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# National Focus Groups – Winter 2019 Third Cycle

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## Final Report

Prepared by:  
**Corporate Research Associates Inc.**

Prepared for:  
**The Privy Council Office**

*Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.*

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Canada 

# **Focus Groups – Winter 2019 – Third Cycle**

Final Report

## **Prepared for the Privy Council Office**

Supplier Name: Corporate Research Associates Inc.

April 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 third cycle of the study entailed a total of fourteen focus groups with Canadian residents 18 to 74 years old between February 28 and March 25, 2019.

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

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## Executive Summary

Corporate Research Associates Inc.  
Contract Number: 35035-181804/001/CY  
POR Registration Number: 074-18  
Contract Award Date: November 26, 2018  
Contracted Cost: \$218,920.00 (excluding taxes)

### 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. The study entailed three cycles of focus groups, one for each of January, February, and March 2019. This report presents the findings from the third and final cycle of focus groups. More specifically, objectives of this third cycle of focus groups aimed to assess opinions and perceptions regarding Trade (Kingston, Winnipeg, Halifax and Laval), the Budget, (Kingston, Victoria, Laval and Halifax), the Environment (Winnipeg and Barrie), Tourism, (Winnipeg, Barrie and Joliette), Skills (Winnipeg, Barrie and Joliette), Stock Options (Kingston, Victoria and Halifax), Housing (Winnipeg, Barrie and Joliette), Energy Vision (Kingston, Victoria, Halifax and Laval), and Local Challenges (Victoria and Joliette).

The third cycle of the study consisted of a total of fourteen (14) in-person focus groups conducted from February 28 to March 25, 2019. Two French sessions were conducted in each of Joliette (QC) and Laval (QC), while two English groups were held in each of Barrie (ON), Winnipeg (MB), Kingston (ON), Victoria (BC) and Halifax (NS). Focus group participants included Canadian residents between the ages of 18 and 74 years old, and were segmented by gender in Joliette and by financial situation in other locations. One group was categorized as “*financially struggling*” and another group was categorized as “*financially secure*”. In Joliette, one session was only females, the other session was only males. Across all groups, a total of 136 participants took part in this research cycle.

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: April 24, 2019

## Key Findings and Conclusions

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

### Housing (Barrie; Winnipeg; and Joliette)

Concern was prominent when discussing housing, both in terms of affordability, securing a mortgage, and also about the government's involvement in supporting first-time home buyers. Desire to own a home was strong, primarily as a means to build personal equity. However the availability of affordable housing, and the ability to save for a down payment, were often cited as barriers to home ownership.

The idea of government supporting first-time homeownership through sharing a small part of home equity elicited mixed reactions and led to questions regarding the logistics and legalities of the proposition. The greatest concern related to the implication of shared equity on decisions related to the use of the property. Of the five proposed names discussed for this program, the preferred options were "First-Time Buyers Benefit" in English and "Hypothèque à mise de fonds partagée" in French.

### Skills (Barrie; Winnipeg; Kingston; Victoria; and Joliette)

Although the term "upskilling" is generally unfamiliar, there is strong agreement and understanding of the need for Canadians to continue their learning, in one form or another, after entering the workforce, due to the rapid advance of technology and the fast-changing job market. Despite this recognition, cost, family commitments and a general lack of time were chief among concerns and barriers, for those who might be interested in undertaking further training or skills upgrading.

Participants were supportive of a government funding program for skills enhancement, but were cautious about logistics and job security. The program idea entailed the provision of a lump sum benefit to Canadian workers to cover a portion of the cost of continuous training and living expenses, while guaranteeing them time off work to pursue education. Participants would be asked to cover some of the cost of training, while employers would be asked to provide time off to interested employees. Despite this type of initiative being seen as an important step to prepare the Canadian workforce for the future,



concerns were expressed regarding the impact of participation on small businesses, notably in terms of labour shortages or additional costs, and participants' financial ability to contribute to the cost of training. Of six options to name this program, the names, "Professional Development Leave" and "Crédit de soutien à la formation" were considered the most appropriate.

### **Budget (Kingston, Victoria, Halifax and Laval)**

Awareness of the recent federal budget varied, not only across locations but depending on participants' financial situation, with those who are more financially secure having greater awareness of the budget announcement. Despite limited knowledge of budget content, nearly all participants heard about the announcement of the federal budget through the news, with social media, newspapers and news radio being popular sources. General impressions of the budget were those of concern, with many questioning how the spending would impact the national debt. The first-time home buyers' initiative was most recalled of the budget's initiatives, and received positive initial response, as did items related to education. Less enthusiastic responses were related to a perceived lack of focus or direction in the budget, and overall concern about increasing the deficit.

Of 13 budget initiatives identified to participants, doubling the infrastructure money and investing in programs to support outcomes on First Nations reserves were considered the top priorities for government. A more in-depth discussion of the first-time home buyers' initiative yielded mixed responses, with many citing concerns about the logistics of the initiative. Similarly, there was skepticism about the Canada Training Benefit, and concern about how this program would impact employment practices and job security. Finally, there was moderate support for changing the stock options purchase benefit, with many uncertain how relevant these changes would be for them personally.

### **Trade (Winnipeg, Kingston, Halifax and Laval)**

Awareness of and concern about trade issues was high, with trade discussions between Canada and other nations being an area of interest to participants. That said, there was limited awareness of trade agreements Canada is involved in, with the new Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans Pacific Partnership, and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement being recalled.

Trade diversification was not a well-known term, but was considered to be an opportunity to trade with multiple countries and improve business opportunities for Canada. Greater economic independence was considered the greatest advantage of trade diversification, while increased competition for local businesses was seen as the main disadvantage. It was believed that the Government of Canada plays a role in assisting private sector businesses with exporting their products and services through trade missions, strengthening the country's profile abroad, and providing financial assistance, among other things.

### **The Environment (Barrie; Winnipeg)**

Top of mind issues relating to the environment most commonly included global warming and a price on pollution, as well as the Trans Mountain Pipeline. In terms government involvement, keeping plastic



pollution out of the waters and investing in public transit were mentioned as top priorities. There were also strong feelings that further efforts are needed to ban plastic bags, reduce garbage and increase recycling plastic bottles, potentially through an incentive program. By contrast, government was seen as not playing a key role in supporting or expanding the network for electric vehicles.

Awareness of the Climate Action Incentive was limited, and was met with skepticism when discussed. Awareness of the plan to put a price on pollution was slightly higher, but raised many questions about the administration of the program and whether the plan would contribute to long-term solutions to improve the climate change situation.

There was a strong desire for Canada to be a leader among other nations when it comes to protecting the environment, and fighting climate change. At the same time, the public recognizes that lifestyle changes must be made in order to have an effect on climate change. Media and family / friends were considered role models for many, when considering what types of changes to make in that regard.

### **Tourism (Barrie; Winnipeg; and Joliette)**

Awareness and general acceptance of vacation rental accommodations booked through online portals was fairly high, and most participants were pleased or at least neutral about their emergence onto the tourism scene. Competitive pricing, as well as a unique or different alternative to hotels when travelling, were cited as positives.

Concerns about vacation rental accommodations related to the impact on other businesses and communities, and what the intention of the builders and property owners would be in the long run. Participants felt that GST-HST should be applied to rentals, but with conditions that create fairness.

### **Energy Vision (Kingston, Victoria, Halifax and Laval)**

Participants were shown five concepts to communicate Canada's energy vision to the public. Response to all three proposed concepts that contained the words "energy" and "future" was positive and strong. More specifically, the **Canada's Energy Future Starts Now** concept garnered the strongest response, eliciting a sense of hopefulness and ownership. Likewise, the concept **My Energy is Powering Canada's Future**, was a close second choice for many.

Regardless of the concepts, specific words held appeal, including "reliable", "sustainable", "affordable", "clean", "renewable", and "my energy is powering". By contrast, some of the expressions caused confusion, including "electrifying the nation" and "full service oil and gas".

### **Local Challenges (Victoria; and Joliette)**

A wide range of issues were discussed as being important in both Victoria and Joliette. Bike lanes, affordable housing, and homelessness were considered the most important challenges in Victoria. In Joliette, an increased population was believed to have caused issues with road safety and traffic, as well as access to services. In general, specific actions of the federal government to support the local economies were not well known.



Among of list of pre-determined issues, major community concerns in both regions were about access to healthcare, an aging population, road and bridge infrastructure, traffic congestion, and poverty. In Joliette, public transit was also listed as a concern, while in Victoria, a shrinking middle class, retirement security, the cost of housing, homelessness, drug overdoses, and preserving a clean environment were additional issues selected by participants. Of note, the availability of healthcare services was the top ranked issue in terms of priorities in both locations.

### **Service Canada Pull-Up Screen (Joliette)**

Among the three concepts tested for potential designs for a Service Canada banner, the one featuring a white and red colour scheme without symbols emerged as most eye catching, as well as being most closely aligned with Service Canada. The concept that featured colourful symbols and the concept that featured symbols, but with a white a red colour scheme each elicited mixed reactions, as the symbols and intention of icons were not easily understood.

In terms of preferred expression for the banner sign, there was a preference for “Au service des gens” as a warm, welcoming statement. In terms of the URL to be included on the sign, “Canada.ca” was preferred over “Canada.ca/servicecanada”, for its brevity and memorability.





## 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 third cycle of the study, the following research objectives apply in various locations:

- Assess overall opinions regarding trade in Canada and the status of the current budget;
- Examine opinions regarding the environment, most notably the increases of green gas emissions, and identify where government focus should be placed; and field opinions about five energy vision concepts;
- Determine perceptions regarding tourism, skills and stock options;
- Garner feedback about housing and identify areas of priorities for the Government; and
- Discuss challenges that are specific to regional locations.

This report presents the findings from the third 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, segmented by gender in Joliette and by perception of financial security in all other locations; in each of the latter markets, groups were divided by those who felt they were **falling behind/just getting by** financially (referred to in this report as “financially struggling”) and those who are **getting ahead/financially secure** (referred to as “financially secure”).

### Research Approach

A total of fourteen (14) traditional, in-person focus groups were conducted in Joliette, Quebec (February 28, 2019), Barrie, Ontario (March 4, 2019), Winnipeg, Manitoba (March 13, 2019), Kingston, Ontario (March 20, 2019), Victoria, British Columbia (March 21, 2019), Laval, Quebec (March 25, 2019) and Halifax, Nova Scotia (March 25, 2019). Groups in Joliette and Laval, QC 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, 136 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
Joliette, QC	French	February 28, 2019	Females	5:30 PM	10
			Males	8:00 PM	10
Barrie, ON	English	March 4, 2019	Falling behind/just getting by	5:30 PM	10
			Getting ahead/Financially secure	8:00 PM	10
Winnipeg, MB	English	March 13, 2019	Falling behind/just getting by	5:30 PM	10
			Getting ahead/Financially secure	8:00 PM	8
Kingston, ON	English	March 20, 2019	Falling behind/just getting by	5:30 PM	10
			Getting ahead/Financially secure	8:00 PM	10
Victoria, BC	English	March 21, 2019	Falling behind/just getting by	5:30 PM	10
			Getting ahead/Financially secure	8:00 PM	10
Halifax, NS	English	March 25, 2019	Falling behind/just getting by	5:30 PM	10
			Getting ahead/Financially secure	8:00 PM	10
Laval, QC	French	March 25, 2019	Falling behind/just getting by	5:30 PM	8
			Getting ahead/Financially secure	8:00 PM	10
<b>Total number of participants:</b>					<b>136</b>



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 in all locations 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 situation surrounding SNC-Lavalin, followed by a mix of other topics which included the status of climate change, the price on pollution (referred to by participants as the “carbon tax”), First Nations Reconciliation (including the Prime Minister’s visit to Iqaluit), and the Trans Mountain Pipeline.

A number of other topics were mentioned in selected locations. In Joliette, a number of women mentioned stories related to the legalization of cannabis, while a few men recalled having heard about discussions between the provincial and federal governments regarding immigration.

In Winnipeg, apart from the main topics highlighted above, the issue of canola seed exports to China was discussed, along with the recent grounding of the Max 8 Aircraft. Tariffs and embargoes within the United States and Canada were mentioned, as well as the increase in the Canadian Pension Plan, and the Huawei situation. The lowering of the Canadian dollar was also cited, as well as the upcoming federal election, and the prioritization (or lack) of veterans’ affairs in Canada.

In Kingston, apart from the SNC-Lavalin situation and the Trans Mountain Pipeline, topics mentioned included the recent budget, specifically related to home ownership support, as well as the cabinet shuffle, and the upcoming election. Removal of a grace period for student tuition, and the relationship with First Nations Canadians were also mentioned (specifically the Prime Minister’s visit to Iqaluit).

In Barrie, additional topics primarily referenced outdated military submarines, a lawsuit filed by a Huawei executive, immigration, and protests for a national autism strategy.

In Victoria, the budget announcement was among the top-of-mind topics. Also, a general sense of turmoil and integrity within government was mentioned in both groups. Other key issues included, a proposal for universal pharmacare, cyber security advancements, the grounding of Max 8 airplanes, the new CUSMA agreement not yet being ratified, tariffs on lumber, iron and steel, China and Huawei, and the Government forgiving or reimbursing loans to First Nations groups for treaty negotiations.

In Laval, the recently released budget was top of mind in addition to the SNC-Lavalin situation, as in other locations. Participants in the “*financially secure*” group also recalled recent stories regarding the cabinet shuffle and key officials leaving the government.

In Halifax, topics primarily centered on SNC-Lavalin, the Trans Mountain Pipeline, a “carbon tax” and the Phoenix pay system. Other key mentions included cannabis legalization, general discourse of



government relations, retribution discussions for Indigenous peoples, and financial support from the federal government for refugees.

## Housing

Participants in Winnipeg, Barrie and Joliette (focus groups conducted prior to the budget being tabled) were asked about their main concerns relating to housing, specific to their city.

### Main Concerns

***A shortage of affordable housing and barriers to home ownership are among the top housing concerns.***

A shortage of affordable housing and increased barriers to home ownership for first-time home buyers were among the most top-of-mind housing issues, particularly in the “*financially struggling*” groups. The affordability of mortgage rates also caused concerns, with a desire for mortgage interest to be tax deductible as a means to assist first-time home buyers.

In Joliette, participants reported a near monopoly situation with the rental market, thus keeping rents high and restricting access to apartments. In addition, the issues of increased residential property taxes and the limited supply of single-family homes were raised by participants in the “*financially secure*” group. Some also forecast increased demand for seniors’ housing leading a problematic situation given the lack of adequate supply of affordable housing options.

Those in Barrie mentioned that their community has the lowest number of apartments per capita in Canada, and that new developments are primarily focused on condos rather than affordable rental apartments. Planning for housing in the city of Barrie was considered non-existent.

