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# ***ANNUAL REPORT***

## **Public Opinion Research in the Government of Canada**



# ***2012-2013***



# Public Opinion Research in the Government of Canada

## Annual Report 2012-2013

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The *Public Opinion Research in the Government of Canada – Annual Report 2012-2013* is available online at:  
<http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/rop-por/rapports-reports/2012-2013/tdm-toc-eng.html>.

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## Introduction

Departments and agencies of the Government of Canada gather information on the views of the Canadian public to be able to quickly respond to their diverse needs. Public opinion research is one of the tools used to better understand the views and needs of Canadians and improve communication between government and citizens. It is also an effective tool to understand how people view and relate to government policies, programs and services and to measure how satisfied they are with the services provided.

Information gathered from public opinion research studies helps provide useful insights on important issues such as children's health and safety, job creation, economic growth, food safety, elder abuse and support to veterans. Real-time feedback can also be obtained with public opinion research in times of emergency or rapidly evolving crises.

Under the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada*<sup>1</sup>, Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) is responsible for activities such as coordinating and providing methodological advice on public opinion research studies, promoting best practices in public opinion research and developing an annual report on government public opinion research activities.

This is the Department's 12<sup>th</sup> annual report on public opinion research. In this report, the Public Opinion Research Directorate of PWGSC provides an overview of government-wide<sup>2</sup> contracted public opinion research activities coordinated on behalf of federal departments and agencies for the period of April 1, 2012 through March 31, 2013. This report includes an overview of the role and the use of public opinion research in the Government of Canada and how it benefits Canadians. It also provides a description of how public opinion research is managed within the government, along with business volumes and other useful information on public opinion research activities.

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<sup>1</sup> *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada*, 2012, <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12316&section=text#sec5.8>.

<sup>2</sup> Compliance with the provisions covering public opinion research in the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada* is mandatory for departments identified in Schedules I, I.1 and II of the *Financial Administration Act*, unless excluded by specific acts, regulations or Orders in Council. Agents of Parliament are exempt under the provisions covering public opinion research. Available online: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/F-11/index.html>.

## A Year in Review

Public opinion research helps the government listen to Canadians and respond to their needs. It is used to better understand how people view government policies, programs and services. It is also used to measure satisfaction with services provided. The government uses this information to design and tailor its programs and services to achieve results, and in turn, better serve Canadians.

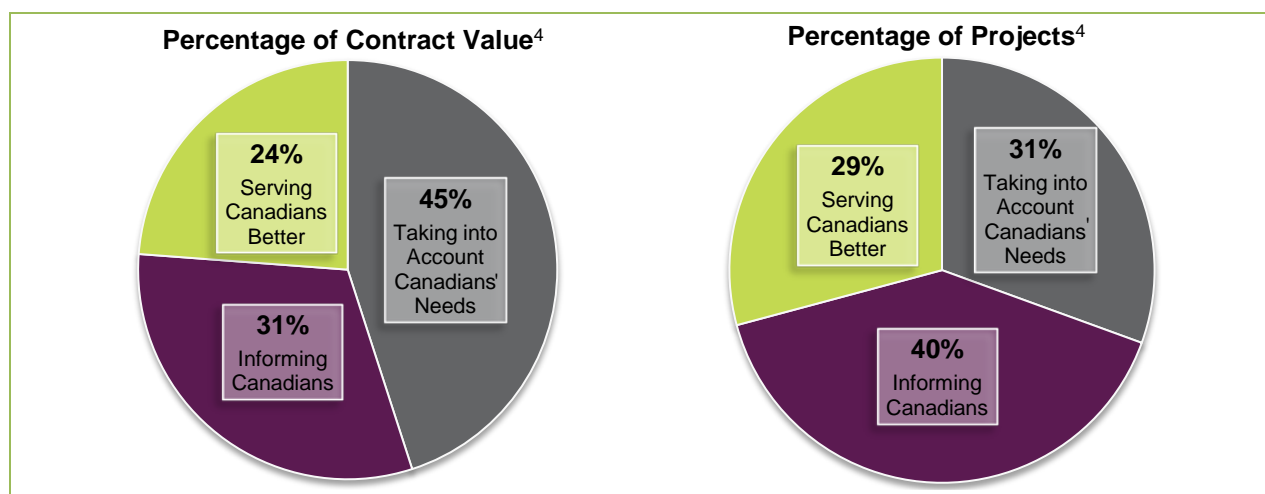
Public opinion research is conducted for three broad uses: ensuring that the government is continuing to serve Canadians better, taking Canadians' needs into account in all aspects of governance and informing Canadians about their government's policies and programs.

