it more affordable for people to buy their first home was considered to be an area where efforts should be made to help young people. The high cost of homes in the current marketplace was considered cost prohibitive to most. Suggestions on what could be done to assist youth included introducing a first-time home buyer incentive.

Young adults concurred that **relieving student debt** was an area where the government of Canada should focus efforts to assist young people. Participants were critical of the ever-increasing cost of education, as well as an apparent trend of increasing the cost of classes, books and the number of credits needed to get a degree. For example, a few participants cited that what used to take three years to complete now takes four or five years, increasing the cost. It was perceived that educational institutions are being run more and more like a business, with a goal of the institutions getting more of a return.

To assist, participants suggested that more scholarships are needed, and that efforts are needed to cap the cost of classes and books as well as the number of credits needed to complete a degree or program.

Overall, **creating jobs for students so they can get work experience** was considered important, but not to the same degree as the previously-discussed items, primarily because of a lack of full-time employment. While most recognized the importance of work experience, it was felt that if full-time positions are not available in the sector / field of study, and if there are many unemployed people in that area, having experience will not help a student attain full-time employment upon graduation. As would be expected, those who were students were more likely to consider this a priority.

Similarly, **increasing skills training and apprenticeship programs** was not considered an area requiring priority focus from the government by any young adults in Calgary primarily because there was perceived to be a glut of trained workers (across job types and professions) and a lack of jobs. Efforts to enhance the economy through job growth was deemed more important.

Strengthening the Canada Pension Plan to help people save for retirement was considered an area of importance for participants, but to a lesser extent. While youth recognized the importance of saving for retirement, it was generally felt that the challenges presented by the high cost of living often prevents retirement savings. Further, most voiced scepticism towards the idea that the Canada Pension Plan will actually be something they will ever see the benefit of.



Housing Affordability for Youth

Factors influencing access to affordable homes are perceived to be the greatest problems impacting youth's ability to own a home.

Participants were shared a list of five problems relating to housing affordability and asked to rank which ones they considered the greatest problems. These problems included:

- Foreign buyers buying houses they don't intend to live in, driving up prices
- Investors buying houses and flipping them without living in them, driving up prices
- The high cost of making a down payment
- The high cost of making mortgage payments
- The lack of housing supply

Of the five problems identified, youth considered the greatest problems to be factors influencing access to affordable home ownership, most notably the high cost of making a down payment, foreign buyers driving up home prices, and investors buying / flipping homes and driving up home prices. For most, the high cost of entry into home ownership is considered cost prohibitive and something that keeps them renting rather than owning a home.

In Calgary, the price of homes was considered excessive and reflective of boom times. While there are always homes for sale, the price tag of the home was deemed excessive.

When asked which items the Government of Canada could actually make efforts to fix, it was felt that efforts could be made in each regard, most notably in making home ownership more accessible. In particular, it was felt that efforts to ease entry into home ownership, and support the development of more modest sized homes would be helpful. In addition, the introduction of legislation to address foreign buyers' home purchasing and the flipping of homes (without living in a home) were both deemed helpful. That said, a few participants questioned if such legislation was federal or provincial, and mentioned that BC implemented restrictions on foreign buyers that helped the BC home market. As a result, it was perceived that many foreign buyers had shifted attentions to the Alberta market, where no such restrictions existed. Accordingly, while participants supported introduction of restrictions in this regard, they were unsure if it was legislation of provincial or federal jurisdiction.

When asked how they would feel if the Government of Canada launched a program to make it easier for people to buy their first home, participants voiced unanimous support for such an initiative. Indeed, making home ownership more attainable was well received, although the high cost of housing overall was considered problematic for some, given that entry-level price of homes was considered extremely high in the Calgary.



The Environment

Top-of-Mind Issues Regarding the Environment

The Trans Mountain pipeline and global warming/climate change were top-of-mind environmental issues in all locations.

Questions related to the environment were asked in Peterborough, Saint-Hyacinthe, Coquitlam, North York and Calgary.

Participants were asked to describe what, if anything, they recalled having recently seen, heard or read regarding the environment. Across locations, the Trans Mountain pipeline and potential environmental impacts was mentioned. In addition, participants in Peterborough mentioned conflicts with indigenous populations.

Across locations, there were mentions of global warming and the country's involvement in international discussions, in addition to the federal government's plan to address climate change (including the implementation of a price on pollution in many locations). Some had recently heard of a deadline of twelve years before a tipping point is reached for the planet. There was also mention of the conflict between the economy / support for certain industries and jobs and trying to protect the environment, as well as issues related to hybrid or electric cars.

Some participants noted a need to invest in new and innovative technology to try to address issues related to the environment.

In Saint-Hyacinthe, many in both groups recalled stories regarding the ocean's plastic pollution and a desire to ban the use of plastic bags in some municipalities. A few mentioned having heard of contaminated soil 'dumping', of stories about the benefits of composting or recycling, and of the value of sustainable development. Some had seen an increase in the popularity of electric vehicles. Plastic pollution and an increase in garbage / plastic was also noted in North York. In North York, participants had also noticed increasing cold, that air quality had been getting worse, and that globally, there was news of climate change getting worse. In Calgary, participants discussed how conflict exists between different resource-based economies (i.e. oil and gas sector, fishing in BC) as increased public discussion is evident on the environmental impact and responsibility of the oil and gas sector.

Government Priorities Regarding the Environment

Environmental priorities for the Government of Canada were considered to be investing in clean energy, driving new business opportunities and job creation in industries of tomorrow, addressing waterways plastic pollution, and improving public transit.

Participants were each provided with a list of ten actions that the Government of Canada is either currently working on, or could consider in the future, as follow:



- Building more than 1,000 public transit projects (for example, light rail trains, buses, transit stations, subway, etc.) to help Canadians get to where they want to go
- Doubling the amount of nature protected across Canada
- Driving new opportunities for business and creating jobs in the industries of tomorrow
- Funding new charging stations for electric vehicles
- Helping communities and families adapt to extreme weather
- Helping families and businesses save money through energy efficiency
- Improving energy efficiency in new low-income housing
- Introducing a price on pollution, so that it's no longer free to pollute
- Investing in clean energy and phasing out coal for cleaner air and better health
- Keeping plastic pollution out of our oceans, lakes and rivers

Prior to a group discussion, participants were asked to individually select up to three actions they believed were the most important for the federal government to focus on. At the same time, they were asked to identify any they believed were not important or pertinent for government intervention.

When looking at combined results across locations, four of the ten actions emerged as being most important priorities:

Investing in clean energy and phasing out coal for cleaner air and better health was considered among the most important priorities in all locations with the exception of Saint-Hyacinthe.

Driving new opportunities for business and creating jobs in the industries of tomorrow was considered a priority in all locations, again with the exception of Saint-Hyacinthe where the economy appeared to be seen as doing better than in other locations.

Keeping plastic pollution out of our oceans, lakes, and rivers was widely seen as a priority by Saint-Hyacinthe participants, and as an important consideration in other locations, though not in the top-three.

Building more than 1,000 public transit projects to help Canadians get to where they want to was mentioned among top priorities in some locations. Concern with the state of public transit was most acute in Coquitlam and Calgary where participants believed that the Government of Canada should focus on this issue as a top environmental priority.

A few of the action items identified elicited moderate interest overall, including ***Helping families and businesses save money through energy efficiencies*** and ***Introducing a price on pollution, so that it's no longer free to pollute***. All other action items listed were considered of a lesser priority. Moreover, in all locations, quite a few participants felt that there is no role for the Government of Canada in ***funding new charging stations for electric vehicles***, and that it should be the responsibility of car manufacturers, utilities or electric car owners rather than being financed through the use of public funds.



There was also some disagreement with the Government of Canada focusing on the ***introduction of a price on pollution*** (notably in Calgary and to some extent in Coquitlam) and with its involvement in ***helping communities and families adapting to extreme weather*** (notably in Peterborough).

In some locations, a few participants identified additional measures they believed the Government of Canada should pay attention to. In Saint-Hyacinthe, participants identified the protection of farmland as an important consideration. The improved health of all waterways, increased use of sustainable building, investing in research, development, and innovation, and strengthening the economy of small communities to reduce the pollution from commuters were identified as environmental topics of relevance for the federal government in Saint-Hyacinthe and Coquitlam. In Coquitlam, participants also noted a need to make solar farms available for communities, as well as a need to have stricter regulation on polluters. In Calgary, it was suggested that efforts should be made to create recycling initiatives to better manage waste and that government should incent the private sector to develop new innovations in that regard.