### Renting vs. Owning

***Although home ownership was desired, participants believed that many young people in particular continue to rent, due to financial circumstances and requirements to obtain a mortgage.***

Home ownership was generally felt to be more important than renting, as a means to build personal equity, particularly among participants in Winnipeg and Barrie. That said, participants sensed that the increased cost of home ownership limited young people’s access to property. By contrast, Joliette participants were more divided on the value of home ownership versus renting, as they believed that the additional costs associated with owning and maintaining a property were sometimes overlooked when comparing both options. Nonetheless, in addition to building equity, the value of home ownership was seen as having better control managing monthly housing costs in comparison to renters who are faced with increased rental rates.



Despite an interest in home ownership, participants offered mixed feelings regarding their ability to enter the housing market. With inflated housing prices, higher personal debt loads, higher mortgage rates, uncertainty in the economy, and increased difficulty in securing personal financing, participants in Joliette and Barrie indicated that it has become more difficult to purchase a home. This situation has caused some anxiety among first-time buyers, notably among Winnipeg participants in the “*financially struggling*” group. By contrast, those in the “*financially secure*” group felt that the benefits of buying a home outweigh any downsides.

### Support from Government

***The idea of government supporting first-time home ownership through sharing a small part of home equity elicited mixed reactions and led to questions regarding the logistics and legalities.***

There was low to moderate interest in the idea of a plan that would provide first-time home buyers access to financing towards a down payment, while sharing a small part of the home’s equity with government in return. Mixed opinions were expressed in Joliette while those in Barrie and Winnipeg were generally unreceptive to this idea.

One of the most obvious benefits was seen as helping young people become homeowners. That said, perhaps the greatest cause for concern was that participants interpreted the idea as the government “co-owning” the property, and thus potentially having legal rights on decisions related to the home and how it is used. For example, a number of participants wondered if the government would need to provide approval for renovations to be made, or would impose conditions when it came to selling the home. Participants also wondered if the government would be sharing the cost of property tax, given its shared equity.

In addition, it was felt that this initiative may lead to higher debt loads given first-time buyers’ ability to pay for a larger down payment than they may have been able to on their own, thus potentially leading them to secure a larger mortgage than they may realistically be able to finance. With this type of situation in mind, participants questioned what would happen if an individual defaulted on their government loan. A few Joliette participants questioned whether it was the role of government to help individuals become homeowners, and what benefits there might be on the Canadian economy in general.

Considering all of these potential pitfalls, participants suggested that the government offers first-time homebuyers tax incentives as a means to facilitate access to property ownership rather than an developing an ownership-sharing plan. To reduce housing pricing, Barrie participants also suggested the implementing of a property tax system that reward residents and penalize foreign investors, similar to the BC model.



## Naming Exercise

**The names “First-Time Buyers Benefit” and “Hypothèque à mise de fonds partagée” were preferred for a government program to support first-time home buyers.**

Participants were given a worksheet with five possible names for the kind of program described above. The five names were as follows:

- First-Time Buyers Benefit / Hypothèque à mise de fonds partagée
- Shared Equity Mortgage / Prestation pour l’achat d’une première maison
- Housing Affordability Assistance Plan / Plan de soutien pour des maisons abordables
- Housing Affordability Assistance Plan / Programme pour l’achat d’une première maison à prix abordable
- First Home Partnership / Partenariat pour l’achat d’une première maison

The following provides an overview of reactions to the English names:

**First-Time Buyers Benefit:** This name was considered most appealing overall, effectively speaking to the first-time home buyer. The name clearly identified the program’s intended audience, did not connote social assistance, and did not overtly identify a government initiative (though some felt this should be explicit).

**Shared Equity Mortgage:** This name was considered the most direct, and accurately summarized the intent of the program. However, given negative reactions to the concept of shared equity, it was also not particularly well liked compared to the other options, particularly in Barrie.

**Housing Affordability Assistance Plan:** This name received mixed reviews. Participants liked the term “affordability”, given their concerns about individuals buying homes beyond their means. However, the term “assistance” negatively implied low income. This name also imply a program that is available to all home buyers, not only those making their first purchase.

**Affordable First Home Program:** Participants felt this name clearly suggested affordability, while also highlighted the program’s intended audience. It was generally seen as clear and descriptive. This name was extremely well liked among those in Barrie’s “financially secure” group, but not chosen by any in Barrie’s “financially struggling” group.

**First Home Partnership:** While this name clearly described the program, the term “partnership” emphasized shared equity, with all its perceived negative connotations. As a result, participants thought the name may prevent some from participating.

Other program names suggested by participants included: Shared Equity Partnership, First-Time Buyers’ Plan, and First-Time Buyers Benefit Plan.



The following provides an overview of reactions to the French names:

***Hypothèque à mise de fonds partagée:*** This name was most commonly chosen in the male Joliette group, and was liked by a few participants in the female group. It was liked for sounding “official” and clearly identifying the government’s role as a lender.

***Prestation pour l’achat d’une première maison:*** This name was most commonly chosen by females, and was liked by a few males. Those who chose this version felt it clearly identified the purpose for the program (i.e., receiving an amount of money towards the purchase of a first home). Negative reactions to the name were primarily explained by concerns over the use of the word “prestation” which suggests ongoing financial assistance rather than a lump sum payment. Participants recommended replacing this term with “soutien”.

***Plan de soutien pour des maisons abordables:*** This name was the least preferred of the five options. Most felt the term “abordables” could be misinterpreted, as the concept of affordability is subjective. This name also did not specify that the program was exclusively for first-time home buyers.

***Programme pour l’achat d’une première maison à prix abordable:*** This name did not elicit positive reactions in either group. Again, the reference to “prix abordable” caused confusion, and the name was considered too long to be memorable.

***Partenariat pour l’achat d’une première maison:*** This name elicited some positive reactions in each group. That said, participants felt that the term “partenariat” implied that the government would have decision-making in the affairs of the home rather than only be a lender, and suggested replacing the word “partenariat” with “prêt” to avoid this kind of misinterpretation.

Another name suggested was “Soutien pour l’achat d’une première maison”.

## Skills

In Winnipeg, Barrie and Joliette, participants were invited to discuss the topic of training for individuals in the workforce, to improve or upgrade their professional skills.

## Terminology

***Participants were open and agreeable to a wide variety of terms to describe improving their professional skills.***

Participants in Winnipeg and Barrie indicated using expressions such as “continuing education”, “professional development”, and “upgrading skills” to describe the concept of working people training to improve or upgrade their professional skills. In addition, Winnipeg participants had previously heard this idea described with names such as, “self-improvement”, “specialized skills”, “refresher”, and “continuous learning”. The term “upskill” was also mentioned by many as a new way of describing this





concept. While some used the term “continuing learning/education”, it was at times considered vague. Although mentioned by some, the term “re-skill” was not considered as appropriately describing the type of training discussed, as it implied learning new things rather than improving on existing skills.

In Joliette, although a number of names were mentioned, none appeared to be widely used or known to describe the type of training discussed. Suggestions included: “formation continue”, “cours de perfectionnement”, “mise à jour”, “spécialisation”, “mise à niveau”, “formation complémentaire”, “stage”, “perfectionnement”, and “développement des compétences”.

### Upskilling and Training

***Despite several barriers, participants believed that now is the time for Canadians to be upskilling their learning in order to stay competitive in the workforce.***

There was a general sense that continuous learning is increasingly important for Canadians, especially given the changing nature of the workforce. Specifically, greater use of technology/robotics/automation, a more fast-paced environment, and expectations from employers of a more adaptable workforce were considered as driving the need for improved skills.

Although availability of training opportunities was felt to be ample and good, there were nonetheless significant barriers noted to pursuing training, chiefly cost and time. Participants also noted a lack of motivation, employers undervaluing training, family commitments, and work priorities, as impeding their interest or ability to partake in continuous education activities. In addition, some felt that one of the difficulties in pursuing training may be people’s inability to identify the training they need to meet their current or future needs. Access to education was also identified as a potential barrier, especially for those who live outside a major urban centre.

### Matching and Funding Program

***Participants were supportive of a government funding program for skills enhancement, but were cautious about logistics and job security.***

Participants were informed of an idea for a federal government program that would provide Canadian workers a lump sum to cover some of the cost of continuous training and living expenses, while guaranteeing them time off work to pursue education. For example, if someone spent \$200 on training, then government would match up the contribution to cover \$400 in overall training costs.

Overall, participants were supportive of this idea, as it addressed some of the main barriers to continuous education, notably in terms of expense and fear of job loss. That said, participants expressed a few concerns. It was believed that the program would have a negative impact on small businesses, causing them to be short-staffed or to incur additional labour expenses while their employee pursued training. As such, questions were raised as to whether employers would embrace the program and allow



staff time off work to participate. A few participants also questioned the government's ability to properly fund a program of this scope.

Participants were informed that the proposed program would allow "open" training, whereby each worker could choose the type of training to pursue, regardless of the relevance to their present work. Many participants felt that while this would be an appealing approach, it could potentially be abused. As such, there were many calls for the program to be regulated to ensure that the types of training pursued would be in growth industries or on topics relevant to the current and future employment environment (e.g., soft skills). To ensure the program benefits the Canadian economy, participants wanted the program to require that those pursuing training work in Canada or for Canadian businesses following their training.

### Training Program Naming

***The names, "Professional Development Leave" and "Crédit de soutien à la formation" were considered the most appropriate for a skills enhancement program.***

Participants were given a worksheet containing six possible names for this kind of program. The names were as follows:

- Professional Development Leave / Congé pour perfectionnement professionnel
- Learning Account / Compte apprentissage
- New Skills Savings Account / Compte d'épargne pour nouvelles compétences
- Training for Good Jobs Benefit / Allocation de formation pour un bon emploi
- Training Support Credit / Crédit de soutien à la formation
- Lifelong Training Passport / Passeport pour la formation continue

"Professional Development Leave" received the most endorsement overall in Barrie and Winnipeg, while "Crédit de soutien à la formation" was widely preferred in Joliette. Below is a more detailed account of reactions for each of the six names.

Reactions from Winnipeg and Barrie participants to each of the English names are presented below. It is noteworthy that names that included "account" or "savings account" were felt to sound more akin to a bank or financial institution than a government-sponsored training program.

**Professional Development Leave:** Participants liked that this name clearly included the word "professional", as it clearly denotes those who want to improve their current employment situation (as opposed to being targeted at younger individuals or students). The name positioned training as building new or improved skills on an already-existing foundation. Some drew analogies with other types of leave where jobs are also protected, such as parental leave. However, for some Winnipeg participants, the word "leave" implied that someone would have to quit their job to undertake training. Additionally, some participants felt the word "professional" suggested this program was limited to a subset of workers – that is, those with specialized skills or qualifications.



**Learning Account:** This name was not well liked. It was not considered relatable to training and was seen as too vague. More so, participants likened it to a bank account or savings account that someone would need to contribute to.

**New Skills Savings Account:** This name was also considered ineffective for being reminiscent of a bank account and suggestive of training for a lateral move or retraining rather than upskilling.

**Training for Good Jobs Benefit:** Reactions to this name were mixed. Some participants saw it as concisely and clearly identifying the program's desired outcomes, namely a better job or higher pay. Others, particularly in Winnipeg, felt the name was unclear, akin to a mis-translated phrase (particularly the phrase "good jobs"). Some felt that "good jobs" over promised the training outcome, or implied that individuals seeking training do not have a good job now.

**Training Support Credit:** While participants felt this name conveyed the intent of the program accurately, they thought it sounded too much like a line on a tax return, not a training program.

**Lifelong Training Passport:** While participants agreed that training is something that is beneficial throughout one's life, some felt "lifelong" was an inaccurate descriptor for this kind of program, as the word connoted any kind of learning, not employment-related training specifically. Most associated the term "passport" with travel, not education, and thus felt this word was also unsuitable.

Other names suggested included:

- Skills Benefit Fund
- Professional Development Plan
- Personal Development Plan
- Professional Development incentive
- Passport for skills
- New skills credit
- Career advancement incentive
- New skills incentive
- Training support program
- Skills and development support
- New Skills Job Benefit
- Professional Skills Development Support
- Training Support Program
- Professional Development Account
- Training Support Benefit
- Lifelong Learning Account/Credit/Benefit

The following provides Joliette participants' reactions to the French names:

**Congé pour perfectionnement professionnel:** A few participants in each group chose this name as it clearly states that the program allows employees to take a leave of absence from their work for the



purpose of training. Likewise, these few participants felt that referring to “perfectionnement professionnel” clearly outlined the program’s purpose. That being said, it was mentioned that the term “congé” may be construed for a vacation and that the term “perfectionnement” is more likely to imply improving current knowledge and skills rather than developing new ones.

**Compte apprentissage:** No one liked this name, as it was generally felt to be meaningless and for some, it did not “roll of the tongue”.

**Compte d’épargne pour nouvelles compétences:** For the most part, participants felt this name did not adequately explain the program. The term “compte” was mostly associated with a bank account or savings account, rather than illustrating the concept of saving to spend on training. Based on a sense that the program was at least in part to help individuals advance existing skills, participants disagreed with references to “nouvelles compétences”, since this implied learning new things.

**Allocation de formation pour un bon emploi:** Participants generally did not like this name, as the term “allocation” implied a regular or ongoing payment or contribution rather than a lump sum. In addition, implying that the training would result in a “bon employ” (good employment) was deemed misleading and overpromising.

**Crédit de soutien à la formation:** This name was by far the preferred choice of participants in both groups. It was felt to be the only option that clearly outlined the program’s purpose (“soutien” and “formation”) without overpromising. The term “credit”, however, alluded to a tax break, rather than the expected lump sum payment.

**Passeport pour la formation continue:** No one liked this name in either of the groups, as it did not clarify the type of assistance or support provided by the initiative. The reference to “passeport” was considered too vague.

Other names suggested included:

- Soutien pour le perfectionnement professionnel
- Plan de carrière
- Allocation de soutien à la formation

## Budget

The Federal Budget was tabled March 19, 2019. Groups that occurred within a week following this date (i.e., Kingston, Victoria, Laval and Halifax), were asked to provide feedback.

### Overall Impressions

***Awareness of the budget was mixed, with concerns primarily related to its impact on the overall national debt.***



Overall, awareness of the federal budget was mixed. Many in the “*financially struggling*” groups were unaware of the budget having been presented or its content, as they typically did not follow political or government affairs. By contrast, participants in the “*financially secure*” groups generally reported having heard of the budget being tabled, though knowledge of budget content varied. The budget initiatives recalled from the announcement included the new home buyer’s plan, municipal infrastructure investments, funding for Indigenous peoples, the Guaranteed Income Supplement earnings exemption to increase retired Canadians’ income potential, a national pharmacare program, and funding for continuing education or retraining.