In 2012-2013, a total of 72 contracted public opinion research projects worth \$4.3 million were coordinated through the Public Opinion Research Directorate. With respect to the purpose of these studies, 29 percent of these projects were conducted to understand Canadian views of government services and to measure how satisfied they were with the services provided; 31 percent were conducted to strengthen policies and develop communications initiatives that take into account Canadians' needs, and 40 percent of these projects provided the Government of Canada with information on its efforts to help keep Canadians informed of government programs, policies and services.

**Table 1: Areas of Application for Contracted Public Opinion Research**

	Contract Value <sup>3</sup>	Number of Projects <sup>3</sup>
Taking into Account Canadians' Needs	\$1,927,306	22
Informing Canadians	\$1,357,614	29
Serving Canadians Better	\$1,019,257	21
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$4,304,177</b>	<b>72</b>

**Figure 1: Areas of Application for Contracted Public Opinion Research**



<sup>3</sup> The number of projects and contract values (rounded to the nearest dollar) represent contractual transactions issued between April 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013 (including amendments to increase, cancel or reduce the value of the contracts issued from previous fiscal years).

<sup>4</sup> The figures have been rounded to the nearest percentage point.

## Taking into Account Canadians' Needs

The government uses public opinion research to identify the needs of Canadians with respect to improving existing policies and programs and to put forward new initiatives. It allows the government to better understand the public's perspectives and views on a given subject, to assist in the design and delivery of programs and help find the best approaches to reach out to Canadians. This is achieved by:

- **Policy development:** The government collects information on attitudes and opinions to help tailor public policies that reflect the needs and wants of Canadians, or specific stakeholder groups affected by those policies.
- **Market research:** This type of research involves collecting information on attitudes, opinions and product attributes that will help in the design and delivery of programs and services.
- **Communications plan development:** This type of research measures awareness, attitudes and behavioural intentions to help the government better communicate with Canadians. It helps identify the best approaches to reach out to the public and helps develop and refine messages, for example, in guides or brochures.

In 2012-2013, studies conducted to take into account Canadians' needs accounted for 45 percent of the total contract value of public opinion research. (See [Figure 1.](#))

## Informing Canadians

The government has a duty to explain its policies and decisions to Canadians and inform them of available programs and services. Public opinion research helps ensure that information about policies, programs and services is clear, concise and targeted to appropriate audiences through:

- **Communication product testing:** This type of research includes the evaluation of concepts, messages, content and creative design.
- **Advertising pretesting:** This type of research is used to test advertising materials and concepts associated with major campaigns. This helps to ensure that Canadians understand the government's communications messages before they are used. Pretesting is mandatory for campaigns with a media buy of \$400,000 or more<sup>5</sup>.
- **Advertising post evaluation:** This type of research is used to measure recall and recognition of major advertising campaigns, as well as attitude and behavioural changes resulting from these campaigns. Post evaluation of advertising is mandatory for campaigns with a media budget of \$1 million or more<sup>6</sup>. The information from these studies is used to improve the planning and development of current and future advertising campaigns.

<sup>5</sup> See the section entitled "Procedures for Planning, Contracting and Evaluating Advertising" in the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada: Procedures*, 2008, available online: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12321&section=text#cha6>.

<sup>6</sup> See the section entitled "Procedures for Planning, Contracting and Evaluating Advertising" in the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada: Procedures*, 2008, available online: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12321&section=text#cha6>.

- **Web site usability testing:** This type of research involves the testing of new or revised Web pages to ensure that they are functional, comprehensive and useful. The content, format, features and ease of navigation are tested to ensure government Web sites meet the needs of the intended user.