With respect to the government and the environment, participants in North York mentioned “grants” to buy hybrids having been taken away (a provincial initiative), as well as general efforts to reduce pollution. However, some participants mentioned that recent news about buying a pipeline seemed contradictory to efforts to help the environment.

Weather / Climate Changes and Impact on Residents

Changes in weather pattern and climate have been noticed across locations, and are reported to have had an incidence on people’s behaviours and habits.

For the most part, participants across locations have noticed significant weather pattern or climate changes over the past few years, many of which personally affected them, including hotter summers, more severe snow or wind storms, and lower air quality resulting from forest fires and pollution.

In Saint-Hyacinthe, more variability in temperatures was believed to have caused increased incidence of freezing rain during the winter months and wind storms/tornadoes during the summer months. Many believed that these changes impacted their personal travel plans or their ability to safely travel within their community to varying levels. Some felt that there is increased chances of slipping on ice in winter, thus potentially causing increased demand on the healthcare system as a result of falls. Warmer weather was also considered as having impacted the lifecycle of the insect population, as well as having sped up the introduction of some insect-related disease such as Lyme disease.

In Peterborough, the warmer winters were felt to have an effect on tourism, as fewer individuals would visit the region for winter sports.

In Coquitlam, warmer temperatures were noted, causing poor air quality in the summer, increases in forest fires, and a need for air conditioning.



Participants in North York had certainly noticed changes to climate and weather, including more severe weather, hotter summers, colder winters, and bigger fluctuations. The effects of these changes included mood effects (feeling depressed), not wanting to go out, slowing of transit systems, increased costs (e.g. running air conditioning systems).

In Calgary, participants readily agreed that changes are prevalent, with most citing variations in other locations as clear evidence of change (i.e. snow in Vancouver, ice storm in Ontario, LA flooding, recent fires). While local changes were also noted (namely winter starting earlier and more pronounced seasons), they were considered less apparent than experiences in some locations. That said, the extreme cold temperatures (Polar Vortex) and the ice caps melting were recent changes mentioned across groups.

Lifestyle Changes

There was an openness to changing personal behaviours to contribute to reducing Canada's green gas emissions, with many participants having already adopted greener habits.

Participants were generally agreeable with the idea that to significantly reduce Canada's green gas emissions, there is a need for each Canadian resident to personally contribute through their behaviours. In fact, most participants across groups mentioned having changed some aspects of their lifestyle in the recent past to adopt more environmentally-friendly habits. Most notably, individuals mentioned recycling, trying to reduce their amount of driving, and switching to LED lightbulbs. In Saint-Hyacinthe, a few also report having started to compost, choosing to reduce food packaging, and a couple also mentioned having considered the purchase of an electric vehicle. In Calgary, specific lifestyle changes cited included using fewer plastic bags, smart appliances, using different landscaping options, new construction focussing on increasing R-value of homes and increased focus on recycling clothes.

That said, in Calgary participants over the age of 34 were critical of the presumption that Canadians need to make some lifestyle changes. A number of participants questioned how emissions are defined (i.e. what is pollution – CO₂?) and disagreed strongly with the claim that Canadians produce more pollution per person than most other countries.

Motivation to change habits included wanting to protect the environment for future generations, it being the right thing to do, and as a means to save money. A few also saw a health benefit from some of their behavioural changes, such as walking instead of driving. In Calgary, participants in both groups also considered education and increased awareness to be the primary motivator to make change.

Barriers to making lifestyle changes included the upfront costs (e.g. buying an electric vehicle or energy efficient appliances), well-formed habits of doing things a certain way, as well as the inconvenience of or inadequate public transit or the need to drive to work. Finally, a lack of awareness was also considered a key barrier to making lifestyle change.



In terms of influencing behavioural changes, many participants felt that their children, other family members, or close relationships are most likely to have an impact on their choices. To a lesser extent, financial incentives (e.g., rebates) or retail advertisements were seen as motivators. In Calgary, participants also mentioned that media (namely social media, Netflix, documentaries, Planet Earth) also influences their opinion by educating them of an issue and what's needed to drive change.

Price on Pollution

Although the existence of a plan on putting a price pollution was largely known, knowledge of what the plan entails was limited.

When asked how many had heard about the government of Canada's plan to put a price on pollution, many were aware there was a plan in place, but were generally not familiar with any details of the plan. A few felt that there would be impacts on individual consumers from the plan, namely increased cost of gas, though participants were hopeful that this would not be the case.

In Calgary participants were critical of what they referred to as a "carbon tax" and felt it was hurting Canadians. Many framed it as a punitive approach, and thought that offering incentives instead would be a better method. More so, it was felt that a better alternative would be focussing on research and development and increased innovation to demonstrate leadership.

In Peterborough and North York, there was a targeted discussion of the price on pollution and the Climate Action Incentive. Just over half of participants in North York had heard of the Government's plan to put a price on pollution, more so in the male group. Participants readily called the plan a "carbon tax" and had heard that there was conflict between the provincial and federal governments over the plan. After hearing an explanation of the system, a minority of participants felt that the system was clear, with participants nearly universally not understanding why individuals would be compensated, rather than the funds collected being spent on tackling climate change. When asked what was unclear about the system, participants felt that it was not obvious how the system would result in a cleaner environment. There were also many questions about the logistics of how the money would be collected, how carbon emissions would be monitored, and how it would help anyone. For those who understood it, the understanding was that it was a penalty for polluting that would go back to the community.

A further cause for concern was related to how the plan will actually affect changes in behaviour. There was scepticism that polluters would be the ones to actually pay, with participants believing that individuals will end up footing the bill.

Few participants in Peterborough, and none of the participants in North York were aware that they would receive a Climate Action Incentive, and once told, they were confused as to how it would be determined, who would get it, and how it would improve anything, seeing as the money would not be directed towards any environmental efforts. There was also scepticism that the costs would simply be passed along to individuals.



Canadian Leadership

Across most locations there was support for the Government to take a global leadership role on protecting the environment and fighting climate change.

Participants were asked if they believed that the Government of Canada should take a global leadership role when it comes to protecting the environment and fighting climate change. In Peterborough, Saint-Hyacinthe and Coquitlam, participants were largely supportive of Canada taking on a leadership role. This was viewed as important for the future / children's future, as well as because, as a developed nation with a large landmass, it is the responsible thing to do.

In Calgary, it was generally felt that Canada does not need to take on a global leadership role when it comes to protecting the environment, because that is a position it has already attained. Indeed, it was felt that the question implied that Canada is not currently a leader in that regard.

More importantly, participants in Calgary felt that the country was in trouble economically and that it is imperative that the Government takes care of its own before taking on a global leadership role to protect the environment.

Only a minority in North York felt that Canada should take on a global leadership role. Those that did said it would be encouraging growth in technological development, and that due to the amount of land in Canada, it was a duty to protect it. Those who felt the country should not said it would have little effect, in the shadow of the US, and that there was first too much cleaning up to do of our own environment to be a leader globally.

In addition, across locations, some felt that Canada's relatively small population and economy mean that despite wanting to take on a leadership role, there may be a risk that the Government's action would have little effect and larger countries will do what they like regardless of Canada's example.

In general, Canada was considered as being an average polluter compared to other countries, in terms of how much pollution is produced per person.



Canadian Coast Guard

Awareness and Opinion of the Coast Guard

The Canadian Coast Guard elicited positive opinions in St. John's, as providing an essential service in ensuring the ocean safety of Canadians.

In St. John's, participants were asked questions regarding the Canadian Coast Guard. They were first asked to jot down an adjective they believed best described the Canadian Coast Guard based on what they know about it. All feedback was largely positive, with some of the words focusing on the main purpose for the organization (safety, security), some words relating to the importance the organization plays (keepers, essential, necessary) and some focusing on the quality of work it does (professional, selfless, reliable, helpful).

Positive impressions were largely driven by a perception that the Canadian Coast Guard provides an essential service, and by the fact that participants had not heard negative news story about the organization. In general, the Government of Canada was seen as doing a good job of managing the Coast Guard. The organization itself was also well rated, notably in terms of making good use of the aging equipment they have. Just a few male participants expressed dissatisfaction, notably in terms of the insufficient number of icebreakers, and a perception that the Coast Guard is not delivering on promises (though no specifics were provided).