Participants’ overall reaction to the federal budget was cautious and questioning, notably given their limited knowledge of the initiatives. One of the main concerns related to the extent to which budget spending would increase the deficit. Meanwhile, there was skepticism among a few participants regarding the possibility of the initiatives announced actually being implemented, which led to a lack of interest in the budget.

In Laval and Kingston, participants often conflated the federal budget with provincial matters. In Laval, many referred to items in the provincial budget which had been tabled two days after the federal budget. In Kingston, participants noted that most information they heard concerned the provincial government, and as a result, there was a general lack of awareness of the details of the federal budget.

### Sources of Awareness

***Across locations, the news was the greatest source of information about the federal budget for participants, whether on television, radio, online on newsfeeds or on social media.***

In most instances, participants learned of the federal budget through various traditional media and social media, including CBC (radio, television and online), Facebook, television (general mention), news radio, newspapers, and Reddit. One Kingston participant noted that their bank provides them with an 8-page summary of the budget.

It should be noted that in Halifax, those who expressed some level of familiarity with budget initiatives typically heard about it through their employment, or through a spouse who was aware via their job. These individuals typically worked in sectors that had the potential to be impacted by such initiatives (e.g. real estate, finance, accounting, etc.).

### Positive Reactions and Concerns

***The first-time home buyer’s initiative and the skills enhancement program announcements spurred positive reactions towards the federal budget, while concerns related to the increased deficit and lack investment in healthcare or for veterans.***

Positive feelings towards the federal budget primarily resulted from an appreciation for some of the initiatives it included. Specifically, the first-time home buyer’s initiative garnered positive interest,



despite concerns that affordable housing was overlooked in the budget. In addition, first impressions on the homeownership initiative led to a few participants questioning the extent to which program spending would contribute to increasing the deficit. Another initiative announced that elicited positive reaction was the skills enhancement program. Indeed, participants appreciating the idea of the learning account, and the possibility for adults to retrain. While these were clearly the two most commonly cited initiatives, a few participants, most commonly in the “*financially secure*” groups, pointed to budget spending they liked, including the purchase of two icebreakers for the Canadian Coast Guard, job creation initiatives, and the government’s intention to further invest in immigration.

Negative reactions towards the budget related to the perceived impact the budget would have in increasing the deficit, and the lack of knowledge or understanding of the government’s plan to return to a balanced budget. Other concerns included a perceived lack of investment in healthcare, and limited programs for veterans.

Beyond these discussions, participants generally concurred that nothing stood out or caught their eye about the budget, or that there was nothing of personal relevance to them.

### Budget Initiatives

***While most initiatives garnered positive support, doubling the infrastructure money and investing in programs to support outcomes on First Nations reserves were considered the best initiatives related to the budget, followed closely by the creation of the Canadian Drug Agency.***

Participants in Kingston, Victoria, Halifax and Laval were given an exercise outlining 13 initiatives included in the budget:

- Creating 84,000 new student work placements to give young people work experience
- Creating Canada’s first national strategy to deal with dementia, to help those suffering and their caregivers
- Creating the Canada Training Benefit, which gives people \$1000 every four years to help cover the cost of skills training, and lets them take time off to take courses
- Creating the Canadian Drug Agency that will bulk buy drugs, in order to lower the cost of prescription drugs
- Creating the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive, to help make the purchase of a first home most affordable
- Doubling the infrastructure money that goes to municipalities this year, so that they can improve roads, transit, community centres, and infrastructure projects.
- Ensuring that every home in Canada has high-speed internet broadband by 2030
- Implementing a National Pharmacare plan
- Increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement earning exemption, so that seniors who work part-time do not have their benefits clawed back.
- Investing in programs to ensure clean water, and better health and education outcomes on First Nations reserves



- Limiting stock option tax breaks used by wealthier individuals at established companies
- Lowering the interest rate on Student Loans
- Security funding for groups who are victims of hate crimes, and an anti-racism strategy

Before discussing as a group, participants were asked to identify, individually, which initiatives they supported and which ones they believed would have an impact on them personally, or on their family. They were then asked to select two or three initiatives they felt were most important for the government.

Most initiatives received general support from participants. That said, two of them emerged as most relevant for participants across locations, namely ***doubling the infrastructure money that goes to municipalities this year, so that they can improve roads, transit, community centres, and infrastructure projects*** and ***investing in programs to ensure clean water, and better health and education outcomes on First Nations reserves***.

The following provides an overview of reactions for each of the thirteen initiatives included in the discussions. The initiatives are presented in order of importance for participants.

***Budget initiative: Doubling the infrastructure money that goes to municipalities this year, so that they can improve roads, transit, community centres, and infrastructure projects***

Across locations, investing in infrastructure ranked highest in importance and held personal relevance to participants, particularly in Victoria. This initiative was considered long overdue and a matter of safety. In Victoria, the high level of support was also due to the visibility of infrastructure projects as a tangible and positive reminder of federal government spending. In Halifax, participants voiced notable frustration with the “horrific” shape of roads and it was felt that funding infrastructure would ensure that problem areas are addressed at a quicker pace. This opinion was echoed in Joliette.

While the idea of improving infrastructure held appeal, questions were raised as to how the federal government would get involved in a municipal jurisdiction matter without causing frictions. Further, some participants were concerned with the overspending potential of “doubling the funds”, while some questioned whether the government would actually follow through on this level of spending.

***Budget initiative: Investing in programs to ensure clean water, and better health and education outcomes on First Nations reserves***

This initiative elicited a high level of support and was considered long overdue and a matter of basic human rights. Although not personally relevant to most participants, it ranked the second most valuable initiative from the list of options.

Despite high levels of support, Kingston and Laval participants were concerned with the government’s ability to address the issue, as similar initiatives had been unsuccessfully undertaken in the past. Many felt embarrassed with the situation, believing that access to clean water is essential and should be easily



achievable in Canada. Similarly, Halifax participants believed that the systemic neglect of First Nations' reserves needs to be addressed and were frustrated that it continues to be something not looked after. Nonetheless, a few individuals in Victoria felt the initiative should be widened to include all Canadians.

***Budget initiative: Creating the Canadian Drug Agency that will bulk buy drugs, in order to lower the cost of prescription drugs***

There was widespread support for this initiative, with many questioning why this had not been done before. A high number of participants felt this initiative would be personally relevant to them, with personal relevance being notably higher in Kingston.

The high cost of medication and the increased reliance on medication as the population ages explained most of the interest for lowering the cost of medication. That said, with limited details regarding the initiative, participants expressed a number of concerns. Specifically, they questioned if all drugs would be included, if healthcare procedures would be covered under this plan in addition to medication, and if bulk buying would affect the quality of the products purchased. As such, participants questioned how quality would be measured and controlled. Questions were raised regarding product limitation, with a concern that more expensive specialized and more costly drugs would potentially not be included in the plan. Another concern was related to all of a type of drug being purchased from a single company, which could result in supply issues (participants compared this to the EPI-pen supply issue).

***Budget initiative: Creating Canada's first national strategy to deal with dementia, to help those suffering and their caregivers***

Nearly all participants felt strongly that this was an important strategy, particularly individuals in the "financially secure" groups in Halifax, Kingston and Victoria. Nonetheless, this initiative generally lacked personal relevance at this time for many (at an individual level). That said, many participants had personal connections to dementia (family or friends) and felt that the situation was in crisis. With the country's aging population, it was believed that more attention is required to strengthening healthcare services, in part by supporting caregivers. In addition, it was recognized that dementia was impacting Canadians at a younger and younger age. In particular, the work of family / friend caregivers was considered important, as participants recognized that caregivers often had to take time off work to deal with a parent or family member living with dementia, and that caregivers need support as well. The financial cost of providing care was also discussed. Participants believed that this kind of initiative would help alleviate pressure on the health care system by encouraging patients to stay in their homes longer.

The only concerns raised related to the logistics of implementing the strategy. A few participants questioned how access to a national strategy would be provided in urban and rural communities.

***Budget initiative: Creating the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive, to help make the purchase of a first home most affordable***





This was a highly popular initiative, due to the perception that young people cannot afford to buy a house. It was believed, however, that the scope of the initiative would be limited to those who can afford a down payment. A few participants in Kingston questioned whether there was already a home buying plan or program in place. This initiative is discussed in further detail elsewhere in this report.

***Budget initiative: Implementing a National Pharmacare plan***

Participants across all locations were generally in favour of this initiative given the high costs of medication. Many believed that a free health care system should logically include pharmacare. Despite the idea being appealing to most, a number of concerns were commonly cited. Specifically, participants questioned the overall program costs, whether all drugs would be included, and what limitations there might be.

In Laval, participants noted that all Quebec residents currently have prescription drug insurance coverage, either through private plans or with the provincial government, and thus they wondered how a parallel system would affect them.

***Budget initiative: Lowering the interest rate on Student Loans***

This initiative elicited positive reactions among nearly all participants, with the exception of about half in the “*financially secure*” group in Victoria. Those opposed felt that it did not personally affect them, that it was not a priority, or that the interest rate should be eliminated, not just lowered.

In Halifax, participants believed that lowering the interest rate would help to ensure loan repayment in a timelier fashion. Those who supported the initiative in Kingston believed that this strategy aligned well with ***Creating the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive***, in that it would help young people and their debt issues. A few questioned the extent to which the interest rate would be lowered.

***Budget initiative: Creating 84,000 new student work placements to give young people work experience***

Participants in all sessions felt positive about this initiative, with nearly all ranking it as an area deserving of government attention. It was believed that work experience is critical in securing a job, but that young people can have difficulty getting work for lack of sufficient experience. As such, the initiative was considered valuable in helping young people enter the workforce and secure better employment.

Opinions were mixed on whether or not these placements should be paid or volunteered positions. It was felt that volunteer positions may be easier for employers to accommodate, although paid positions would help support youth employment. There was also concern that this initiative would eliminate other jobs, or conversely, that 84,000 placements across Canada was insufficient. Those who believed that the initiative would have a personal impact mentioned having young adult children or relatives who could benefit from it.



***Budget initiative: Creating the Canada Training Benefit, which gives people \$1,000 every four years to help cover the cost of skills training, and lets them take time off to take courses***

There was generally a high level of support for this initiative across locations. Participants appreciated that it might encourage training in trades, and help the workforce be better prepared to face the changing nature of work and the workplace. However, participants had a number of questions about the strategy and did not necessarily feel that the amount and timing would align with work and educational offerings. Specifically, it was noted that most training programs are longer than four weeks and cost substantially more than \$1,000. There was also concern regarding employers' willingness to provide employees time off for training. Some raised potential issues with the timeliness of receiving income assistance while training, especially given the delays associated with the review and approval of Employment Insurance (EI) requests. Further, the amount of EI benefits paid was considered by some as insufficient to cover regular living expenses, without any supplement from their employer.

***Budget initiative: Ensuring that every home in Canada has high-speed internet broadband by 2030***

Of the 13 initiatives presented, this idea was considered the least important strategy at this time for the Government of Canada. In Kingston, Halifax, and Victoria, broadening high-speed internet access was not seen as the role of the federal government, and an expensive endeavour to reach out to rural and remote areas of the country. By contrast, Laval participants felt that this initiative was of great importance, given the role technology plays in today's workplace and the increasing need to strengthen the network for teleworking. It was also believed that this type of initiative would encourage self-employed individuals to live in rural areas, thus contributing to increasing the economic well-being of those areas. That said, some questioned this goal given that Internet may not be relevant ten years down the road, given the fast-changing pace of technology.

The high telecommunications fees paid by Canadians was raised as a concern, and participants wondered what resulting impacts there might be on user fees from further investing in the network infrastructure. Indeed, increased expenses on networks were seen as resulting in higher user fees.

In Halifax, a few participants felt that ensuring centralized access (e.g. in a community center) in more rural areas should suffice. Others felt that for Canada to compete in a global economy it would be necessary for high speed internet to be readily available, although not necessarily in the case of every home.

***Budget initiative: Increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement earning exemption, so that seniors who work part-time do not have their benefits clawed back.***

This initiative was well received as a means to ensure older Canadians can earn enough to live comfortably. It was believed that encouraging seniors to work longer is beneficial for their long-term health, and encourages them to continue being physically and mentally active. It was also felt that active seniors should not be penalized for continuing to work. Those in Laval also mentioned that keeping aging Canadians in the workforce longer has economic benefits, especially given anticipated labour



shortages as a result of low population growth. It was also believed that this approach would ensure better knowledge transfer from experienced workers to those entering the workforce.

***Budget initiative: Security funding for groups who are victims of hate crimes, and an anti-racism strategy***

Support for this strategy was mixed, with some participants requiring further clarification on the initiative being considered and what “securing funding” meant in this context. Those who were supportive felt that safety is a key issue and crucial for residents in an increasingly polarized world.

In Victoria, half of those in the “*financially struggling*” group were opposed, and felt that money could be spent better elsewhere, and that this initiative was not the government’s responsibility.

In Halifax, participants felt that the two topics (victims of hate crimes and anti-racism) were very different and should not be grouped together in the same initiative. Rather, both were deemed important and requiring separate attention.

In Kingston, there were also questions as to who would benefit from the initiative, and there were suggestions that public education about anti-racism should be of equal priority. Similarly, in Laval, a few participants in the “*financially struggling*” group thought that a public education campaign to encourage multiculturalism would have more positive, long-term, and sustained influence, in comparison to investing in victim safety.

***Budget initiative: Limiting stock option tax breaks used by wealthier individuals at established companies***

This initiative received moderate support, and was viewed as least personally relevant to participants across all locations. In Laval, nearly half felt that this initiative should not be a priority for government. Participants in Kingston indicated that the wealthy are not paying enough taxes, and therefore they should be taxed more. This initiative is discussed in further details later in this report.

**Budget Discussion About the First-Time Home Buyers Incentive**

***There was confusion about the logistics and legalities of the First-Time Home Buyers Program, with the exception of Laval, where support was generally positive.***

The moderator provided participants with the following additional details about the First-Time Home Buyers Incentive:

The government created the First-Time Home Buyers Incentive. Under this plan, you can get an interest-free loan from CMHC to cover 5% of the cost of your first home – or 10% if it’s a new build, so as to encourage developers to build more homes. This means First-Time Buyers would not need as large of a mortgage,



reducing their payments. For example, on a \$500,000 home, this could drop your monthly mortgage payments by over \$225 a month. When you sold your house, CMHC would collect 5% of the sale price of the house back, as repayment for this loan.

Upon learning more about the First-Time Home Buyers Incentive, participants voiced mixed opinions. Many felt that they would need more information about program details before offering an opinion, and some participants in Laval thought that the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation already offered this incentive.