Studies to inform Canadians accounted for 31 percent of the total contract value of public opinion research for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. (See [Figure 1.](#))

## Serving Canadians Better

Public opinion research is used to understand how people view government policies, programs and services and to measure how satisfied they are with the services provided by their government. It also helps the government to understand how these services could be improved. Government listens to Canadians by means of:


- **Quality of service and client satisfaction:** This type of research helps the government evaluate experiences and identify interests and priorities in order to be aware of areas requiring improvement. It provides the government with the means to understand the drivers of client satisfaction and identify areas where clients seek information. This type of study also includes research supporting a more productive work environment.
- **Policy and program evaluation:** This type of research helps evaluate the effectiveness of programs and services and the factors driving their usefulness.

Studies undertaken to better serve Canadians accounted for 24 percent of the total contract value of public opinion research for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. (See [Figure 1.](#))

## Research Approaches

Public opinion research relies on a number of data collection methods to obtain information from a wide variety of audiences. [Appendix IV](#) presents 40 specific segments of the population reached through public opinion research studies conducted in 2012-2013. Research approaches used to reach these audiences include qualitative methodologies, quantitative methodologies or a combination of both, referred to as a mixed-mode approach.

Qualitative research is widely used to gain insights into people's behaviours and perceptions and explore their opinions on a particular topic. This approach is typically used when the research needed is exploratory, in-depth or about very complex issues. It relies on semi-structured or unstructured interviews where the moderator or interviewer works with a discussion guide that can be adapted according to the participants' individual experiences and responses. The most commonly used qualitative techniques are focus group discussions, group interviews and personal interviews. [Appendix V](#) shows the locations of focus groups for qualitative studies conducted during the reporting year. Qualitative methodologies do not yield numeric data and the findings cannot be projected to the general population. Twenty-nine percent of the research projects undertaken in the 2012-2013 fiscal year used qualitative methodologies.



Quantitative research uses a more systematic approach to collect and analyze information obtained from a sample of the target population. This method includes structured techniques, such as surveys, with the aim of drawing conclusions for the total target population to provide results. A quantitative approach is typically used when statistics or numerical results are required. In 2012-2013, 45 percent of the research undertaken used quantitative methodologies.

Qualitative and quantitative research techniques can be combined over the course of a study to meet various research objectives. Studies based on both quantitative and qualitative methodologies accounted for the remaining 26 percent of projects undertaken during the fiscal year.

## Public Opinion Research Management in the Government of Canada

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's [Communications Policy of the Government of Canada](#) sets out a framework for conducting public opinion research to ensure that activities are well coordinated, transparent and provide value for money. The policy is mandatory for departments identified in Schedules I, I.1 and II of the [Financial Administration Act](#), unless excluded by specific acts, regulations or Orders in Council.

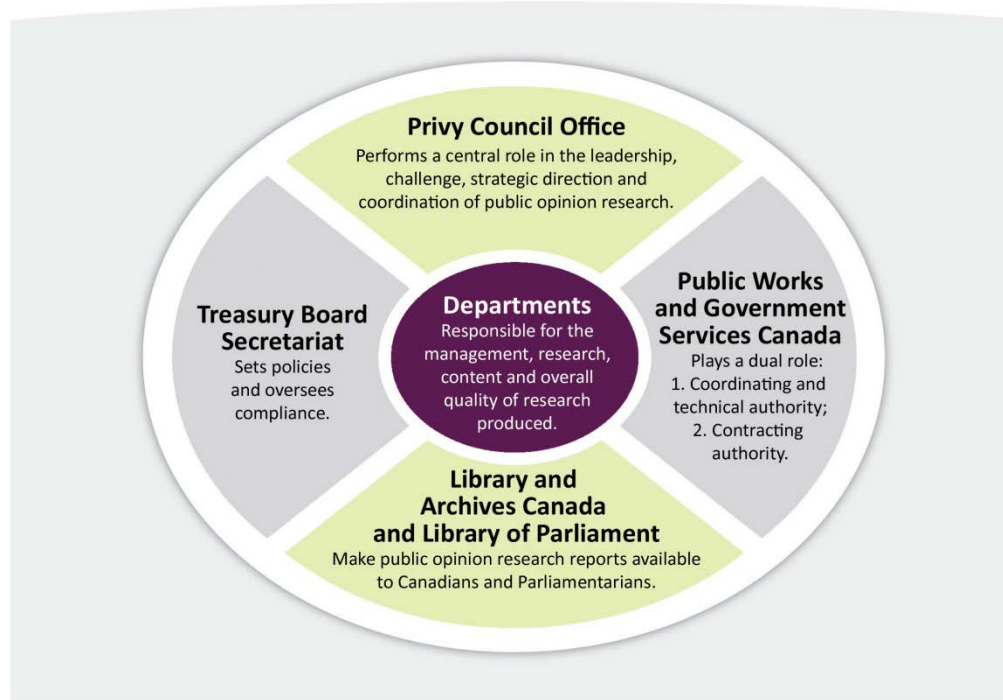
The following institutions are exempt under the provisions covering public opinion research:

- Office of the Auditor General of Canada;
- Office of the Chief Electoral Officer;
- Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada;
- Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages;
- Offices of the Information and Privacy Commissioners of Canada; and
- Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada.


## Organizations with a Responsibility for Public Opinion Research

The [Communications Policy of the Government of Canada](#) assigns the following responsibilities to key bodies in public opinion research. (See [Figure 2](#).)

**Figure 2: Organizations with a Responsibility for Public Opinion Research**







**Departments** are at the centre of the overall process. They are responsible for the management of their public opinion research activities as well as the research content and the overall quality of the research produced. Departments are also responsible for accepting all deliverables and for the payment of suppliers.

The **Privy Council Office** performs a central role in the leadership, challenge, strategic direction and coordination of departmental and horizontal public opinion research activities.

The **Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat** provides advice and support to Treasury Board ministers and its President in the development, management and evaluation of administrative policy. Under the [Communications Policy of the Government of Canada](#), the Secretariat is responsible for developing, evaluating and reviewing government-wide communications policy, which includes public opinion research; advising institutions on policy interpretation and application; and monitoring policy implementation and compliance.

**Library and Archives Canada** (LAC) ensures increased transparency by facilitating access to public opinion research reports. LAC receives copies of final reports from departments within six months of the completion of fieldwork. The [LAC Web site](#) provides access to bilingual executive summaries and final reports from research contracted after August 1, 2006. The **Library of Parliament** makes the reports available to Members of Parliament and the media.

**Public Works and Government Services Canada** (PWGSC) works with other federal organizations to serve Canadians efficiently and cost-effectively. The Department serves as coordinating, technical and contracting authority for public opinion research within the government. PWGSC exercises this authority through two of its directorates, the Public Opinion Research Directorate and the Communication Procurement Directorate, which collaborate to provide seamless services to federal organizations.

- The **Public Opinion Research Directorate** provides a mandatory common service as the technical and coordinating authority of public opinion research activities. The Directorate facilitates studies by guiding client departments through the entire process. The Directorate advises institutions on research methodologies, standards, policy requirements and research instruments (e.g. questionnaires and discussion guides), and assigns project registration numbers. This helps ensure that research objectives are met and that the research undertaken conforms to legislative and policy requirements as well as Government of Canada and accepted industry standards. The Directorate also contributes to government-wide capacity building by delivering information sessions, developing best practices and tools and promoting training opportunities related to the conduct of government public opinion research.
- The **Communication Procurement Directorate** provides a mandatory common service as the government's contracting authority for public opinion research. The Directorate manages the procurement process for all departmental public opinion research requirements in accordance with Government of Canada policies; awards and manages contracts; and, where applicable, chairs and conducts open, fair and transparent bid evaluation processes.

## Appendices

### Appendix I: Trends in Contract Values and Number of Projects

In 2012-2013, 72 contracted public opinion research projects worth \$4.3 million were coordinated by the Public Opinion Research Directorate.