Not surprisingly, when asked if they thought the word "essential" would be a good way to describe the Canadian Coast Guard, nearly all felt this was the case because of the large amount of coastline surrounding Canada in general, and Newfoundland and Labrador in particular.

Very few participants in either groups recalled having heard, seen or read anything about the Canadian Coast Guard recently. Those who did referred to a story about ships being in dry dock for refit, the aging fleet of boats, low paying staff, and ships no longer docked/onsite near St. Anthony.

Priorities for the Coast Guard

Renewing or upgrading the fleet of ships to ensure they are appointed with new technology was considered a priority for investment to support the Coast Guard's safety role.

Participants in St. John's were provided with a list of six things the Canadian Coast Guard is working towards or could be working towards and asked to circle the two that they believed were most important.

Ensuring the safety of Canadians at sea was considered by far the most important priority, as it relates to the core function of the Canadian Coast Guard. It was believed that improving response times, educating boaters, and assessing risks from foreign vessels were areas related to safety that could be focused on.



While all other areas were considered less important comparatively, three stood out as being somewhat important. ***Stimulating the economy by building and upgrading ships in Canadian shipyards*** was considered as providing jobs, supporting the local economy, and ensuring that equipment is up-to-date. A few also felt that Canadian shipyards should be favoured as they are considered as having a better understanding of what is required to build ships in a colder climate. A number of participants also felt that the Coast Guard should focus on ***tracking and reacting to changes in marine ecosystems resulting from climate change*** and likewise to ***support scientific research in marine areas***, as part of its mandate. It was believed that this would be good use of resources, since scientific experts could board ships which are already going to sea to patrol the oceans. It was also mentioned that climate change affects ocean conditions (e.g., more storms, ice caps migration) which may result in a higher safety risk for boaters, thus making the Canadian Coast Guard's involvement in those topics relevant to its main ocean safety mandate. Finally, ***protecting commercial shipping routes*** and ***defending Canada's sovereignty in remote areas*** were seen as comparatively less important roles for the Canadian Coast Guard.

Participants were also asked to select two items among a list of seven things they believed should be the top priority for the Government of Canada when investing in the Canadian Coast Guard. Renewing or upgrading the fleet of ships was consistently considered a priority, though there were differences of opinions on how this should be done. Specifically, while many felt that the federal government should be ***maintaining and upgrading existing ships*** as a means to be more fiscally responsible, others believed that it would be more beneficial to ***build new ships*** to renew the Coast Guard fleet with the latest and safest equipment available. Not surprisingly considering the focus on upgrading ships, many participants in both groups believed that the Government of Canada should ***buy new, innovative equipment to modernize Coast Guard capabilities***, again with safety in mind. It was believed that this was most needed with new telecommunications technology now being available.

While the other action items were considered less of a priority in comparison, a few participants in each group felt that the ***recruitment and growth of the Coast Guard's workforce*** held some importance, notably to support the economy, ensure sufficient staffing, and highlight the desirability of careers in this field. ***Investing in the conservation of marine areas*** was not selected as a top priority for investment, although it was still seen as a valuable focus for the Coast Guard.

Finally, ***expanding the Coast Guard's mandate to support national security activities*** and ***expanding its presence in the Arctic to defend our sovereignty*** were considered areas the Government of Canada should not invest in through the Coast Guard. It was believed that the Department of National Defence was better suited to this role, and that it may take away from its core safety functions if the Coast Guard was to take on those responsibilities. Many were also unsure of how the Coast Guard would get involved in national security based on their assumptions of the workforce's current skillset.

Participants were told that the average age of ships currently in service within the Coast Guard is 35 years and asked if knowing this would change their opinion about what should be a priority. Given that many participants had already identified that the ships' retrofit or replacement should be a priority, the information did not influence their opinion, even among those who were surprised that the ships were



not older. It was mentioned, however, that the physical condition of the ships, not their age, should drive decisions to invest in improvements.

Canada's Fleet of Icebreakers

Opinions were mixed regarding the need to expand the fleet of icebreakers, with limited awareness and understanding of the current situation.

St. John's participants were reminded that there are different types of ships that could be built to renew the Coast Guard fleet, including icebreakers. Although it was believed that Canada needs enough icebreakers for the Coast Guard to patrol all waterways, many were unsure if the current situation warranted investing in new icebreakers. The commercial purpose of ensuring that all waterways are navigable was also not top-of-mind nor was it well understood by some.

In some instances, it was believed that global warming would reduce the amount of ice in the Arctic, thus reducing the need to expand the fleet of icebreakers. Others, however, believed that climate change would shift how glaciers and ice floes move, thus requiring greater attention to manage the situation and perhaps an increased need for icebreakers.

Irregular Migration

Current Situation

There was a moderately high level of awareness of the issue related to the increase of asylum seekers, and opinions were divided on the work the Government of Canada has done to manage this issue.

Participants in Peterborough, Saint-Hyacinthe, Coquitlam, St. John's and North York were asked to briefly describe what, if anything, they had recently heard or seen regarding asylum seekers crossing the Canada-U.S. border. Across locations, most participants had heard of the issue. While some were able to recall specific details, such as locations (Manitoba and Quebec), or the rationale for the increase (changes in U.S. policy / U.S. administration perceived to be not welcoming to asylum seekers causing a high degree of desperation / global refugee trends), others were simply aware of increases in asylum seekers and the appearance of disruption for the affected communities and resulting discussions on policy to manage the situation.

Some participants felt that while there was lots of attention on this issue a few months ago, it had since waned, and therefore there was a perception that there were now fewer asylum seekers than there had been. By contrast, some had seen information about immigration on social media and were concerned about the tone of the dialogue being anti-immigrant.

Some additional questions on the topic were asked in Peterborough related to participants' knowledge of the process of managing asylum seekers. Participants were under the impression that asylum seekers were screened, then either put in hotels or jail until their cases were processed.



All participants were asked to rate the Government's handling of recent issues related to the increase in the number of asylum seekers. Participant views were divided on this matter, with roughly half feeling the Government was doing a good job and the remainder either thinking they were not doing a good job, or did not know enough to make a judgement.

Those holding positive views felt that the Government was acting compassionately and doing the best it could under difficult circumstances. By contrast, some participants felt that the Government was focussing too much on asylum seekers, while not taking care of issues for citizens and residents, and that the focus on immigration was putting pressure on the economy. Others felt that the processing times were too long for these migrants, and that they should be dealt with in the U.S. if that is where they initially landed. In general, those who felt that the government was doing a bad job indicated they felt there was not proper screening of asylum seekers. There was also conflation of the ideas of asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants, with some in North York feeling broadly that there was too much immigration, causing social problems and strains on housing. Because of this, some North York participants felt that the government should be trying to deter asylum seekers from crossing irregularly into Canada.

When all participants were asked specifically if the Government should be trying to deter asylum seekers from coming to Canada, opinions were mixed, though many felt that it was important to offer sanctuary to those in need.

By contrast, some participants felt that there was a sense of injustice in that those crossing the border irregularly were somehow skirting the rules.

Deterrence Measures

None of the four deterrence measures presented elicited strong support from participants in any of the locations. As possible deterrence measures were presented, participants often expressed that it is a difficult situation and not an easy one to fix. Participants had difficulty understanding the different deterrence measures presented and some felt they did not have enough information to form an opinion.

Participants in Peterborough, Saint-Hyacinthe, Coquitlam, North York, and St. John's were asked to comment on four possible deterrence measures the Government of Canada could implement to manage the flow of irregular migrants. Options were reviewed one at a time in a group discussion. To avoid any biases, the presentation of approaches was rotated across groups. The following provides a summary of reactions for each measure:

Not accepting claims

One measure entailed not accepting asylum claims from those who enter Canada from the U.S. between ports of entry. Participants were informed that because it has a well-established legal system that operates within international refugee law, Canada could send migrants back to the U.S. where they



would be able to pursue their claim. As such, individuals would not make a claim in Canada. Participants were told that this option would require cooperation with the U.S. administration.

There was general disagreement with this approach, primarily due to mistrust that asylum seekers would be treated fairly in the U.S. This approach also appeared as counter to the Canadian values of being welcoming to those in need of assistance. It was also felt that if someone makes the effort to uproot from their country, it is generally because of a great need for assistance and valid reasons, thus this approach would penalize the majority of asylum seekers who are perceived to have valid claims.