Generally, the incentive was considered to be better suited for larger urban centres where home prices are considerably higher. A number of participants were not overly receptive to the idea of equity sharing with government. Some felt the initiative would encourage young adults to buy a home that is beyond their means. Others felt that the repayment terms may be more complex due to shared equity with more partners (i.e. the homeowner, the Government and a financial institution). A few wondered if the government would be paying a portion of property taxes for the home, given that it essentially would have some equity in the house.

Conversely in the “*financially secure*” group in Kingston, many participants were homeowners, and felt that this might make the housing market more appealing as there may be more buyers as a result of this strategy.

Additionally, Laval participants were widely supportive of this initiative. A few participants mentioned that they would consider buying a home as a result of the program, while current homeowners felt that the value of their homes might increase as a result of a more active homebuying market, and thus were supportive. It was believed that this initiative would help young people in general, but also provide welcomed financial relief to families with young children who wish to become homeowners.

### **Budget Discussion About the Canada Training Benefit**

***Participants had a number of questions about the logistics of this idea, with costs and job security being the main concerns.***

Participants were provided with the following additional information about the Canada Training Benefit:

The government created the Canada Training Benefit. This gives every working Canadian between 25 and 64 a \$250 credit every year they can build up to use towards skills training or continuing education. The government would also mandate that employers would need to let employees take off up to 4 weeks every 4 years, with EI, to take advantage of these programs if they want to. Think of this as a version of parental leave, but for skills training.



So, for example, in 4 years you could take 4 weeks off work to take a course to learn new skills, and the government would pay your EI while you are on leave, and put \$1,000 towards the cost of these courses. People could use this to learn skills so that they can do their current jobs better and get promoted at their company, or they could learn new skills if they feel they need to move to a different industry.

This additional detail raised more questions about the program for those in Kingston, Halifax and Victoria. There was a sense that training or continuing education would involve a greater time and money commitment than was available via this benefit. On the other hand, participants also felt that educational institutions may adjust their course offerings to align with this program.

Those in Kingston and Halifax questioned if the initiative could negatively impact businesses, as employers would need to replace absent employees, or might lose employees to better opportunities after training. At the same time, some felt that their employers currently provide adequate training and as such they would not be interested by this program. That said, some appreciated that it promotes a culture of continued learning and the need to continually adapt in the workforce.

In Kingston and Victoria, some participants felt that despite the program providing generous incentives, they would still not be able to afford to participate, either because of insufficient EI benefits or their inability to pay for any training costs.

Opinions were more favourable in Laval, where participants in both groups welcomed an initiative they believed would help workers adapt to the changing nature of the workplace. Indeed, it was believed that changing careers or employers is common in today's workplace, and that such an initiative would help workers manage these situations.

Participants raised some questions regarding eligibility, including whether training would need to be done in Canada, if self-employed individuals would have access to this program, and what would happen in the cases where employers currently pay workers while they are training. It was also mentioned that four weeks is insufficient for someone looking to train in a different field and that a period of one year would be more adequate. While they believed this initiative would provide businesses with more highly skilled employees, participants wondered if there would be a limit regarding the number of employees that can use the program at any given time.

### **Budget Discussion About the Stock Options**

***There is general support for a stock options tax break despite limited understanding and personal relevance of the proposed option.***

Next, participants were provided with the following information about the stock option tax breaks:



As you may be aware, employee stock options provide employees with the right to acquire shares of their company as a form of compensation. Many smaller start-ups use this as a way to attract and retain talented employees. Employee stock options are currently taxed at half the rate of other forms of income, and currently 85% of the total value of employee stock options in Canada goes to individuals making over \$500,000 a year.

In the budget, the government announced that stock options would be taxed at the normal rate. However, there would be an exemption for start-up companies and for individuals with under \$200,000 in stock options. So the new tax on stock options would only apply to those in established companies with over \$200,000 in annual options. This way, start-ups could still use stock options to attract talent, and companies could still give stock options to lower salaried employees as a benefit. But large stock options for CEOs would be taxed at the same rate as salary.

Perhaps as a result of misunderstanding the concept, across locations, it was believed that in theory, the initiative would help lower-income workers to access stock options and thus ensure better access to business ownership for a greater number of people. Participants were mostly supportive (aside from a few participants in the “*financially secure*” group in Halifax), based on a general sense that wealthy Canadians should pay more taxes to align with their higher income. It was also believed that this kind of initiative would encourage innovation and start-ups. However, few participants felt they would be financially able to take part in this kind of program, or have the opportunity to work for an organization offering this kind of benefit.

There were a few who mentioned that the program could make Canada less attractive for large organizations, who may relocate to other countries if stock options is an important component of their executive financial compensation. A few also felt that such a change would simply result in wealthy individuals finding creative ways to avoid having their stock options taxed at the normal rate.

## Trade

### Awareness

***General awareness of news associated with international trade revolved around issues related to Canada-US trade and Canada’s relationship with China, though specific knowledge is moderate.***

In Kingston, Winnipeg, Halifax and Laval, participants were asked what they had seen, read or heard lately regarding international trade. Participants across locations discussed issues related to Canada’s relationship with China, particularly canola seed exports, and considerations around use of 5G / Huawei technology. Other international trade-related stories included references to a new North American free trade deal, with participants noting new duty-free limits, increasing brokerage fees (noticed on personally-imported goods) and US tariffs on imports of Canadian steel and aluminium.



Participants largely believed that the US was Canada's largest trading partner, followed by China, the European Union, and Mexico. In Halifax, India was also named as a key trading partner. When asked about free trade deals Canada currently has, participants referred to the new Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), as well as the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which was much less widely known.

### Trade Diversification

***While the term “trade diversification” is not widely known, it was generally recognized as involving trade with a greater number of countries. Greater economic independence was considered the greatest advantage of trade diversification, while increased competition for local businesses was seen as the main disadvantage.***

Participants were asked to describe how they interpreted the term “trade diversification”. Most were unfamiliar with this term but surmised that it implied being less reliant on trade with the US, and diversifying both trading partners as well as the types of goods traded. Trade diversification was generally considered to be trading with a greater number of countries, so as to broaden opportunities in multiple jurisdictions.

The moderator then provided the following brief explanation of “trade diversification”: “(it) essentially involves signing trade agreements with as many countries/regions as possible”, and asked participants what they saw as the advantages and disadvantages of the concept. Overall, trade diversification was considered something that the Government of Canada should focus on, although opinions are mixed as to whether it should be a high or medium priority.

Perceived advantages of trade diversification included being less reliant on the US, providing Canadian consumers access to greater product diversity and better prices, being able to negotiate lower costs for Canadian exports, access to more markets for Canadian products and services, less dependence on any one nation, assisting smaller countries, increased jobs due to increased manufacturing from growing exports, and gaining a larger number of trading partners.

Despite trade diversification being perceived as beneficial to the Canadian economy, it was believed to have possible negative effects on Canadian manufacturers. Specifically, opening up the Canadian market was considered as putting pressure on Canadian manufacturers in terms of reducing their production costs and retail prices to be able to compete. The fear among participants was that diversification may damage local economies or be detrimental to sustaining local produce or products, resulting in a loss of Canadian manufacturing jobs.

Canada having multiple trading partners was also seen as potentially weakening any one of those relationships. For example, if two trading partners are in disagreement with one another, Canada doing business with both of them may be perceived as betraying one or the other. There was also a sense that trading with many countries complexified trade relations and may weaken Canada's negotiations with



one or more of these countries. Specifically, Canada may appear less loyal to anyone of its trading partners, thus reducing its negotiating power.

If the goal of trade diversification is to expand international trade, some participants expressed concern with Canada potentially overlooking considerations of product quality, or standards related to human rights, ethics, or workplace safety, to secure trade agreements. A few also expressed security concerns that could result from greater involvement with other countries' trading systems.

### **Government of Canada Involvement in Trade Diversification**

***The Government of Canada was seen as playing a role in trade diversification by supporting the export initiatives of private sector businesses.***

In terms of what the Government of Canada should do to promote trade diversification, participants identified many ideas that may assist with securing more opportunities. These ideas included:

- Organizing trade missions (with a greater focus on key officials participating, such as ambassadors);
- Spearheading discussions with other countries;
- Building trust abroad in the quality of Canadian produce and products;
- Approving pipelines (to enable oil and gas exports overseas);
- Investing in technology and innovation to help Canadian manufacturers be able to compete;
- Strengthening the Canadian dollar
- Assisting businesses with shipping costs;
- Simplifying the administrative process to export products;
- Protecting Canada's natural resources from foreign buyers; and
- Giving tax breaks to entrepreneurs.

When it came to Canada negotiating trade agreements, there was some disagreement, particularly in Halifax, as to how much information should be provided to the public prior to any deal being signed (some felt the Government should provide more details; some felt it was necessary for negotiations to be done in closed meetings).

## **The Environment**

In Barrie and Winnipeg, participants were asked to comment on various topics related to the environment.

### **Top-of-Mind Issues Regarding the Environment**

***Pollution pricing and global warming were top-of-mind environmental issues across locations.***





Participants in Barrie and Winnipeg were asked to describe what, if anything, they recalled having recently seen, heard or read regarding the environment.

In both locations, participants readily named global warming, the price on pollution (referred to as “carbon tax”), climate change and the Trans Mountain Pipeline as key environmental stories. Participants noted weather changes such as the polar vortex impacting the Prairie Provinces, as well as temperature change and oceans rising. There was also some discussion in Winnipeg about the impact of the fashion industry on the environment, including its impact on water pollution and chemical contamination in countries where clothing is produced.

When asked what they had seen, read or heard specifically related to the Government of Canada and the environment, participants in both locations noted the price on pollution and the impact of this program on businesses compared with how other countries were addressing the issue of air pollution. There was also mention of the debate around the Trans Mountain pipeline, including the potential environmental impact of a pipeline compared to the safety and impact of transporting oil by rail or truck.

There was also discussion related to a desire for there to be a comprehensive plan demonstrated by the Government of Canada on how it is working to improve the environment, rather than a series of smaller measures.

### **Government Priorities Regarding the Environment**

***Environmental priorities for the Government of Canada were considered to be investing in public transit and keeping plastic pollution to a minimum.***

Participants in Barrie 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 follows. This topic was not discussed in Winnipeg. The list of actions included:

- 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



***Least important actions (what the government should not do):***

Of the various environmental actions listed, participants in Barrie primarily identified one key action as something the government should not do – namely ***funding new charging stations for electric vehicles***. For the most part, participants felt that there are better ways for government to spend money, rather than fund stations for vehicles that are available to only a limited few and out of reach financially to most. Rather, it was felt funding such stations should be more of a private enterprise function. Others commented that they were not convinced electric vehicles are necessarily better for the environment and that it was not currently difficult to find such stations in the Barrie area.

***Introducing a price on pollution*** was also a source of disagreement among some, primarily because it was considered an action that was only a temporary measure, rather than implementing a solution to the problem.

Some participants felt that ***building more than 1,000 public transit projects*** was not a priority, primarily because such a limited number of projects would not adequately address the problem across the country, or because they felt the public transit system in Barrie was adequate and effectively met their needs.

***Most important actions:***

Of the listed items a number of actions consistently were considered most important. To begin, it was felt that ***keeping plastic pollution out of the waters*** was essential. Participants felt that further efforts were needed to ban plastic bags, reduce garbage or incentivize recycling plastic bottles. Multiple participants suggested a vending machine approach, whereby consumers could easily drop off plastic bottles and immediately receive their deposit.

For others, ***building more than 1,000 public transit projects*** was given priority because it was felt the current infrastructure was lacking and forced residents to rely on motorized vehicles. Innovative and an effective public transit system (experienced in many European cities) was considered fundamental to reducing both consumers' dependence on vehicles and pollution.

***Driving new business opportunities for business and creating jobs in the industries of tomorrow*** was also identified as a priority for some, primarily because it underscores the importance of building a strong economy.

In addition, while some considered Canada's protected lands to be sufficient, others placed importance on ***doubling the amount of nature protected across the country***, with a goal of stopping deforestation and protecting wildlife species.

Participants in Barrie offered limited suggestions on what other environmental actions were missing from the list, with key mentions including enhancing existing parks, protecting the greenbelt (where



food supply is grown), building up versus building out, and educating the public on the need to reduce consumption (i.e. consumerism).

### **Weather / Climate Changes and Impact on Residents**

***There was a recognition of changing weather patterns and climate that is personally affecting Canadians.***

In Barrie, residents identified a wide range of variations to weather / climate. This topic was not discussed in Winnipeg.

Most notably, Barrie participants referenced much more extreme weather including significant swings in temperature within specific seasons. A number mentioned seeing more yellow / green skies (similar to the Barrie tornados). Further, a decline in the number of birds and butterflies was noticed. Finally, with extreme weather swings, it was felt that four distinct seasons were not as evident or prevalent as in the past.

Personal impact was generally considered as limited to having fewer winter toys (because of inconsistent snow falls), increased home or property damage due to storms, and no longer having a winter carnival in town.

### **Climate Action Incentive**

***There is limited awareness of the Climate Action Incentive and initial reactions to the initiatives are skeptical.***

Of those asked whether they had heard of the Climate Action Incentive in Barrie and Winnipeg, a few participants indicated that they had previously heard of the Climate Action Incentive, mostly those who had completed their taxes for 2018 already. However, most participants had not.

When told that for 8 out of 10 families, the Climate Action Incentive would be more than the costs they pay through a price on pollution, there was a great deal of skepticism expressed in both locations. Many participants felt that this incentive would not be sustainable, and that the initial payment was being implemented merely as a way of appeasing the population in the short term. Participants were critical of the program for its perceived lack of a solution to a problem. The 8 out of 10 statistic was not felt to be believable, with many who believed that they would be in the 20 percent minority who would get less back than they had paid.

### **Canadian Leadership**

***There was strong support for the Government of Canada to pursue, and maintain, a global leadership role with respect to the environment and fighting climate change.***



Participants in Barrie 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. This question was not asked in Winnipeg.

Barrie participants unanimously agreed that Canada should take a global leadership role when it comes to protecting the environment and fighting climate change. It was felt that Canada is defined by open space and trees and that it is a country that pollutes minimally compared to other nations.

For the most part, it was felt that Canada currently has a leadership role and sets an example. Being a leader was seen as leading by example - namely developing technologies that address pollution (which was considered vitally important). It was not believed that introduction of punitive tariffs demonstrated an effective leadership role, but rather through education, research and awareness.

### Price on Pollution

***There is some awareness of the plan to put a price on pollution, and most are generally supportive, but with concerns, and a desire to better understand the plan.***

When Winnipeg and Barrie participants were asked how many had heard about the government of Canada's plan to put a price on pollution, the level of awareness varied. While there was some awareness that a plan was in place, very few were aware of the details of the plan, which they referred to as a "carbon tax".

When asked to describe the plan, participants indicated that it was overall a plan to decrease pollution by taxing big businesses, and a measure that would endeavour to change behaviour by making it more expensive to pollute. That said, there were a few participants who felt that for those businesses in the transportation or manufacturing industries, the plan was unnecessarily punitive and that it would impact competitiveness.

Further, those aware described the initiative as one that would measure output of polluting companies and would tax them for that output. While participants generally supported the concept of carbon reduction, it was felt that such a price on pollution is simply another tax which will end up coming back to the consumer. Some felt that the plan would increase the price of fuel and thus resulting in a decrease in driving and fewer purchases of larger vehicles. A few participants questioned what impact the measure would have given Canada's relatively low output of carbon on a global scale.

Participants in both locations felt that Canada is too dependent on fossil fuels, and thus it is unrealistic to think that drastic changes can be made until alternative energy sources are developed, and that at present, the price on pollution is therefore not treating the root cause of climate change. While some felt that introducing pollution pricing would force businesses to take action, participants believed that on its own, this initiative would be ineffective in reducing pollution. Additionally, they expressed a general preference for a rewards-based approach rather than punishment (i.e. carrot versus a stick).



Winnipeg participants noted that the plan would result in increased costs for many consumers, as the prices imposed on polluting companies would simply be passed along. Further, there was a great deal of skepticism that the Climate Action Incentive payment would come close to covering the resulting cost increases that consumers would see.

Questions about the plan largely centered on whether the plan would impact on the environment, given that it was seen merely as a redistribution of funds that would require a lot of administration. Participants questioned why the funds collected were not being allocated to environmental measures such as research and development or investment in environmentally sustainable technologies. Participants also wondered why the system was centered on penalizing polluters rather than incenting those who act responsibly towards the environment. There were also questions around how the program would be administered, and how pricing would be determined.

In general, Barrie participants ranked Canada as an above average polluter in terms of the amount of pollution produced per person. This opinion was primarily driven by Canadians' affluent lifestyle compared to developing countries, namely our consumerism and dependency on fossil fuels (including the necessity of home heating due to our colder climate). This question was not asked in Winnipeg.

### Lifestyle Changes

***Participants are keen on lifestyle changes, and feel they are participating in positive change.***

Discussions about lifestyle changes related to climate and the environment were conducted in Barrie, where there was strong agreement that if Canadians are serious about reducing emissions, lifestyle changes need to be made. Participants were largely critical of the amount of garbage sent to landfills and Canadians' desire to consume or purchase excessive material items.

Participants consistently expressed that they are making lifestyle changes to influence positive change. Most notably, increased focus on reducing, reusing and recycling was cited (e.g. donating clothes and household goods, not using plastic bags, adding programmable thermostats, LED lights, using water saving faucets), as well as increased focus on alternative travel sources (i.e. using public transit, cycling, walking versus motorized vehicles). Changes were primarily motivated by a growing concern for the environment brought on by increased education and public awareness. Further, money or cost savings was also a significant motivator to most.

By contrast, factors that discourage people from making changes include time constraints, the cost and inconvenience. Some acknowledged that today's society is a 'throw away' society that focuses excessively on materialism.

When considering who influenced opinions related to making lifestyle changes impacting climate change key mentions included media and family /friends. Of note, participants underscored that given the prevalence of smart phones, media are often selected according to an individuals' pre-existing opinions. Accordingly, people often hear only what they want to hear (i.e. click bait), so information received is



more often one-sided. Multiple participants expressed concerns that not enough is being taught in schools about the need for lifestyle changes.

## Tourism

In Barrie, Winnipeg and Joliette, participants were asked questions regarding their familiarity with vacation or rental accommodations, made through online platforms.

### Awareness and Opinion of Online Vacation or Rental Accommodations

***Awareness of Online Vacation and Rental Accommodations was high, and acceptance of this new model is strong.***

Participants in both Winnipeg and Barrie were consistently aware of vacation rental accommodations such as Airbnb, VRBO and Home Away, and a large minority had actually used these services in the past. Awareness and usage were lower in Joliette, though still a few had used those services in the past.

Those who had rented from one of these services had had positive experiences and impressions of the services as a more affordable alternative when travelling compared with hotels, and a diversification of the market. The rating systems were noted as an advantage. Most described such rentals as more reasonably priced accommodations, which are privately owned properties or homes. They were seen as offering an effective alternative to hotels providing more space, greater amenities and a cheaper price. It was also seen in Joliette as a good means for people to augment their income by offering their home for short-term accommodations.

Only a few participants voiced concerns around online rental services being a challenge to businesses such as hotels. However, participants also felt that the offering of these services was an advantage for travellers, and that the competition forced hotels to 'step up' their service and delivery offerings, and reconsider pricing. In addition, this type of lodging was seen as an advantage for lower-income travellers in rural regions or smaller communities where there are few adequate hotel facilities to choose from. The only concerns raised had to do with the impact of these services on communities or of new properties being built solely for this purpose rather than providing additional affordable rental accommodations.

A few felt that such platforms have driven up condo prices or home purchase costs and have reduced rental availability as owners choose to offer their property for vacation rentals. Also, in all locations, a few expressed some concern over a lack of standards or quality controls across vacation rental properties.

### GST-HST Application

***Participants felt that GST-HST should be applied to rentals, but with conditions that create fairness.***



When asked if they felt GST-HST should be applied to rental accommodations, generally participants felt that it should be, in fairness to other businesses, but there were many who felt it should only apply after a certain revenue threshold, and that those making under a certain amount should not pay these taxes. The concern was that if the taxation system became too complex, that it could discourage smaller players from being entrepreneurial and offering this type of accommodation, or that it could drive the accommodation price up for travellers. Participants were concerned about creating an equal playing field. In a few instances, it was felt vacation rentals should be treated the same as Bed and Breakfast accommodations.

## Energy Vision

### Concept Testing

***Participants felt that the concept for “Canada’s Energy Future Starts Now” best represented the Government of Canada’s energy vision, with many commenting on the simple, clear messaging and idea.***

In Kingston, Victoria, Laval and Halifax, participants were told that the Government of Canada consulted Canadians on the energy future they want for the country. Participants were then informed that the Government is working to develop an energy vision that reflects this input, that includes five major groups of initiatives, namely:

- Improve energy efficiency such as incentive programs for homeowners and updating building codes
- Switch from coal/gas to solar/hydro/wind/nuclear and using more electricity to power vehicles, homes and industry
- Use more waste from agriculture and forestry to make renewable fuels such as biodiesel
- Produce oil and gas more efficiently, use more electricity, and adopt clean technology like carbon capture and storage
- Attract investment to increase clean electricity capacity and build pipelines to get our resources to markets outside the US, to diversify our exports

Participants were shown five concepts regarding energy vision, by way of a visual that incorporated words and pictures. The five concepts were as follows (with each concept found in Appendix C), along with a summary of reactions from participants to each concept.

Of the five concepts under consideration, the “*Canada’s Energy Future Starts Now*” was believed to best convey an idea of hope and inspiration for Canada’s energy future, followed fairly closely by the “*My Energy is Powering Canada’s Future*” version. Participants reported feeling empowered, and feeling pride from the term “*Canada’s Future*”. . The use of “*Canada*” in both concepts was also important.

The following provides a detailed description of feedback received for each of the five concepts tested.



## Canada's Energy Future Starts Now

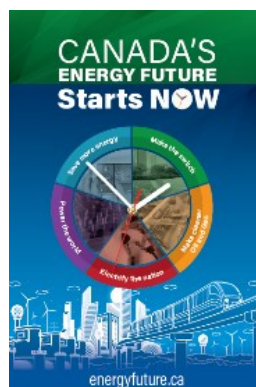


Figure 1

This version shown in figure 1 is titled “Canada’s Energy Future Starts Now” showed an image of a clock with the five focus areas identified, namely “Save more energy”, “Make the switch”, “Make cleaner Oil and Gas”, “Electrify the nation”, and “Power the world”. Various images of energy-related situations are shown in the clock image. At the bottom of the page, there is an illustration showing a modern urban landscape featuring high-rise buildings, wind mills, and a train. The URL “energyfuture.ca” is written below.

This idea was felt to be the strongest of the five concepts presented, with participants thinking the clock image was a clear call to action, suggesting an urgent need to change. The wording was felt to be concise, yet clear and strong. The bold colours grabbed attention, although a few in Laval felt that it used too much ink to be considered environmentally-friendly to print.

This concept was the one that was felt to best convey an idea of hope and inspiration for Canada’s energy future. The bottom image clearly conveyed concepts related to the future, innovation, and clean energy. However, a few felt there was insufficient information presented. In Kingston, the clock was mistaken for a gas gauge in a few cases, creating the impression of messaging about oil and gas.

## My Energy is Canada’s Future



Figure 2

This concept, shown in figure 2, is titled, “My energy is powering Canada’s future” followed by the URL “canadaenergyfuture.ca”. It shows the fact of two people looking at each other, with the five focus areas identified in between, namely “Smart Energy Use”, “Clean Power”, “Cleaner Oil and Gas”, “Low-Carbon Fuels”, and “Markets and Investments”. Faded images of a road, a house, and towers/tall tanks appear in the background. At the bottom of the page are the side-face image of five individuals, each with a specific statement written above their head: “My energy is Efficient”, “My energy is Electric”, “My energy is Clean”, “my energy is Renewable”, and “My energy is Global”.

This concept was also well received by participants, and was considered quite memorable. The use of adjectives to qualify energy (i.e., efficient, electric, etc.) helped communicate the importance of clean energy in a simple manner, and some liked the racial diversity shown amongst people illustrated. Despite the concept eliciting overall positive feedback, some participants noted that it conveyed stereotypical gender roles, with clean energy in the female image and oil and gas in the male image.

Some (particularly in Laval and Victoria) also found it to be ‘oppositional’, with individuals ‘facing off’ against each other. Additionally, a few participants in Halifax thought that all five people in the bottom images should be positioned the same way (rather than one looking outwards), and a few felt there was





a lack of age representation. Laval participants also felt there was too much of a focus on people, rather than on the environment, and found the lack of a clear visual reference to energy in general, and clean energy in particular, rendered the intent of the graphic harder to grasp. A few also thought the concept suggested the use of “dirty” fuels, based on a perception that some of the images were chimneys or equipment related to oil and gas.

Participants stressed the importance of an easy to remember website URL.

Across locations, participants noted the importance of including enough content to clearly articulate the concept, or a poster / image would simply be ignored for lack of context.

In Kingston, participants suggested using the top image from the “Canada’s Energy Future” concept with the bottom five images from this one to strengthen the final concept.

### Canada’s Energy Future

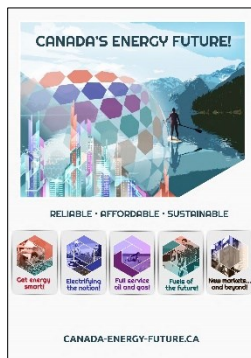


Figure 3

The concept shown in figure 3 is titled “Canada’s Energy Future!”. It features a collage of graphic images representing paddle boarder on a lake in a mountainous environment, a sphere or dome-shape structure, and sky-scraping buildings. Information is written below the image, including the words “Reliable, affordable, sustainable” and five blocks each with one illustration and a subtitle, namely, “Get energy smart!”, “Electrifying the nation!”, “Full service oil and gas!”, “Fuels of the future!”, and “New markets... and beyond!”. The URL “Canada-Energy-Future.ca” is written below.

This concept was also liked and considered memorable, with participants endorsing the imagery of the paddle boarder and mountains. However, the icons on the bottom of this image were often confusing in terms of wording and readability, particularly the intent of the expressions “electrifying the nation” and “full service oil and gas” was difficult to understand. The colours were similar to the previous concept and were also well received, although some felt the image of the sphere reminded them of Epcot or Expo 67. Those in Victoria particularly liked this image, citing that it was reminiscent of British Columbia’s natural landscape. In Laval, those who liked this idea found that it clearly showed the relationship between nature and technology and the equal importance of each when considering clean energy in the future.

### Robot



Figure 4

This concept, shown in figure 4, is titled, “What part will you play?” and includes the following information: “The Robot represents Canada’s current energy situation. Currently he’s getting the job done but is much better with new parts. Each new part represents 1 of the 5 energy solutions”, followed by two images of a robot, side-by-side, one labelled “Current Way” and the other labelled “What we could be”. The five energy



solutions are explained: “1. Wasting Less Energy – Body: Do you contain the ability to help others waste less?”, “2. Switching to Clean Power – Solar cell: Will you be the power behind the transition?”, “3. More Renewable Fuels – Fuel tank: Will you fuel Canadian’s desire for sustainability?”, “4. Cleaner Oil & Gas – Inner gears: Will you have finely-tuned ideas to clean up our emissions?”, and “5. Market Access & Investment – Wheels: Will you move the markets in the right direction?”.

The **Robot** concept was considered the least clear, and many noted that too much text was provided, resulting in them not reading the content. Overall, the concept was felt to lack visual appeal and to be too cluttered. Some felt the concept and images were too youthful, while others felt the concept was overly busy and confusing. The wording was not clear for participants, who questioned the meaning of the individual, direct questions found within the listing of the five energy solutions. That said, a few participants found the idea informative and original with the robots implying innovation and the future.

### Pathways

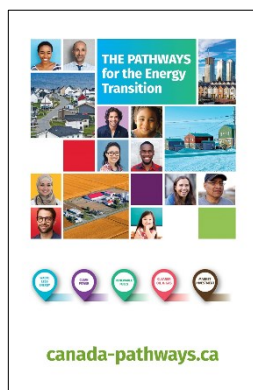


Figure 5

This concept featured in figure 5 is titled, “The Pathways for the Energy Transition”. It features a collage of images representing faces of people, rural communities, urban settings, and farmlands. Images are presented in various size square patterns with block colour squares interspersed between some of them. At the bottom of the page, there are five location markers of different colours, each specifying one focus area, namely, “Waster Less Energy”, “Clean Power”, “Renewable Fuels”, “Cleaner Oil & Gas”, and “Market Investment”. The URL “Canada-pathways.ca” is written below.

This idea was felt to be unappealing, not clearly related to energy, and the least memorable of all five concepts. While showing multi-culturalism, age and gender diversity was appreciated, the connection between the various diverse faces and the ideas of energy was unclear. Some felt there was too much of a focus on rural settings in the imagery, thus not visually suggesting the future or technology. The word “pathways” was not well liked among English-speaking participants, and reminded many of an educational program cover page. In Laval, the website was considered too long and confusing because of the use of the hyphenation.