That said, a few participants supported this measure, feeling that because asylum seekers had first landed in the U.S., that they should be seeking asylum there. A few were also of the opinion that those who had crossed irregularly should be returned, while those who entered via official ports of entry should be allowed to submit a claim in Canada.

Sending asylum seekers back to the U.S. and inviting them back at a scheduled time

Participants were informed that another measure would entail sending those arriving between ports of entry back to the U.S. and inviting them back to return to Canada at a scheduled time. That is, those crossing irregularly would be sent back to the U.S. temporarily, with a date to be scheduled for them to return to determine if they are admissible to claim asylum in Canada. Participants were told that this option could help maintain an orderly flow of irregular migrants at the border. This approach would require cooperation with the U.S. administration.

Most participants also disagreed with this measure, again in large part due to mistrust of the U.S. administration and what would happen to the asylum seekers while they were waiting for their scheduled appointment. There were also concerns around the logistics and costs required for this measure.

Some participants felt unable to assess this measure without understanding the scope of the asylum issue. Finally, just a few were agreeable to this idea as they believed it would create some structure to managing the influx of asylum seekers without compromising their safety.

Working with a U.S. organization to welcome an agreed-upon number of claimants to Canada daily

Another option consisted of working with U.S. organizations to organize migrants in the U.S. and to send the agreed-upon number of claimants to Canada each day. Participants were reminded that whereas the previous option has irregular migrants crossing into Canada first, and then being sent back to the U.S. to receive a date when they could return, this option consists of asking for support from the U.S. government or a U.S. non-governmental organization (NGO) to organize irregular migrants south of the border before they reach Canada. A queue, or line-up, would be established by the organization so that the agreed-upon number of asylum seekers are directed to the border each day. Participants were told that this approach would maintain border integrity and fair access to Canada's asylum system. This option would require cooperation with the U.S. administration.



Mixed opinions were offered regarding this approach. Some participants largely disagreed with this measure, again because of mistrust of the U.S. administration or the logistics of working with an NGO. Participants felt that those crossing the border irregularly were desperate and assumed they would be required to find the NGO or government on their own in order to become part of the queue. Many felt that it was unrealistic to think that the U.S. Government would agree to this type of approach.

Those who supported this measure largely felt that it would mean that asylum seekers would be pre-screened by the U.S. or the NGO. Most preferred to see an NGO involved, thus removing the U.S. administration from any decisions related to these asylum seekers. This approach seemed to provide a quick and orderly approach to managing the influx, while ensuring the safety of asylum seekers.

Establish a different way of processing irregular migrant claims

The fourth option entailed establishing a different way of processing irregular migrant claims to speed up the review process and allow for faster removal of migrants who do not qualify. This option described how irregular migrants could be treated differently from other asylum claimants, in that the process for determining whether asylum claims from irregular migrants would be accepted or rejected could be expedited. Participants were informed that as such, for irregular migrants whose claims are rejected (meaning they are found to not need Canada's protection), this would allow Canada to remove them more quickly (for example, via chartered airplane), and they would spend less time in Canada receiving supports. However, this would mean other asylum claimants would have to wait longer for their claims to be processed. Participants were told that this approach could potentially discourage irregular migrants from continuing to cross the border outside of ports of entry.

There was a large degree of disagreement with this measure, namely due to the perception that all asylum seekers should be treated the same way. In addition, the phrase related to 'chartered airplane' worried many participants due to concern related to the cost of this measure. Overall, there was not a clear understanding of why speeding up the process would act as a deterrent. In fact, some participants felt that this streamlining would act as encouragement for other legitimate asylum seekers to cross irregularly, in order to have their claim processed more quickly. A few also felt that there would continue to be asylum seekers crossing the border irregularly, but in this situation, they may be more tempted to stay underground rather than use formal channels to make a claim.

When asked if the Government should find ways to process asylum cases faster, even if this costs more money, participants were receptive, reasoning that by speeding things up, there would ultimately be cost savings. There were some who cautioned, however, that they would need to know more about the current wait times and costs before making a decision.

Participants were informed that asylum seekers have their cases heard by the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board. If the Board determines that they have a valid refugee claim, claimants can stay in Canada and apply for Permanent Resident status. If the Board determines that claims are not valid, applicants sometimes have the right to appeal the decision.



In general, it was believed that asylum seekers who enter Canada via the designated points of entry should continue to have the right to appeal the Board's decision. However, some concerns were raised related to the number of times someone could appeal, and the cost to the Government of this process.

By contrast, participants, notably men in Saint-Hyacinthe and Coquitlam, were generally agreeable to removing the appeal process among asylum seekers who cross irregularly to speed up the average time for cases to be heard. In fact, this was considered a further deterrence measure to manage the flow of irregular migrants crossing the U.S. border for these individuals.

Conversely, women in Coquitlam and Peterborough, and men in Peterborough were generally not supportive of this idea, feeling that the system should be the same for all asylum seekers.



Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the analysis of focus group discussions to address the study's objectives.

- ***There was uncertainty regarding the state of the economy, notably with respect to a more difficult job market within the past year.***

In all locations with the exception of Saint-Hyacinthe, the state of the economy and job market elicited some uncertainty, notably in terms of the declining number and quality of jobs available. In Saint-Hyacinthe, the economy was seen as in an upswing, with workforce shortage issues, though increased experience and skills requirements. In some locations, the issue was perceived as being the quality more so than the quantity of jobs available. The tighter job market was considered as being a fairly recent issue, having started within the past year or so. There was concern for the job market looking ahead five to ten years down the road, notably in terms of outsourcing, automation, an impending recession, the compound effect of wages not keeping up with the cost of living, the cost of housing, and economic outmigration.

Unemployment rates were assessed at levels ranging from 4 to 15% in North York and Calgary and participants were surprised to learn that it actually stood at 5.6%, the lowest level since Statistics Canada started measuring comparable data over 40 years ago. It was believed that neither the quality nor the nature of the jobs was factored into the job market assessment. In Calgary, participants were especially cynical of the unemployment rate claim and considered it artificial and misleading.

In terms of assessing the strength of an economy, signs of a strong retail environment were most commonly identified as evidence of a healthy economy, including strong retail sales and construction, in addition to low unemployment and the availability of higher-paying, quality jobs. By contrast, signs of household financial hardships were most commonly indicative of a bad economy, notably lower household incomes, increases in the price of goods and services, higher bankruptcy levels, and higher interest rates and level of inflation. At the same time, lower consumer confidence and increased social issues, such as homelessness, were considered signs of a bad economy.

There is a widespread perception that the Government of Canada can influence the state of the economy primarily through policy setting, encouraging trade, managing immigration levels, funding of key industries, setting up interest rates, and by adjusting equalization payments to provinces. When provided with a list of seven job-related issues the Government could tackle, wages not keeping up with the rising cost of living was considered a top priority across locations, followed by job security and skills training and retraining.



- **Youth Economic Opportunities**

In Calgary, youth were generally under the impression that there are many more opportunities available to today's younger generation than were evident in the past, particularly with increased technology and global trade. That said, there was a clear perception that youth face many challenges that did not exist in the past, most notably in relation to the environment, the cost of living, increased reliance on global relationships, and a decreased focus on resource-based economies. While Canada was recognized as a country largely dependent on its natural resources (regardless of region), today's global landscape places great pressures on that dependence and questions its relevance or appropriateness.

When asked what the largest challenges facing younger Canadians are these days, Calgary youth consistently identified finding suitable, full-time employment, the high cost (and resulting debt) of education, as well as a perceived inability to own their own home. In addition, participants felt that youth today are generally unable to deal with basic life skills and have a lack of awareness of how to cope with day-to-day living.

When considering how government could help young adults, Calgary participants placed the greatest emphasis on actions that would help make life more affordable, with priority given to helping young families with the cost of raising children, making it more affordable for people to buy their first home and relieving student debt.

Factors influencing access to affordable homes are perceived to be the greatest problems impacting youth's ability to own a home and accordingly, it was felt that efforts to ease entry into home ownership, and support the development of more modest sized homes would be helpful. In addition, the introduction of legislation to address foreign buyers' home purchasing and the flipping of homes (without living in a home) were both deemed helpful. Finally, participants voiced unanimous support for a program that makes it easier for first time home buyers.