### Word Appeal

Participants consistently identified the same words across concepts as being appealing to them and grabbing their attention. These words or expressions include:



English Words or Expressions:

- Reliable
- Sustainable
- Affordable
- Clean
- Renewable
- My energy is powering

French Words or Expressions:

- Fiable
- Durable
- Abordable
- Renouvelable
- Avenir
- Utilisation intelligente
- Quel rôle jouez-vous?
- Commence aujourd’hui
- Mon énergie dynamise l’énergie du Canada

By contrast, words or terms that were considered problematic included the following:

English Words or Expressions:

- Electrifying the nation (focus on electricity seen as not positive, as many felt there is a move away from electric energy)
- Full service oil and gas (sounds like getting your gas pumped)
- Global (sense that our energy isn’t global, and we shouldn’t be trying to push oil and gas on the world. (Kingston))
- Saving energy versus using less

French Words or Expressions:

- Carburant (implies pollution)
- Carburant faible en carbone
- Marché investissement
- Gaz propre
- Pétrole et gaz service complet
- Asking a question to which I don’t know the answer on the Robot concept

## Local Challenges

In Victoria and Joliette, participants were asked to share their thoughts on what the most important local issues were for their area.

### Victoria

***Bike lanes, affordable housing, and homelessness were considered the most important challenges in Victoria.***

When asked to name the most important issues facing Victoria, participants in that region identified the following:

- Bike lanes
- Roads / infrastructure / potholes
- Affordable housing and availability of rental housing
- Poverty and homelessness (tent cities)
- Cost of travelling to the BC mainland
- Drug addiction / fentanyl overdoses



- Climate change
- Mental health facilities and housing
- Sunday parking
- Municipal government issues
- Provincial government issues
- Waste management
- Hospital capacity
- Speed of development (too fast)
- Amalgamation
- Regional policing constraints
- Support for families with kids with special needs
- Childcare cost and shortages, and support for parents working from home
- Cost of fuel
- Lack of employment opportunities

In Victoria, specific discussion was had about several key issues including bike lanes, affordable housing, poverty, homelessness, support for social programs and a provision of living wage, particularly for childcare workers. More details on each issue are provided below.

**Bike lanes:** With the recent implementation of bike lanes in Victoria, concerns were raised over how they had been implemented, particularly because it affected the amount of street parking available and made pedestrian street crossing more dangerous for seniors.

**Affordable housing:** The cost of living was raised as a concern, particularly high rental rates in the city core, making it difficult for individuals to live near their workplaces. One solution raised was to build more affordable housing coupled with public transit to ensure the ability of people to live affordably and travel to work easily, to re-zone certain areas to ensure people could live near where they worked, and offer incentives for builders to create affordable communities.

**Poverty, homelessness and support for social programs:** Participants felt that mental health services were lacking, causing a rise in homelessness (which they felt was already larger than in other parts of the country due to the moderate winter climate in Victoria). Participants expressed a desire to see more investment in housing and support services for individuals facing homelessness and the inter-related issues of drugs and lack of employment.

## Joliette

***In Joliette, an increased population was believed to have caused issues with road safety and traffic, as well as access to services.***

In Joliette, participants identified the following local challenges:

- Population growth



- Urban sprawl which reduces the amount of farmlands, and increases highway traffic between Joliette and Montreal
- Increased immigration and the issues of integration
- Increased wait times to receive health care services
- Limited sports and entertainment options for youth
- Access to, or availability of, public transportation
- Fewer grants for the development of small businesses
- Healthcare access

It was primarily mentioned that with the increasing urban sprawl surrounding Montreal, Joliette had slowly become a bedroom community for those who are employed in Montreal. As such the region experienced a population growth, which created challenges, such as road and traffic issues, accessibility to municipal services, and healthcare access.

### Infrastructure

***Infrastructure improvements were considered as needed in both Victoria and Joliette though the focus differs across locations.***

Participants were asked what their regions needed in terms of infrastructure, and where their biggest concerns and challenges were.

Roads, transit, affordable housing, hospitals, fire departments and a lack of parking were all noted in Victoria. Many of the issues related to transit concerned traffic congestion to and from the suburbs during rush hour, which participants felt could be alleviated with a train or more city buses. There was a general consensus that greater emphasis must be placed on public transit. Another related issue was the unaffordability of the ferry to Vancouver. Related to the hospital, there was recognition that in future, needs would be even greater, and that hospitals should be planning for the future.

In Joliette, it was believed that the greatest need is improved roadways, due to an increase in traffic. Indeed, it was felt that an increased proportion of residents commute to Montreal for work, thus putting pressure on the road system. Increased traffic was seen as damaging roads more quickly, as well as introducing a greater security risk for drivers. The region of Joliette was also seen as being in need of schools to support the population growth, as well as sporting facility for families and youths.

### Government Actions

***Specific actions of the federal government to support the local economies were not well known.***

Participants were asked to identify what the federal government had done over the past year that had the most positive impact on their region.



Participants in Joliette were hard-pressed to identify any specific government initiatives and were more likely to speak of general investments they had noticed, including road improvements, the extension to the commuter train from Montreal, funding improvements at a local sewer treatment plant, more student loans, and an increase in benefits for families.

In Victoria, there was recognition that there had been funding in the last year from the federal government related to the McKenzie Interchange improvements, funding for naval submarines, and infrastructure funding for bike lanes. There were also a few comments that there had been improvements to the cruise ship terminal.

Conversely, very few participants in Joliette were able to identify anything the federal government had done in the past year that has had a negative impact on the region. A few mentioned that the federal government did not step in to save an Electrolux plant from closing a few years ago. Apart from that, no other initiative stood out to them. In Victoria, participants mentioned the legalization of cannabis as a potential negative as a gateway drug, the LNG pipeline plans which threaten orcas, and waste management that is not efficient, particularly in terms of recycling.

No single industry was considered most important to the Joliette economy. Rather, participants identified specific companies or manufacturing plants as being major employers in the region, including Firestone, Kruger, Videotron, Demix-Beton, and CHR Canada. No one in either group recalled any recent government actions aimed at supporting those industries.

Participants in Victoria identified technology as an important industry in the region, along with tourism, government, health and education.

### Major Community Concerns

#### ***Healthcare, housing and travel infrastructure were the greatest concerns for participants.***

Participants in Victoria and Joliette were presented with a list of items and asked to select all of those they felt were major concerns in their community, and to circle the two or three that were of greatest concern. In both locations, the availability of healthcare services, an aging population, the quality of roads and bridges, traffic congestion and poverty were among the most common concerns. Joliette participants also identified the availability of public transit, while additional issues of concern in Victoria included a shrinking middle class, retirement security, the cost of housing, homelessness, drug overdoses, and preserving a clean environment as issues affecting their community.

The following outlines a brief summary of each item, and where it emerged on the list of top three concerns. Some of the topics were discussed in more depth in some of the locations.

***Availability of healthcare services:*** This item emerged as the top choice across both locations when participants were asked to circle their top three greatest concerns. It also received the highest number of individual votes as a major concern, tied with the next item.



In Joliette, participants believed that access to healthcare services in their region is increasingly challenging. More specifically, it was believed that there are fewer specialists and longer wait times for various healthcare services, including emergency services. A few participants mentioned that it is not uncommon for them to drive outside of their community to another hospital for emergency services where wait times might be lower than at their nearby hospital, or to access a specialist. In addition, the limited number of family physicians made it difficult for many to secure a family doctor.

In Victoria, this was also noted as a key issue, with a lack of doctors and nurse practitioners resulting in long wait times at emergency rooms and walk-in clinics. Participants also noted there needed to be a greater focus on preventative care. In addition, participants mentioned the high cost of extended benefits and alternative or supplemental healthcare.

**An aging population:** This item also received a high number of individual votes in terms of major areas of concern, across both locations. It ranked modestly in terms of being a top three concern.

**Quality of roads and bridges:** This was a top three concern in Joliette and one that warranted some attention in Victoria. In Joliette, participants believed that the roads are of poor quality and that the situation will only worsen. More specifically, an increase in road traffic and more truck traffic in the region, has resulted in more damaged roadways. It was also believed that the issue is compounded by the lack of proper maintenance or investments in the past few years, thus resulting in a badly damaged system. They sensed that there was a lack of long-term infrastructure planning which further impacted the situation.

**Traffic congestion:** This item was second highest in terms of top three concerns, and also received a high number of individual votes in terms of being a major concern, in both locations. In Joliette, participants mentioned that with the population increase in the region that mostly include people who commute for work in Montreal, congestion was becoming of increased concern. Indeed, the road infrastructure updates have not kept up with the population growth, thus causing traffic congestion. It was believed that the situation has declined over the recent past, and that it is likely to continue worsening over time. In Victoria, participants noted traffic congestion having increased in recent years, particularly for those commuting from Colwood and surrounding areas into the city.

**Poverty:** Although this was cited as a major concern by the vast majority of participants, only a moderate number indicated it was a top three priority. In Joliette, affordable housing was identified as an issue locally. The recent population growth has resulted in a shortage of housing options, thus increasing the cost of housing and ultimately making it difficult for lower-income individuals and families to secure affordable housing. As such, it was believed that poverty is increasing in the region. Participants mentioned that new housing construction is limited and that there is a long wait list to access social housing. In Victoria, the issue of poverty was linked with homelessness, drug overdoses and affordable housing as a key set of related issues that are becoming increasingly acute.

**Cost of housing:** Participants in Victoria ranked this as a top three concern, and it also received a high number of individual votes as a major area of concern in Joliette. Votes from this item as a top three



concern were notably higher in the “*financially struggling*” group. Cost of housing was mentioned by many as becoming an issue that was increasingly difficult to cope with in Joliette. Similarly, in Victoria, participants noted the high cost of housing in the region, resulting in it being nearly unaffordable to live there. Some cited that even with a good job and salary, that the city was simply too expensive. A key suggested solution was the building of affordable housing options.

***A shrinking middle class:*** This item was of highest concern to those in the “*financially struggling*” group in Victoria but typically not a key concern in the other groups. In the “*financially struggling*” Victoria group, many felt that it is now harder to manage expenses even with a decent income. The sentiment was that wages were not increasing commensurate with the cost of living in Victoria. Individuals cited having good jobs and not being able to save for their future, and concern about how the future would look given their situation.

***Availability of public transit:*** Most in Joliette ranked this as a major concern, as well as nearly all in the “*financially secure*” group in Victoria. However, none in the “*financially struggling*” group from Victoria ranked this as a concern. While public transit is available in Victoria, participants noted that it is insufficient, leading to more people needing to drive, and thus increasing traffic density.

***Homelessness:*** This item was a major concern for most participants in Victoria and often a top-three concern, but generally not a concern in Joliette. In Victoria, participants noted an increase in homeless people, which they believed to be due to the favourable climate and people moving from other parts of Canada. There were concerns related to safety and crime, as well as the drug overdoses and addictions issues they felt were related to homelessness.

***Preserving a clean environment:*** Most Victoria participants considered this as a major concern. However relatively few in either Joliette or Victoria indicated it was a top three concern.

***Retirement security:*** Among those who felt this item was a major concern, nearly all were in Victoria. Only a small number indicated it was a top three priority.

***Drug overdoses:*** About half of those in Victoria felt it was a concern, but almost none cited it as a top three item, while it was generally not a major concern in Joliette. As mentioned, drug overdoses, homelessness and crime were seen in Victoria as inter-related issues that need addressing. There was a call for more rehabilitation and addictions services.

***Ability of local businesses and industries to succeed:*** A relatively small proportion felt this item was a major concern, but almost none felt it was a top three item. In Victoria, some felt this was an issue affecting small businesses. Suggestions from participants to address this issue included offering assistance to help local businesses to succeed, as well as offering incentives to individuals to patronise local businesses.





**Availability of affordable childcare options:** Among the modest number of participants who felt this was a major concern, nearly all were in Victoria, where participants felt that the high cost of childcare meant that it was not worth going back to work after having a child. However almost none in either location felt it was a top three concern.

**Crime:** A minority from each group across locations felt this was an area of major concern. However almost none believe it to be a top three concern.

**Level of Employment Insurance benefits for those who can't find work:** Only a small number of participants felt this to be a major concern, and almost none felt it was a top three concern for them.

**Availability of broadband internet:** Very few participants felt this was an area of major concern, and almost none felt it was a top three concern.

**Availability of jobs:** Some in the “financially secure” group in Victoria were concerned about this issue. When briefly discussed, participants noted that they would qualify the term to be related to the availability of well-paying jobs that would allow people to afford to live in Victoria. However virtually none felt it was a top three concern.

**Young people leaving for opportunities elsewhere:** Only a small number, and mainly in Victoria, cited this as a major concern, and virtually none felt it was a top three concern.

**Integrating immigrants into the community:** A handful of individuals cited this as a major concern, though virtually none felt it was a top three item.

**Low high school graduation rates:** A few felt this was a major concern, but virtually none felt it was a top three concern.

**Availability of services:** This was raised as a concern mainly in the female group in Joliette. However virtually none felt it was a top three consideration.

**Availability of cell phone service:** A handful of participants felt this was a major concern, with none feeling it was a top three concern.

**Gun control:** No participants felt this was a top three concern, and few felt it was a major concern.

**Gang violence:** No participants felt this was a top three concern, and few felt it was a major concern.

When asked if they felt that anything was missing from the list of concerns presented, participants in Joliette identified additional financial supports for families, and improved cultural offerings. In Victoria, participants mentioned the issue of affordability of getting on and off Vancouver Island (cost of the ferries), the availability of a reasonable living wage, and the issue of rapid development of condos and



new housing areas without the infrastructure (public transit, healthcare facilities and shopping) in place to allow people to live where these developments are being built.

## Service Canada Pull-Up Screen

In Joliette, participants were asked to comment on three potential designs for a Service Canada pull-up banner sign.

### Initial Impressions and Preferences

***Concept A (white/red colour scheme, no symbols) and B (colourful with symbols) were deemed most eye-catching, though Concept A and C (white/red colour scheme, with symbols) were considered more closely aligned with Service Canada.***

Participants were shown three design options for a refresh of the visuals used on Service Canada's pull-up screens (or banner signs) that are used at Service Canada Centres, at temporary Service Canada sites in different communities, as well as at career fairs and other similar events across the country. They were informed that the purpose for the screen is to make the public aware that Service Canada representatives are at the particular location and are available to answer questions or provide assistance regarding Government of Canada programs and services. The three versions shown will be referenced as "Concept A" featuring a red-and-white colour scheme with colour block features (no image or symbols), "Concept B" featuring multiple symbols in multiple colours, and "Concept C" featuring a red-and-white colour scheme with a design that includes a few symbols.