- **Environment**

The Trans Mountain pipeline and global warming/climate change were top-of-mind environmental issues in all locations, along with ocean plastic pollution. Accordingly, environmental priorities for the Government of Canada among a list of ten action items were considered to be investing in clean energy, driving new business opportunities and job creation in industries of tomorrow, addressing waterways plastic pollution (notably in Saint-Hyacinthe), and improving public transit (notably in Coquitlam and Calgary). By contrast, funding new charging stations for electric vehicles was viewed as an area that should be supported by private-sector or user funding rather than public funds. Opinions were mixed with the Government of Canada focusing on the introduction of a price on pollution and with its involvement in helping communities and families adapt to extreme weather.

Changes in weather pattern and climate have been noticed across locations, notably hotter summers, more severe snow or wind storms, and poor air quality resulting from forest fires and



pollution. These changes were seen as having had an incidence on people's behaviours and habits, as well as external resources, such as tourism and healthcare.

There was an openness to changing personal behaviours to contribute to reducing Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, with many participants having already adopted greener habits. In fact, people recognized the role they play in addressing the issue and have made changes such as recycling, reducing the amount of driving, switching to LED lighting, reducing food packaging, and in some instances, composting and consideration for electric vehicles. The protection of the environment for future generations and saving money are the greatest motivators to changing habits, while barriers to lifestyle changes include the upfront cost, well-formed habits, and the inconveniences of public transit.

Although the existence of a plan on putting a price pollution was largely known, knowledge and understanding of what the plan entails was limited. Many also considered it a "tax" on pollution. Awareness of the Climate Action Incentive was nonexistent in North York and minimal in Peterborough. Regardless of knowledge or opinions of climate change issues, there was support for the Government to take a global leadership role on protecting the environment and fighting climate change.

- ***Renewing or upgrading the fleet of ships to ensure they are appointed with new technology was considered a priority for investment to support the Coast Guard's safety role.***

In St. John's, participants were asked questions regarding the Canadian Coast Guard, where it elicited positive opinions as providing an essential service in ensuring the ocean safety of Canadians. Among a list of six action items for the Coast Guard, ensuring the safety of Canadian at sea was widely seen as an important focus to support the organization's mandate. The renewal of the Coast Guard fleet was also considered important, either by building new ships or retrofitting existing ones with the newest technology.

As such, there is support for the Government of Canada to invest in building or retrofitting ships, including the purchase of new, innovative equipment to modernize the Coast Guard's capabilities. By contrast, opinions were mixed regarding the need to expand the fleet of icebreakers, with limited awareness and understanding of the current situation.

- ***There was a moderately high level of awareness of the issue related to the increase of asylum seekers, and opinions were divided on the work the Government of Canada has done to manage this issue.***

In Peterborough, Saint-Hyacinthe, Coquitlam, North York and St. John's, the focus group included a discussion on irregular migrants. For the most part, participants had knowledge of a sudden influx of asylum seekers crossing the U.S.-Canada border, although the details of the situation were generally not known. Opinion was divided on the performance of the Government of Canada managing the increase in asylum seekers. Some felt that the Government has been acting compassionately in



handling the situation, while others felt that too much attention was afforded to the situation, thus taking away focus on national issues more directly impacting Canadians.

Four possible deterrence measures were presented in the context of the focus group, for discussion. Each option was briefly presented and participants were asked to share their spontaneous reactions based on the limited information shared with them. Overall, none of the four deterrence measures presented elicited strong support from participants in any of the locations.

The option of working with a U.S. organization to welcome an agreed-upon number of claimants to Canada daily received mixed feelings. A mistrust in the U.S. administration and cost/logistics of applying this measure led some people to disagree with it. On the other hand, involving an NGO was considered more appropriate, and deemed a good way to pre-screen asylum seekers before they enter Canada, thus bringing some order to handling an influx of requests for asylum.

Establishing a different way of handling irregular migrant claims to speed up the review process and allow for faster removal of migrants who do not qualify was generally not well received. The idea that those who enter through established channels may have to wait longer to have their claims processed as a result was disliked, primarily due to the perception that all asylum seekers should be treated the same way. It was also believed that this approach may encourage more irregular asylum seekers, especially those who wish to have their claim processed faster.

Most participants disagreed with the option of sending asylum seekers back to the U.S. after they have entered Canada and inviting them back at a scheduled time. There was great mistrust in the fairness of the U.S. administration towards asylum seekers and questions regarding how asylum seekers would be treated in the U.S. while waiting for their scheduled appointment. Costs and logistics concerns were also expressed.

The option that was least appealing involved sending asylum seekers back to the U.S. where, given that it has a well-established legal system that operates within international refugee law, they are able to pursue their claim. There was general disagreement with this approach, primarily due to mistrust that asylum seekers would be treated fairly in the U.S. This approach also appeared as counter to the Canadian values of being welcoming to those in need of assistance.

Despite mixed feelings towards the various options presented, there was a clear belief that the Government of Canada should find ways to process asylum cases faster, even if this costs more money. It was believed that cost-savings would be achieved in the long run. It was also believed that asylum seekers in general should continue to have the right to appeal claim decisions made by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), while mixed opinions were offered regarding whether or not irregular migrants should have access to an appeal.



**Appendix A:
Recruitment Screener**

RECRUITMENT SCREENER FINAL

Name: _____

Tel. (H): _____ Tel. (W): _____ Tel. (Cell): _____

Email: _____

Group 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

FOCUS GROUPS:

<u>Peterborough, ON (ENGLISH)</u>			
Date:	January 15, 2019	Location:	Holiday Inn Peterborough Waterfront
Time:	Group 1: 5:30pm – Females Group 2: 7:30pm - Males		150 George Street North Peterborough, ON
<u>Saint-Hyacinthe, QC (FRENCH)</u>			
Date:	January 17, 2019	Location:	Holiday Inn Express & Suites
Time:	Group 3: 5:30pm – Females Group 4: 7:30pm - Males		1500 Daniel-Johnson Est Saint-Hyacinthe, QC
<u>Coquitlam, BC (ENGLISH)</u>			
Date:	January 21, 2019	Location:	Executive Plaza Hotel Coquitlam
Time:	Group 5: 5:30pm – Females Group 6: 7:30pm - Males		405 North Road Coquitlam, BC
<u>St. John's, NL (ENGLISH)</u>			
Date:	January 24, 2019	Location:	MQO Research
Time:	Group 7: 5:30pm – Females Group 8: 7:30pm - Males		55 Duckworth Street St. John's, NL
<u>North York, ON (ENGLISH)</u>			
Date:	January 31, 2019	Location:	Quality Response
Time:	Group 9: 5:30pm – Females Group 10: 8:00pm - Males		2200 Yonge Street Suite 903 Toronto, ON
<u>Calgary, AB (ENGLISH)</u>			
Date:	February 4, 2019	Location:	Qualitative Coordination
Time:	Group 11: 5:30pm – 18-34 years old Group 12: 8:00pm – 35+ years old		707 – 10 Avenue SW Suite 120 Calgary, AB

SPECIFICATIONS SUMMARY

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In each of Peterborough, Saint-Hyacinthe, Coquitlam, St. John's, North York, one group with males and one group with females • In Calgary one group with those 18-34 years old and one group with those 35 years or older • All to be Canadian citizens 18-74 years old (mix of age based on quotas) • All have lived in their respective markets for at least 2 years. • Mix of parents of children 18 years or younger at home and non-parents (4-6 with children and 4-6 without) • Must not personally or have someone in household work or be retired from sensitive occupations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of occupation, education and household income • Max 6 recruits per group who have been to focus groups before. • Must not have taken part in a focus group in past six months • Must not have taken part in 5 or more focus groups in past 5 years. • Able to take part in written/visual exercises in English / French (based on location) • Recruit 12 per group • \$100 incentive |
|--|--|

Hello, my name is ____ and I am with Corporate Research Associates Inc., a market research firm, and I'm calling today on behalf of the Government of Canada. We are currently conducting a series of small group discussions and are looking to include people who are at least 18 years of age or older. Would you be that person, or is there someone else I could speak with? **REPEAT INTRO IF NECESSARY**

Would you prefer that I continue in English or in French? *Préférez-vous continuer en français ou en anglais?* **[IF FRENCH, CONTINUE IN FRENCH OR ARRANGE CALL BACK WITH FRENCH INTERVIEWER: Nous vous rappellerons pour mener cette entrevue de recherche en français. Merci. Au revoir.]**

The purpose the small group discussions is to explore various issues of importance to the country. These group discussions will be held on <DATE>, will last two hours and those who attend will receive \$100 in appreciation for their time. May I ask you a few quick questions at this time to see if you qualify to participate in this study? This will take about 6 or 7 minutes.