Participants were first asked to identify which design they were drawn to, at first glance. Concept A elicited the greatest interest among participants. Initial impressions were that the concept's simplicity, colour contrast, and clarity was most effective at grabbing attention. The large font, Service Canada logo, and well-recognized location marker icon were considered attention grabbing. Just a few across both groups were attracted by the Concept B for its colourful design. Only one participant chose Concept C as being initially attention-grabbing.

After looking at all three designs a bit longer and sharing broad opinions as a group, participants were asked to identify which of the three options they personally preferred. Opinions were more divided, with none of the three concepts clearly highlighted as best.

When asked which of the designs best represented what Service Canada is all about, Concept A (red/white no symbols) was most closely aligned for being professional, "plain", simple, and "government-like", thus being more representative of a government department. A few also found Concept C to be most aligned with Service Canada, for much of the same reasons. By contrast, Concept B was most commonly associated with a sporting event or tourism signage due to its colourful representation of Canadian symbols and icons.



## Concept Evaluation

***All three concepts were liked for varying reasons, though Concept A elicited the most positive reactions.***

Concept A (red/white no symbols) was considered simple, visually-attractive, having a “clean” and somewhat modern design, large lettering and great contrast. The message was considered clear and simple, thus being appropriate for a location banner.

Concept B (colours with symbols) was deemed attractive and playful for its use of multiple colours and for using symbols that are associated with Canada, its people and culture. There was, however, an expectation that the symbols would provide an indication of services and programs offered through Service Canada. The concepts of diversity and inclusiveness were also well communicated by this concept. That said, some found the design busy and confusing, taking away attention from the main purpose of the banner, that is indicating that Service Canada staff were available for information.

Concept C (red/white with symbols) was less commonly considered as attention-grabbing, although its clean and simple design was appreciated by some. These individuals felt the use of fewer symbols introduced a whimsical element to the design, without taking away from the banner’s main purpose. The use of the location marker icon was also appreciated and deemed as clear. That said, a few participants felt that the symbols were too small to effectively communicate a message.

## Symbols

***Some symbols were confusing as presented, and participants did not readily understand the link between the symbols and Service Canada’s offerings.***

Participants were asked to comment on the symbols used in the design for Concept B (colours with symbols) and Concept C (red/white with symbols). Various icons were misunderstood in each of the options containing icons, namely the toque (not clear to many), the Toronto skyline in front of mountains (misunderstood for the Eiffel tower), the Metis flag (often described as the infinity sign), and the image of the beaver. Those who recognized the Toronto skyline wondered why only this Canadian city was represented. Despite some symbols causing confusion, participants appreciated the attempt to represent all provinces and to include symbols associated with Indigenous peoples.

Regardless of their preferred design, many participants questioned the relevance of using the selected symbols in the context of a Service Canada sign. It was suggested that the symbols would be more relevant if they illustrated the types of services offered by Service Canada rather than providing an illustrative reference to Canada and Canadians. It was believed that people should also be included to reflect the audiences targeted by government services (e.g., families, elderly, etc.).



## People Serving People vs. Here For You

***The expression “Au service des gens” was slightly preferred for being warm, welcoming and clearly stating that staff is available to assist.***

Participants were asked to indicate which of the two phrases “Au service des gens” or “Ici pour vous” they preferred, if at all. There was a slight preference for “Au service des gens” for being warm, welcoming, and clearly stating that staff is onsite to provide assistance. Indeed, the expression “au service” implied staff availability and a desire to help. Overall, the phrase focused on the human factor.

The phrase “Ici pour vous” was liked by fewer participants, although it was still appreciated for being short, clear and simple. Further, it was believed to be effective at indicating that staff was onsite to help. The use of the word “vous” was liked for engaging the public and making the expression more personal.

## URL

***The URL “Canada.ca” was preferred for its simplicity and memorability, as most would use a search engine to locate the information they need.***

Participants were asked which of two URL they would like to see on the banners, namely “Canada.ca” or “Canada.ca/servicecanada”. By far, the shorter version was preferred for being more memorable. It was widely mentioned that if looking for information online, a URL would not likely be used, but rather, participants would use a search engine to locate the information they are looking for and thus the URL did not really matter.



# **Appendix A: Recruitment Screener**

**RECRUITMENT SCREENER FINAL**

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

Tel. (H): \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. (W): \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**FOCUS GROUPS:****Joliette, QC (FRENCH)****Date:** February 28, 2019**Location:** Chateau Joliette**Time:** Group 23: 5:30pm – Females  
Group 24: 8:00pm - Males450 rue Saint Thomas  
Joliette, QC**SPECIFICATIONS SUMMARY**

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

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 23**
  - Male.....2 **CONSIDER FOR GROUP 24**
  - 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
  - 75 or older .....8 **THANK & TERMINATE**
- VOLUNTEERED**
- Refused.....9 **THANK & TERMINATE**

} **SEE QUOTAS**

**AGE QUOTAS:**  
 In each group, recruit min 3 between 18-34; min 3 between 35-54 and max 4 between 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
- VOLUNTEERED**
- Refused..... 8

} **AIM FOR MIX IN EACH GROUP**

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	} <b>Ensure good mix: Recruit 2 below \$40K category Recruit 3 between \$40 and \$80K Recruit 5 above \$80K category</b>
\$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	
<b>VOLUNTEERED</b>		
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	<b>THANK &amp; TERMINATE</b>

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	<b>THANK &amp; TERMINATE</b>

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	<b>THANK &amp; TERMINATE</b>

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

**RECRUITMENT SCREENER FINAL**

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

Tel. (H): \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. (W): \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Group 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

**FOCUS GROUPS:****Barrie, ON (ENGLISH)****Date:** Monday March 4, 2019**Time:** Group 25: 5:30pm – Falling behind/Just getting by  
Group 26: 8:00pm – Getting ahead/Financially secure**Location:** **Holiday Inn Barrie Hotel**  
20 Fairview Road**Winnipeg, MB (ENGLISH)****Date:** Wednesday March 13, 2019**Time:** Group 27: 5:30pm – Falling behind/Just getting by  
Group 28: 8:00pm – Getting ahead/Financially secure**Location:** **NRG Research**  
213 Notre Dame Avenue  
Suite 804**Kingston, ON (ENGLISH)****Date:** Wednesday March 20, 2019**Time:** Group 29: 5:30pm – Falling behind/Just getting by  
Group 30: 8:00pm – Getting ahead/Financially secure**Location:** **Holiday Inn Kingston Waterfront**  
2 Princess Street**Victoria, BC (ENGLISH)****Date:** Thursday March 21, 2019**Time:** Group 31: 5:30pm – Falling behind/Just getting by  
Group 32: 8:00pm – Getting ahead/Financially secure**Location:** **R.A. Malatest & Associates**  
858 Pandora Avenue**Halifax, NS (ENGLISH)****Date:** Monday March 25, 2019**Time:** Group 33: 5:30pm – Falling behind/Just getting by  
Group 34: 8:00pm – Getting ahead/Financially secure**Location:** **CRA Halifax**  
7071 Bayers Road  
Suite 5001 (5<sup>th</sup> Floor)**Laval, QC (FRENCH)****Date:** Monday March 25, 2019**Time:** Group 35: 5:30pm – Falling behind/Just getting by  
Group 36: 8:00pm – Getting ahead/Financially secure**Location:** **AdHoc Research**  
400 de Maisonneuve West  
Suite 1200**SPECIFICATIONS SUMMARY**

- In each of Barrie, Halifax, Kingston, Winnipeg, Victoria and Laval, one group with those who are falling behind or just getting by financially and one group with those who are getting ahead or secure financially
- 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
- 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? Pr  f  rez-vous continuer en fran  ais 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 fran  ais. 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 C  t  , 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 **RECRUIT 6 PER GROUP**
- Male.....2 **RECRUIT 6 PER GROUP**
- 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
- 75 or older .....8 **THANK & TERMINATE**
- VOLUNTEERED**
- Refused.....9 **THANK & TERMINATE**

} **SEE QUOTAS**

**AGE QUOTAS:**  
Groups 25-36: Recruit min 3 between 18-34; min 3 between 35-54 and max 4 between 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. Thinking about the cost of living and your personal financial situation, would you say you are currently...

- Falling behind on your monthly expenses..... 1
  - Just getting by, with no savings..... 2
  - Getting ahead, with some savings ..... 3
  - Financially secure ..... 4
  - Don't know/Refused ..... 5
- CONSIDER FOR GROUP 25,27,29,31,33,35**
- CONSIDER FOR GROUP 26,28,30,32,34,36**

15. 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.

16. 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**

17. 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**

18. 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**

19. **[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 – March 2019

*Focus Groups – Winter 2019 – Phase 3*

### 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 (all locations)

5 minutes

To begin...

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

### Environment

30-40 minutes

(Barrie; Winnipeg)

- 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?

#### BARRIE ONLY:

**Exercise:** 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?

#### ALL LOCATIONS:

- 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?

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.

**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

- 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?

**BARRIE ONLY:**

- 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?

**Service Canada Pull-Up Screens**  
(Joliette)

**15 minutes**

I would now like to show you three designs. These designs are options for a refresh of the visuals used on Service Canada’s pull-up screens (or banner signs). These screens are used at Service Canada Centres, at temporary Service Canada sites in different communities, as well as at career fairs and other similar events across the country. The purpose of the screens is to make the public aware that Service Canada representatives are at the particular location and are available to answer questions or provide assistance regarding Government of Canada programs and services.

**Note: All three designs are to be shown at the same time to ensure time efficiency and a comparative analysis.**

- What are your first impressions of the three designs? Is there one you are more drawn to? Why?  
**[SHOW OF HANDS]**

**After allowing 1-2 minutes for the participants to review the designs more closely, pose the following questions.**

- After looking a bit closer at the designs, which of the three do you prefer? **[SHOW OF HANDS]** Would you choose something other than the one at first impression? Why?
- Is there one design presented here which you feel best represents what Service Canada is all about? **[SHOW OF HANDS]** Which design do you more closely associate with Service Canada? Why?
- Is there anything in particular that you do not like about any of the designs? Why?
- Do you think the use of icons on the second and third designs is appealing?
  - Are there any icons you particularly like?
  - Are there any icons you do not think are appropriate?

- Do you have a preference between using the wording ‘People Serving People’ or ‘Here for You’ or nothing at all? Why?
- Do you have a preference between the use of the url Canada.ca or the url Canada.ca/servicecanada on the designs? If so, why?

**Local Challenges**  
(Victoria; Joliette)

30 minutes

- What are the most important local issues in **[INSERT CITY WHERE GROUPS HELD]**? **LIST ON WHITE BOARD**
  - **FOR EACH:** Why is it important? What needs to be done? **PROBE TO SEE IF OTHERS FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT**
- And what does **CITY** need in terms of infrastructure?
  - What are the biggest concerns/challenges? Is there anything that needs to be done?
- Thinking about everything the federal government has done in the past year, what, if anything, do you think will have the most positive impact on **CITY**?
- Have they done anything that you think will have a negative impact on **CITY**?
- What industry is the most important to the local economy in your area?
  - And do you think the federal government has been supportive of this industry recently? Why or why not?

**Exercise:** I’ve got a handout with various items. I’d like you to put a check mark beside each one that you think is a major concern in your community. Now I’d like you to circle the top 2 or 3 that you worry about the most.

- Was there anything missing from that list?

**TIME PERMITTING - DISCUSS A FEW ISSUES THAT WERE CIRCLED:**

- What *specifically* is the problem? Why is it a problem?
- Is this something that has been getting worse in recent years or has it always been a problem?
- Thinking of all the local issues and challenges we’ve talked about today, what is the one thing the federal government could do that would impact your city the most positively?
  - What action would have the most positive effect on you personally?

**Tourism**  
(Barrie; Winnipeg; Joliette)

10 minutes

- Is anyone familiar with vacation or rental accommodations made through online platforms? **PROMPT AS NECESSARY:** AirBNB, VRBO, Home Away **SHOW OF HANDS**
  - Explain it to me as if I’m someone who has never heard of it.

- Have you used this? How do you feel about it?
  - **PROBE:** Some people have concerns that these types of rental accommodations are a challenge to lodging businesses like hotels. Is this a concern you share?
- Currently, the GST-HST does not apply to rental accommodations made through online platforms like AirBNB, as it does to accommodations provided by the traditional hotel/ BnB sector. Do you think they should be forced to?
  - **PROBE:** Why? Why not?

**Skills**
**25 minutes**
**(Barrie; Winnipeg; Joliette)**

I want to move on to discussing the topic of people doing training to improve or upgrade their professional skills once they're in the workforce. An example of this would be when someone has already graduated with a degree or certification in their field, but they continue to take courses or training.

- What do we call this? What's the term people use?
  - **PROBE:** Lifelong learning? Continuing learning? Skills development? Continuing education? Professional development? Upskill? Re-skill?
- To what extent do you feel that working Canadians need to "upskill" or "reskill" more now than they might have had to in the past?
- Do you feel that you are able to "upskill" as much as you want to and need to or are there barriers – maybe at work or at home – that make it difficult?
  - What are the barriers? **PROBE:** lack of time/flexibility, financial barriers etc.
- If you decided to pursue training, what would you think of a federal government program where if you spent \$200 on training, the government would also provide \$200 to cover \$400 in overall training costs?
- What if the government also provided a means, perhaps through the Employment Insurance system, to provide you with some funding to cover living expenses during the days in which you may take-off to pursue training, and your job would be protected?
- What if this government program was designed to be "open", meaning that you would choose what kind of training you wanted (i.e. not the government, not business, but you). You could even do training to get the skills you might need to change your career – what would you think of that?

**Exercise:** I'm going to give you a worksheet with 6 possible names for what a program like this could be called. Obviously you don't know all the details, but I want you to circle the name that would make you want to find out more about this program

- **FOR EACH:** How many chose this name?
  - **IF SELECTED:** Why; what do you like about it?
  - **IF NOT CHOSEN:** Why did you not chose it? **PROBE:** Did not like or confusing

- Any other suggested names not listed here? Or variations on these that would make more sense to you (e.g. mixing and matching the first part and last part from two different names on your sheet)?

### **Housing**

**20 minutes**

**(Barrie; Winnipeg; Joliette)**

Now let's turn to the issue of housing.

- What are your main concerns when it comes to housing in this city?
  - **PROBE:** Affordable rent? Being able to afford to live in a safe neighbourhood that is close to work?
- Is it important that you own as opposed to rent your home? Why? Why not?
- If you were looking to buy your first home right now, how do you feel about taking on a mortgage and making the payments in the current environment?
- Do you think the government should support individuals who want to buy a home, maybe with extra funding or financing to afford a down payment?
- How would you feel about a plan where first-time buyers could have a government agency share a small part of equity in their house in order to cut the cost of a down payment?