Please note, this information will remain completely confidential and you are free to opt out at any time. We are not trying to sell you anything. Thank you.

IF A REFERENCE IS REQUIRED TO AUTHENTICATE THE STUDY, PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: Isabelle Côté, Privy Council Office – Tel: (613) 960-4031 / Email: Isabelle.Cote@pco-bcp.gc.ca

THANK & TERMINATE WHERE REQUIRED IN THE SCREENER: Unfortunately, we will not be able to include you in this study. We already have enough participants who have a similar profile to yours. Thank you for your time today.

QUALIFYING QUESTIONS

1. Do you or any member of your household work in or has retired from: **READ RESPONSES**

Marketing or Market Research	1
Public relations, communications, graphic design, or creative agency	2
Advertising or media (TV, Radio, Newspaper)	3
Political Party.....	4
Federal or provincial governments	5

IF YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, THANK AND TERMINATE

2. Are you a Canadian citizen at least 18 years old who normally resides in the [SPECIFY COMMUNITY] area?

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

3. How long have you lived in [SPECIFY COMMUNITY]?

Response: _____ **TERMINATE IF LESS THAN 2 YEARS**

4. Have you ever attended a focus group discussion or in-depth interview for which you received a sum of money?

- Yes 1 **CONTINUE – MAX 6 RECRUITS PER GROUP**
- No 2 **GO TO PROFILING QUESTIONS**

5. When was the last time you attended a focus group or interview? _____

IF THEY HAVE BEEN TO A GROUP/INTERVIEW IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS - THANK & TERMINATE

6. How many focus groups or interviews have you attended in the past five years? _____

IF THEY HAVE BEEN TO 5 OR MORE GROUPS/INTERVIEWS IN PAST 5 YEARS - THANK & TERMINATE

PROFILING QUESTIONS

7. Are you a...

- Female; or.....1 **CONSIDER FOR GROUP 1, 3, 5, 7**
- Male.....2 **CONSIDER FOR GROUPS 2, 4, 6, 8**
- VOLUNTEERED**
- Other/refused.....3 **ASK WITH WHICH GROUP THEY ASSOCIATE**

8. In which of the following age group do you fall? Please stop me when I reach your age. Are you [READ]?

- Less than 18.....1 **THANK & TERMINATE**
- 18 to 24.....2
- 25 to 34.....3
- 35 to 44.....4
- 45 to 54.....5
- 55 to 64.....6
- 65 to 74.....7

} **SEE QUOTAS**

- 75 or older8 **THANK & TERMINATE**
- VOLUNTEERED**
- Refused.....9 **THANK & TERMINATE**

AGE QUOTAS:

Groups 1-10: Recruit min 3 between 18-34; min 3 between 35-54 and max 4 between 55-74
 Group 11: Recruit 6 between 18-24 and 6 between 25-34
 Group 12: Recruit 3 in each of 35-44 and 45-54, and 6 in the 55-74

9. Do you currently have children under the age of 18 living in the house with you?

- Yes 1 **RECRUIT 4-6 PER GROUP**
- No 2 **RECRUIT 4-6 PER GROUP**

10. How many people above the age of 18 are there in your household?

- One 1
- More than one..... 2

11. What is the highest level of education you have finished?

- Less than High School 1
 - Some High School/Vocational 2
 - Completed High School 3
 - Some College / Technical Training 4
 - Completed College / Technical Training..... 5
 - Some University..... 6
 - Completed university 7
- } **AIM FOR MIX IN EACH GROUP**

VOLUNTEERED

- Refused..... 8

12. Are you currently **[READ]**?

- Employed full time 1
 - Employed part-time 2
 - Self-employed..... 3
 - A homemaker 4
 - Unemployed 6
 - A student 7
- } **RECRUIT MAX 3 PER GROUP**

13. **[IF EMPLOYED, ASK]** What is your current occupation? _____
[IF RETIRED, ASK] What was your last occupation? _____

TERMINATE IF SIMILAR OCCUPATIONS AS IN Q1 – RECRUIT MIX OF OCCUPATIONS

14. 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 RESPONSES**

- Under \$20,000..... 1
- \$20,000 to just under \$ 40,000 2
- \$40,000 to just under \$ 60,000 3
- \$60,000 to just under \$ 80,000 4
- \$80,000 to just under \$100,000 5
- \$100,000 to just under \$150,000 6
- \$150,000 and above 7

**Ensure good mix:
 Recruit 2 below \$40K category
 Recruit 3 between \$40 and \$80K
 Recruit 5 above \$80K category**

VOLUNTEERED

- Don't know/Refused..... 8

INVITATION

Based on your responses, it looks like you have the profile we are looking for. I would like to invite you to participate in a focus group discussion we are holding at [TIME] on [DATE]. As you may know, focus groups are used to gather information on a particular subject matter; in this case, various issues of importance to the country. The discussion will consist of about 10 people and will be very informal. The information provided by participants during the focus groups will remain anonymous and confidential.

15. This discussion will last up to 2 hours; it will begin at [TIME] and end at [TIME]. Refreshments will be served and you will receive \$100 as a thank you for your time. Would you be interested in attending?

- Yes 1
- No 2 **THANK & TERMINATE**

16. The discussion you will be participating in will be audio and video recorded for use by the research team only to analyze the findings. Please be assured your comments and responses are strictly confidential. Are you comfortable with the discussion being recorded?

- Yes 1
- No 2 **THANK & TERMINATE**

17. Participants may be asked to read some materials and write out responses individually during the group discussion. Would it be possible for you to take part in these activities in [English/French – based on location] by yourself without assistance?

- Yes 1
- No 2 **THANK & TERMINATE**

18. **[IF PROFESSIONAL FACILITIES ARE USED]** The discussion will take place in a room that is equipped with a one-way mirror for observation.

[IF HOTEL MEETING FACILITIES ARE USED] The discussion will take place in a room equipped with a close-circuit camera hooked to a television in an adjoining room.

This set up will allow Government of Canada employees who are involved in this research, and partner organizations, to observe the discussion without disturbing it. Your participation will be anonymous and only your first name will be given to these people. Would this be acceptable to you?

Yes 1

No 2 **THANK & TERMINATE**

As part of our quality control measures, we ask everyone who is participating in the focus group to bring along a piece of I.D., picture if possible. You may be asked to show your I.D.

As these are small groups and with even one person missing, the overall success of the group may be affected, I would ask that once you have decided to attend that you make every effort. In the event you are unable to attend, please call _____ (collect) at _____ as soon as possible in order that a replacement may be found.

Please also arrive 15 minutes prior to the starting time. **The discussion begins promptly at [TIME].** Anyone arriving after **[TIME]** will **NOT** be able to take part in the discussion and will **NOT** receive the \$100 incentive.

Please bring with you reading glasses or anything else that you need to read with or take part in the discussion.

Thank you for your interest in our study. We look forward to meeting you and hearing your thoughts and opinions.

ATTENTION RECRUITERS

1. Recruit **12** participants for each group.
2. CHECK QUOTAS.
3. Ensure participant has a good speaking (overall responses) & written ability - If in doubt, **DO NOT INVITE**.
4. Do not put names on profile sheet unless you have a firm commitment.
5. Repeat the date, time and location before hanging up.
6. Ask them to arrive 15 minutes prior to the start time.
7. Reminded them of the discussion start and end time

CONFIRMING

1. Confirm at the beginning of the day prior to the day of the groups.
2. Verify qualifying questions
3. Confirm in person; do not leave a message.
4. Verify time and location (ask if they are familiar).
5. Remind participants to glasses if needed.
6. Remind them to arrive 15 minutes prior to the start time
7. Remind them to bring their IDs

Appendix B: Moderator's Guide

Moderator's Guide

Focus Groups – Winter 2019 – Phase I

Introduction

10 minutes

- **Welcome:** Introduce self & research firm & role as moderator (keep on time/on topic)
- **Sponsor:** Groups on behalf of the Government of Canada
- **Length:** Our discussion should last about 2 hours, excuse yourself if needed during the session
- **Your Role:** Share your opinions freely and honestly; no prep needed; not testing your knowledge
- **Process:** All opinions are important; looking to understand minority/majority of opinions; talk one at a time; interested in hearing from everyone
- **Logistic:** Audio/video taping for reporting; observation representing the government (mirror/video feed)
- **Confidentiality:** Your comments are anonymous; no names in reports; answers will not affect dealings with Government of Canada; Once finalized, the report can be accessed through the Library of Parliament or Archives Canada.
- **Participant Introduction:** First name, who they live with, and favourite hobby/pastime

Government of Canada News

5 minutes

To begin...

- What have you seen, read or heard about the Government of Canada lately?
 - **[COQUITLAM; ST. JOHN'S; NORTH YORK; CALGARY]**
 - Has anyone heard anything about Canada's Food Guide lately?
 - IF YES: What did you hear?
 - **IF MENTION UPDATED GUIDE:** What are your thoughts on this?

Economy

30 minutes

Ask in Peterborough; Saint-Hyacinthe; Coquitlam; St. John's; North York; Calgary

- We talk a lot about “the economy” and how the economy is doing. But what does that actually mean?
- What do you consider the best ways of telling if the economy is going well? If it is going badly?
 - What does a “good economy” look like?
 - What does a “bad economy” look like?
- How much is the government of Canada able to influence whether we have a good or a bad economy?
 - What type of things can they do that have an impact?
 - Has the Government of Canada done any of these types of things?

Exercise #1: Take a moment and write down one word, or a few words that describe the current job market. Don't overthink it – there are no right or wrong answers.

- What words did you use to describe the current job market? Why those?
- Is the job market better, worse or the same as it was a year ago?
 - Why? What has changed?

- Is it better, worse or the same as it was 5 years ago?
 - Why? What has changed?
- Looking ahead, do you think the job market is going to get better or worse or stay the same over the next 5 or 10 years? Why?
 - What concerns do you have when you look ahead?

Exercise #2: I've got a handout with different issues all related to "jobs". A lot of these are similar, but I want you to circle the 2 or 3 items on this list that you think are the most important for the government of Canada to pay attention to.

- Let's look at each one individually: did you circle that one? **REVIEW EACH INDIVIDUALLY**
 - Why do you think this is an issue the government should pay attention to?
 - Why do you think this isn't important for the government right now?
 - **IF CIRCLED:** Is there anything specific the government could do to fix this problem?

ASK IN NORTH YORK AND CALGARY

- Does anyone know what the current unemployment rate is?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED

The unemployment rate is currently 5.6%, which is the lowest level since Statistics Canada started measuring comparable data just over 40 years ago.

- What do you think when you hear this?
 - Does it surprise you?
 - Does it paint an accurate picture of job market?
 - Does it make you feel better about the jobs situation in Canada?

Environment

40 minutes

Asked in Peterborough, Saint-Hyacinthe; Coquitlam; North York; Calgary

- What have you seen, read or heard about the environment lately?
 - And have you seen, read or heard about anything related to the Government of Canada and the environment recently?

Exercise #3: I've got a handout with various things the Government of Canada is working towards, or could be doing to help the environment. I'd like you to circle the three you think are the most important.

When you're done with your selections, please put an 'x' next to any items that you think the government should NOT do, or that you disagree with.

- Before we look at which ones you have chosen... Are there any you think that the government should **not** do/that you disagree with? Why?

- Which ones do you think are the most important (those you chose)? What makes you say that?
- Was there anything missing from that list?
- Have you heard of the government of Canada's plan to put a price on pollution? **SHOW OF HANDS**
 - **IF YES:** What have you heard recently?

PETERBOROUGH AND NORTH YORK ONLY

CLARIFY AS NEEDED

In 2016 the Government of Canada announced a plan to put a price on pollution across the country, instructing each province to come up with their own plans before the end of 2018.

The federal government has announced that they will apply a price on pollution in the four provinces that still do not have a system in place: Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and New Brunswick.

Under this system, what people and businesses pay will be based on the amount of carbon emissions they produce. All revenue collected in Ontario will stay in Ontario – 90% will be given directly to residents in the form of an incentive, with the average household receiving about \$300. 10% will go to small businesses, hospitals, and schools.

- Is this system clear – i.e. do you feel you understand how the federal government plans to put a price on pollution works? (show of hands)
 - How would you explain this plan?
 - What parts of the plan do you feel you understand?
 - What parts are unclear?
- Had you previously heard you would receive a Climate Action Incentive beginning this year?
- For 8 out of 10 families, the Climate Action Incentive will be more than the costs they pay through a price on pollution Does this change the way you feel about the program?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE MODERATOR

- The federal carbon pollution pricing system puts a price on every tonne of carbon dioxide equivalents produced, and is made of two parts:

- a trading system for large industry, known as the output-based pricing system; and
- a regulatory charge on fuel

- The government expects that although the price on pollution does not apply directly to individuals, some costs will be passed on to consumers through things like increases in the price of heating or electricity.

- For most families (in these 4 provinces), the value of the incentive will be higher than the costs associated with the price on pollution

ALL LOCATIONS

- Do you think Canada should take a global leadership role when it comes to protecting the environment and fighting climate change? **SHOW OF HANDS**
 - **IF YES:** How important is it that Canada takes a leadership role? Why do you say that?
 - **IF NO:** Why do you think Canada should not take a leadership role?

- Canada is a vast country with significant variations to climate and weather. Has anyone here noticed changes either recently or longer ago to weather/climate locally?
 - **IF YES:** What have you noticed?
 - Has this affected you? If yes, how so?
- In terms of how much pollution produced per person, how do you think Canada ranks globally? That is, do you think we are one of the top polluters, about average, or one of the lowest producers?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED:

Because of heating our homes in winter, our high standard of living and high rates of car ownership across Canada, Canadians produce more pollution per person than most other countries.

- Some feel that if we as Canadians are serious about reducing our emissions, we are going to have to make some lifestyle changes. How do you feel about this – does this seem valid? Why/why not?
- Some Canadians are making lifestyle changes, and some are not. Where do you fall in this regard - are you making lifestyle changes or is your lifestyle fairly similar to what it was, say 5 years ago?
 - **IF CHANGED:** What motivates you to make changes?
 - **IF NOT:** What is discouraging you from making changes?
- When it comes to climate change, who influences your opinion when it comes to making any lifestyle changes? How so? Why/why not?

Coast Guard

30 minutes

Ask in St. John's

- Next we're going to talk briefly about the Canadian Coast Guard. We will get into some specifics in a moment, but first I'd like you to write down one adjective that you would use to describe the Canadian Coast Guard based on what you know about it.
 - **PROBE:** Why did you choose that word?
 - **PROBE:** Do you think the word "essential" would be a good way to describe the Canadian Coast Guard? Why or why not?
- What, if anything, have you seen, read or heard about the Canadian Coast Guard lately?
 - And have you seen, read or heard anything that the Government of Canada has done recently or is planning to do regarding the Canadian Coast Guard?
 - **IF YES:** And where did you see/read/hear this? TV, Newspaper, Social media (if so, from which channels, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)?
- Overall, do you think the Government of Canada is doing a good or a bad job of managing the Canadian Coast Guard? Why?
- Do you think the Coast Guard is doing a good or a bad job? Why? (If possible)

Exercise #4: I've got a handout with various things the Canadian Coast Guard is working towards, or could be working towards. I'd like you to circle the two that you think are the most important.

- Choose one item that you circled – why is this item important?

Exercise #5: Keeping in mind that the Government of Canada has many responsibilities and has must make priorities when deciding how to spend money, please circle the two items on the below list that you think should be the top priority when investing in the Canadian Coast Guard.

- Choose one priority that you circled – why did you choose this item as a top priority?
- Where there any items on the list that you think the Government of Canada should not be spending money on? Why?
- If I told you that the average age of ships currently in service with the Canadian Coast Guard is 35 years, would that change your opinion about what should be a priority?
- We've talked about potentially building new ships, but there are different types of ships that could be built, including new icebreakers. Do you think building up Canada's fleet of icebreakers should be a priority? Why or why not?
 - **PROBE IF NECESSARY:** Do you think the work done by Canada's icebreakers is important? Why or why not?