**Exercise:** I'm going to give you a worksheet with 5 possible names for what a program like this could be called. Obviously you don't know all the details, but I want you to circle the name that would make you want to find out more about this program.

- **FOR EACH:** How many chose this name?
  - **IF SELECTED:** Why; what do you like about it?
  - **IF NOT CHOSEN:** Why did you not chose it? **PROBE:** Did not like or confusing
- Any other suggested names not listed here? Or variations on these that would make more sense to you?

### **Budget**

**45 minutes**

**(Kingston; Victoria; Halifax; Laval)**

- Has anyone heard anything about the federal budget?
  - If YES PROBE IN-DEPTH:
    - What did you hear?
    - Where did you hear about it?
      - PROMPT AS NEEDED: TV news, newspaper, friend's FB post, etc.
- What do you think the overall theme or focus of the budget is?
- What specific initiatives are in it?
- Is there anything in there you like?
- Anything you don't like?
  - IF YES PROBE: What do others think about (ITEMS MENTIONED)?

- What are your overall impressions of the budget?

**Exercise:** I'm going to give you a handout with a list of some initiatives included in the budget. This list is just some initiatives, not everything covered in the budget. We'll talk about some of these in more detail in a bit, but I want to get your reaction to the short summaries described below, even if you don't know the details yet.

There are 3 things I'm going to ask you to do in this exercise:

1. Please give each a thumbs up or thumbs down.
2. Then, circle what you feel are the best 2 or 3 initiatives on this list.
3. Next, I'd like you to put check marks next to the ones you feel will have an impact on you and/or your family personally

GO THROUGH EACH ITEM INDIVIDUALLY:

- For those who circled this one, why do you like it?
  - For those who don't like it, why? (if no one says don't like, ask for negatives they could see)
  - Give me some examples of how they could impact the lives of you or people you know.

	Liked / circled	Didn't like	Impact you?
1. Creating 84,000 new student work placements to give young people work experience			
2. Creating Canada's first national strategy to deal with dementia, to help those suffering and their caregivers			
3. Creating the Canada Training Benefit, which gives people \$1000 every four years to help cover the cost of skills training, and lets them take time off to take courses			
4. Creating the Canadian Drug Agency that will bulk buy drugs, in order to lower the cost of prescription drugs			
5. Creating the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive, to help make the purchase of a first home most affordable			
6. Doubling the infrastructure money that goes to municipalities this year, so that they can improve roads, transit, community centres, and infrastructure projects.			
7. Ensuring that every home in Canada has high-speed internet broadband by 2030			
8. Implementing a National Pharmacare plan			
9. Increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement earning exemption, so that seniors who work part-time do not have their benefits clawed back.			



10. Investing in programs to ensure clean water, and better health and education outcomes on First Nations reserves			
11. Limiting stock option tax breaks used by wealthier individuals at established companies			
12. Lowering the interest rate on Student Loans			
13. Security funding for groups who are victims of hate crimes, and an anti-racism strategy			

I want to talk a bit more about three of the things on this list.

### HOUSING

The government created the First-Time Home Buyers Incentive. Under this plan, you can get an interest-free loan from CMHC to cover 5% of the cost of your first home – or 10% if it's a new build, so as to encourage developers to build more homes. This means First-Time Buyers would not need as large of a mortgage, reducing their payments. For example, on a \$500,000 home, this could drop your monthly mortgage payments by over \$225 a month. When you sold your house, CMHC would collect 5% of the sale price of the house back, as repayment for this loan.

- How do you feel about this plan?
- Will this make it easier for young people to buy their first home?
- If you don't own a home – is this something you would use?
  - If you do own – would this impact you at all?

### SKILLS

The government created the Canada Training Benefit. This gives every working Canadian between 25 and 64 a \$250 credit every year they can build up to use towards skills training or continuing education. The government would also mandate that employers would need to let employees take off up to 4 weeks every 4 years, with EI, to take advantage of these programs if they want to. Think of this as a version of parental leave, but for skills training.

So, for example, in 4 years you could take 4 weeks off work to take a course to learn new skills, and the government would pay your EI while you are on leave, and put \$1,000 towards the cost of these courses. People could use this to learn skills so that they can do their current jobs better and get promoted at their company, or they could learn new skills if they feel they need to move to a different industry.

- How do you feel about this plan?
- Is this something you would use?
  - Why or why not?
- What kind of impact do you think this will have on small business owners?

## STOCK OPTIONS

As you may be aware, employee stock options provide employees with the right to acquire shares of their company as a form of compensation. Many smaller start-ups use this as a way to attract and retain talented employees. Employee stock options are currently taxed at half the rate of other forms of income, and currently 85% of the total value of employee stock options in Canada goes to individuals making over \$500,000 a year.

In the budget, the government announced that stock options would be taxed at the normal rate. However, there would be an exemption for start-up companies and for individuals with under \$200,000 in stock options. So the new tax on stock options would only apply to those in established companies with over \$200,000 in annual options. This way, start-ups could still use stock options to attract talent, and companies could still give stock options to lower salaried employees as a benefit. But large stock options for CEOs would be taxed at the same rate as salary.

- How do you feel about this change?
  - What do you like about it?
  - What concerns do you have?

### *Trade*

*20 minute*

*(Winnipeg; Kingston; Halifax; Laval)*

- What have you seen, read or heard about international trade lately?
  - And have you seen, read or heard about anything related to the Government of Canada and trade recently?
- With which countries do you think Canada trades with the most?
- Does Canada have any free trade deals? With who?
- What comes to mind when you hear the words trade diversification?

### **CLARIFY AS NECESSARY:**

Trade diversification essentially involves signing trade agreements with as many countries/regions as possible

- What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of trade diversification?
  - Do think that trade diversification benefits Canada's economy?
    - IF YES: how so?
    - IF NO: what makes you say that?
- Do you think trade diversification is something the Government of Canada should focus on?
  - In terms of priorities for the Government of Canada, where would you rank trade diversification? Do you think it should be a high, medium, or low priority, or not a priority at all?
  - What can the Government of Canada do to promote trade diversification?
    - Framed another way, what can the Government of Canada do to secure more opportunities for Canadian exporters?

**Energy Vision****20 minutes****(Kingston; Victoria; Halifax; Laval)**

Over the last two years, the Government of Canada consulted Canadians on the energy future they want for our country. Now, the Government is working to develop an energy vision that reflects this input. It will include 5 major groups of initiatives:

- Improve energy efficiency such as incentive programs for home owners and updating building codes
- Switch from coal/gas to solar/hydro/wind/nuclear and using more electricity to power vehicles, homes and industry
- Use more waste from agriculture and forestry to make renewable fuels such as biodiesel
- Produce oil and gas more efficiently, use more electricity, and adopt clean technology like carbon capture and storage
- Attract investment to increase clean electricity capacity and build pipelines to get our resources to markets outside the US, to diversify our exports

**Exercise:** The Government has tried to capture these ideas in a graphical way, using words and pictures. We would like your reaction to the five concepts (Moderator distributes copies of the five concepts to each of the participants). Feel free to mark up each of the concepts as we discuss these.

- Which one explains the initiative the best? Which is least clear?
- Which one is the most memorable?
- Which pictures make you feel hopeful/inspired about Canada's energy future?
- Which words resonate more? Are there words or phrases that you are not familiar with or that you find confusing?

**Thanks & Closure**

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

## Exercise Sheet

### Exercise – The Environment

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 – Community Concerns

- A shrinking middle class
- Ability of local businesses and industries to succeed
- An aging population
- Availability of affordable childcare options
- Availability of broadband internet
- Availability of cell phone service
- Availability of healthcare services
- Availability of jobs
- Availability of public transit
- Availability of services
- Cost of housing
- Crime
- Drug overdoses
- Gang violence
- Gun control
- Homelessness
- Integrating immigrants into the community
- Level of Employment Insurance benefits for those who can't find work
- Low high school graduation rates
- Poverty
- Preserving a clean environment
- Quality of roads and bridges
- Retirement security
- Traffic congestion
- Young people leaving for opportunities elsewhere

## Exercise – Skills

Professional Development Leave

Learning Account

New Skills Savings Account

Training for Good Jobs Benefit

Training Support Credit

Lifelong Training Passport

## **Exercise – Housing**

Shared Equity Mortgage




















First-Time Buyers Benefit

Housing Affordability Assistance Plan

Affordable First Home Program

First Home Partnership

## Exercise – Budget

Some of the initiatives from the 2019 budget	Choose thumbs up or thumbs down for EACH initiative on the list		Check <u>three</u> of the 13 initiatives you think are the best	Check if <u>any</u> initiative will impact you / your family personally (check all that apply)
Creating 84,000 new student work placements to give young people work experience				
Creating Canada’s first national strategy to deal with dementia, to help those suffering and their caregivers				
Creating the Canada Training Benefit, which gives people \$1000 every four years to help cover the cost of skills training, and lets them take time off to take courses				
Creating the Canadian Drug Agency that will bulk buy drugs, in order to lower the cost of prescription drugs				
Creating the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive, to help make the purchase of a first home most affordable				
Doubling the infrastructure money that goes to municipalities this year, so that they can improve roads, transit, community centres, and infrastructure projects.				
Ensuring that every home in Canada has high-speed internet broadband by 2030				
Implementing a National Pharmacare plan				
Increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement earning exemption, so that seniors who work part-time do not have their benefits clawed back.				
Investing in programs to ensure clean water, and better health and education outcomes on First Nations reserves				
Limiting stock option tax breaks used by wealthier individuals at established companies				
Lowering the interest rate on Student Loans				
Security funding for groups who are victims of hate crimes, and an anti-racism strategy				



**Appendix C:**  
**Energy Vision Concepts Tested**

# My energy is powering Canada's future

[canadasenergyfuture.ca](http://canadasenergyfuture.ca)

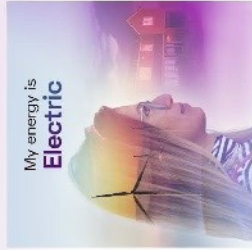
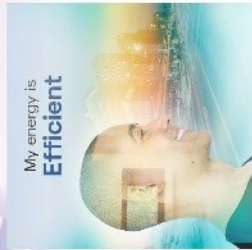
Cleaner  
Oil and  
Gas

Clean  
Power

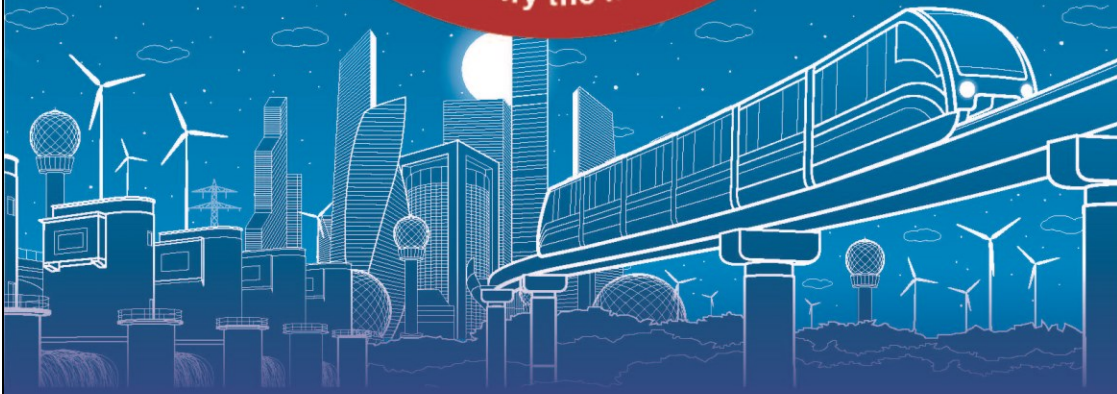
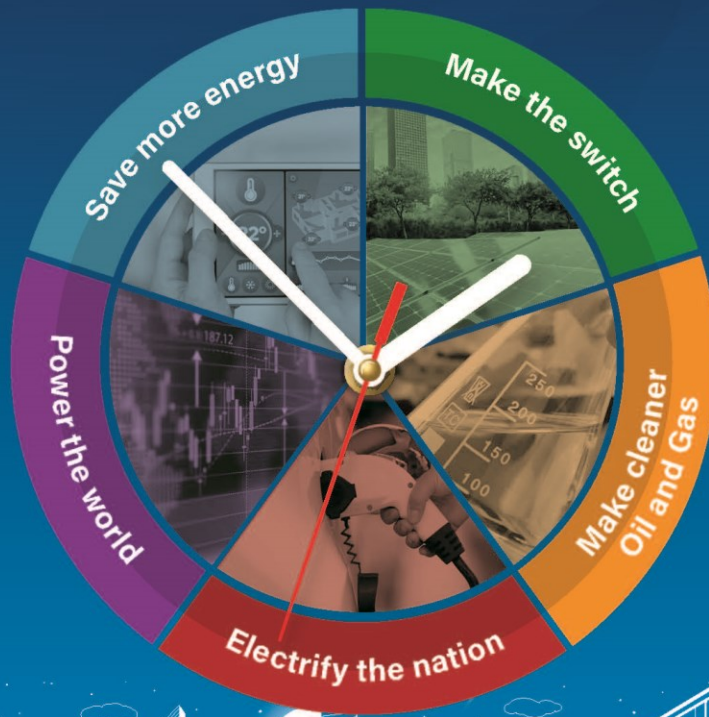
Smart  
Energy  
Use

Markets and  
Investments

Low-  
Carbon  
Fuels



# CANADA'S ENERGY FUTURE Starts NOW



[energyfuture.ca](http://energyfuture.ca)

# CANADA'S ENERGY FUTURE!



**RELIABLE • AFFORDABLE • SUSTAINABLE**



**Get energy smart!**



**Electrifying the nation!**



**Full service oil and gas!**



**Fuels of the future!**



**New markets... and beyond!**

**CANADA-ENERGY-FUTURE.CA**

# “What part will you play?”

The Robot represents Canada's current energy situation. Currently he's getting the job done but is much better with new parts. Each new part represents 1 of the 5 energy solutions



## 5 Energy Solutions

- **1. Wasting Less Energy**  
**BODY: Do you contain the ability to help others waste less?**
- **2. Switching to Cleaner Power**  
**SOLAR CELL: Will you be the power behind the transition?**
- **3. More Renewable Fuels**  
**FUEL TANK: Will you fuel Canadian's desire for sustainability?**
- **4. Cleaner Oil & Gas**  
**INNER GEARS: Will you have finely-tuned ideas to clean up our emissions?**
- **5. Market Access & Investment**  
**WHEELS: Will you move the markets in the right direction?**



[canada-pathways.ca](http://canada-pathways.ca)