Youth Economic Opportunities
Ask in Calgary

30 minutes

- I want to talk a bit about younger Canadians. For the purposes of this discussion, let's think about people who are roughly 20 to 35 years old.
- Do you think younger Canadians have it easier or harder than past generations?
 - How so?
- Do you think the Government of Canada pays more or less attention to young people, compared to older age groups?
 - What makes you say that?
 - What has the government specifically done that benefits younger Canadians?

ASK REMAINDER TO YOUNGER FOCUS GROUP ONLY

- What are the largest challenges facing younger Canadians these days?

Exercise #6: I've got a handout with a list of some things the government could do to help young people. I want you to rank the three you feel they should focus on the most 1-2-3.

(GO THROUGH ALL 6, AND ASK PEOPLE WHO RANKED IT IN TOP 3 WHY IT'S IMPORTANT, AND WHAT SPECIFICALLY THEY WANT TO SEE GOVERNMENT DO. IF VERY FEW RANKED IT, ASK OTHERS WHY IT'S A LOWER PRIORITY)

Exercise #7: I want to talk a bit more about housing affordability. I've got a handout with 5 problems listed. I want you to rank the ones you see as the biggest problems 1-2-3.

(GO THROUGH ALL 5, AND ASK PEOPLE WHO RANKED IT IN TOP 3 WHY IT'S IMPORTANT, AND WHAT SPECIFICALLY THEY WANT TO SEE GOVERNMENT DO. IF VERY FEW RANKED IT, ASK OTHERS WHY IT'S A LOWER PRIORITY)

- Regardless of how big a problem is, which of the things on this list do you think the government of Canada could actually do something to fix? And which of the things do you think are outside of their control?
- How would you feel if the government of Canada launched a program to make it easier for people to buy their first home?

Irregular Migration

30 minutes

Ask in Peterborough; Saint-Hyacinthe; Coquitlam; St. John's; North York

- Have you heard anything lately about asylum seekers crossing the Canada-U.S border?
 - What have you heard?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED:

Asylum seekers are people who come to Canada and, after arriving, claim asylum, saying that they cannot go home because they face danger or persecution. Canada has signed international treaties to protect refugees. As such, we have a legal responsibility to assess asylum claims. Some claim asylum at our designated ports of entry while others claim asylum at our borders, between designated ports of entry. If an individual enters Canada through a designated port of entry and makes an asylum claim, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) assesses whether they can enter Canada.

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

- 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?
- Should the federal government be trying to deter asylum seekers from coming to Canada?

Exercise #8: I will hand out a sheet that describes some possible deterrence measures the federal government may consider implementing to manage the flow of irregular migrants. There are a number of possible actions that could be taken, but some could not be taken immediately as they require legal changes to how we accept asylum seekers and process their claims and may require coordination with the U.S. ***MODERATOR HANDS OUT SHEET WITH OPTIONS AND READS THE MATERIAL TO PARTICIPANTS.***

- With a show of hands, please let me know who agrees and who disagrees with implementing each. Then, we'll have a quick round-table discussion about why you feel the way you do.

I would now like to discuss the fourth option in a little bit more detail.

- Thinking more broadly about asylum cases, should the federal government find ways to process asylum cases faster, even if this costs more money?
 - **PROBE:** Asylum seekers can stay in Canada while their case is being processed. Some people have said that processing cases more quickly could therefore deter other people from coming to Canada, because then those found not to be in need of our protection wouldn't be able to stay in Canada for as long (since the cases would be processed faster). Do you agree with this? Does it change the way you feel about this issue?

- Asylum seekers have their cases heard by the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board. If the board determines that they have a valid refugee claim, they can stay in Canada and apply for Permanent Resident status. If the board determines that they do not have a valid claim, applicants sometimes have the right to appeal this decision.
 - Do you think they should have the right to appeal the decision?
 - (if unsure because they don't know enough) What additional information would you need to know, before deciding how you feel about this?
 - Asylum seekers include both those who come to Canada through official ports of entry and border stations, and those who cross irregularly at other places on the border. How would you feel about removing the appeal process among those who cross irregularly, if removing this appeal process sped up the average time for cases to be heard.

Thanks & Closure

That concludes our discussion. On behalf of the Government of Canada, thank you for your time and input.

Exercise Sheet

Exercise #1

Exercise #2

Jobs disappearing

Job security

Lack of jobs

Lack of job opportunities for young people

Lack of opportunities for career advancement

Skill training and retraining

Wages not keeping up with the rising cost of living

Exercise #3

Building more than 1,000 public transit projects (for example, light rail trains, buses, transit stations, subway, etc) to help Canadians get to where they want to go

Doubling the amount of nature protected across Canada

Driving new opportunities for business and creating jobs in the industries of tomorrow

Funding new charging stations for electric vehicles

Helping communities and families adapt to extreme weather

Helping families and businesses save money through energy efficiency

Improving energy efficiency in new low-income housing

Introducing a price on pollution, so that it's no longer free to pollute

Investing in clean energy and phasing out coal for cleaner air and better health

Keeping plastic pollution out of our oceans, lakes and rivers

Exercise #4

Ensuring the safety of Canadians at sea

Protecting commercial shipping routes

Defending Canada's sovereignty in remote areas

Supporting scientific research in marine areas

Tracking and reacting to changes in marine ecosystems resulting from climate change

Stimulating the economy by building and upgrading ships in Canadian shipyards

Exercise #5

Building new ships to renew the Coast Guard Fleet

Maintaining and upgrading existing ships to renew the Coast Guard Fleet

Expanding the Coast Guard's mandate to support national security activities

Buying new, innovative equipment to modernize Coast Guard capabilities

Expanding the Coast Guard presence in the Arctic to defend our sovereignty

Investing in the conservation of marine areas

Recruiting and growing the Coast Guard's workforce

Exercise #6

Creating jobs for students so they can get work experience

Helping young families with the cost of raising children

Increasing skills training and apprenticeship programs

Making it more affordable for people to buy their first home

Relieving student debt

Strengthening the Canada Pension Plan to help people save for retirement

Exercise #7

Foreign buyers buying houses they don't intend to live in, driving up prices

Investors buying houses and flipping them without living in them, driving up prices

The high cost of making a down payment

The high cost of making mortgage payments

The lack of housing supply

Exercise #8**1. NOT ACCEPTING CLAIMS**

Because it has a well-established legal system that operates within international refugee law, send migrants back to the U.S. where they are able to pursue their claim. Individuals would not make a claim in Canada.

This would require cooperation with the U.S. administration.

2. SENDING ASYLUM SEEKERS BACK TO THE U.S. AND INVITING THEM BACK AT A SCHEDULED TIME

Irregular migrants would still arrive between ports of entry. Rather than processing their claim in Canada that day, we could send them back to the U.S. temporarily and schedule a date for them to return to determine if they are admissible to claim asylum in Canada.

This could help maintain an orderly flow of irregular migrants at the border.

This would require cooperation with the U.S. administration.

3. WORKING WITH U.S. ORGANIZATIONS TO ORGANIZE MIGRANTS IN THE U.S. AND TO SEND THE AGREED-UPON NUMBER OF CLAIMANTS TO CANADA PER DAY

Whereas the previous option has irregular migrants coming to Canada first to receive a date when they could return, this option consists of asking for support from the US government or a US non-governmental organization (NGO) to organize irregular migrants south of the border before they reach Canada. A queue, or line-up, would be established by the organization so that the agreed-upon number of asylum seekers are directed to the border each day.

This would maintain border integrity and fair access to Canada's asylum system.

This would require cooperation with the U.S. administration.

4. ESTABLISH A DIFFERENT WAY OF PROCESSING IRREGULAR MIGRANT CLAIMS TO SPEED UP THE REVIEW PROCESS AND ALLOW FOR FASTER REMOVALS

Treat irregular migrants differently from other asylum claimants, and make the process faster for determining whether asylum claims from irregular migrants are accepted or rejected.

For irregular migrants whose claims are rejected, meaning they are found to not need Canada's protection, this would allow us to remove them more quickly (for example, via chartered airplane), and they would spend less time in Canada receiving supports. However, this would mean other asylum claimants would have to wait longer for their claims to be processed.

This could discourage irregular migrants from continuing to cross the border outside of ports of entry.