Fiscal Year	Contract Value <sup>7</sup>	Number of Projects <sup>7</sup>
2012-2013	\$4,304,177	72
2011-2012	\$6,513,824	100
2010-2011	\$7,902,871	136
2009-2010	\$8,305,795	148
2008-2009	\$8,103,886	131

<sup>7</sup> The number of projects and contract values represent contractual transactions issued between April 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup> for each of the fiscal years (including amendments to increase, cancel or reduce the value of the contracts).

## Appendix II: Listing of Departments Engaged in Public Opinion Research in 2012-2013

A total of 24 departments were involved in public opinion research during 2012-2013.

Government Organization	Contract Value <sup>8</sup>	Number of Projects <sup>8</sup>
National Defence	\$454,912.50	5
Health Canada <sup>9</sup>	\$448,556.18	8
Department of Finance Canada	\$403,615.43	4
Canada Revenue Agency	\$329,710.99	6
Natural Resources Canada	\$305,705.02	4
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	\$263,248.45	8
Privy Council Office	\$249,794.14	2
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	\$207,784.45	2
Transport Canada	\$177,596.29	1
Veterans Affairs Canada	\$172,142.74	5
Financial Consumer Agency of Canada	\$140,940.67	2
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada	\$138,458.73	3
Environment Canada	\$138,035.15	1
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council	\$120,348.39	1
Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions	\$120,107.71	3
Canadian Food Inspection Agency	\$111,296.36	1
National Research Council Canada	\$104,658.04	4
Canadian Transportation Agency	\$91,030.54	1
Canadian Heritage	\$84,496.16	3
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	\$68,223.75	3
Library and Archives Canada	\$60,907.00	2
Passport Canada <sup>10</sup>	\$60,217.70	1
National Film Board of Canada	\$39,729.95	1
Department of Justice	\$12,660.80	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$4,304,177.14</b>	<b>72</b>

<sup>8</sup> The number of projects and contract values represent contractual transactions issued between April 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013 (including amendments to increase, cancel or reduce the value of the contracts issued during previous fiscal years).

<sup>9</sup> Includes contracts issued on behalf of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

<sup>10</sup> This project was managed by Passport Canada, however the contract was issued under Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada.

## Appendix III: Listing of Contractors Engaged in Public Opinion Research in 2012-2013

A total of 18 contractors were involved in public opinion research during 2012-2013.

Supplier	Contract Value <sup>11</sup>	Number of Projects <sup>11</sup>
Ipsos-Reid Corporation	\$765,394.44	8
Phoenix SPI	\$651,651.29	8
Harris/Decima Inc.	\$594,803.83	9
Léger Marketing	\$396,889.18	5
Ekos Research Associates Inc.	\$316,699.45	8
Walker Consulting Group	\$285,904.51	2
Environics Research Group	\$275,574.79	5
NRG Research Group	\$254,229.09	3
TNS Canadian Facts Inc.	\$228,009.07	7
Corporate Research Associates Inc.	\$145,119.97	3
Phase 5	\$85,806.61	4
Gregg, Kelly, Sullivan & Woolstencroft: The Strategic Counsel	\$85,179.97	2
Vision Critical Communications	\$80,117.00	3
Royal Canadian Legion	\$61,500.00	1
Sage Research Corporation	\$54,537.71	1
Patterson, Langlois Consultants	\$30,438.58	1
Opinion Search Inc.	\$21,294.85	1
Nanos Research Corporation	\$-28,973.20 <sup>12</sup>	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$4,304,177.14</b>	<b>72</b>

<sup>11</sup> The number of projects and contract values represent contractual transactions issued between April 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013 (including amendments to increase, cancel or reduce the value of the contracts issued during previous fiscal years).

<sup>12</sup> In 2012-2013, a contract was amended to reduce the contract value of an existing project issued in a previous fiscal year. The result was a net decrease. No public opinion research project was contracted in 2012-2013 with this supplier.

## Appendix IV: Population Segments Reached through Public Opinion Research in 2012-2013

Public opinion research undertaken by the Government of Canada reaches a wide range of Canadians, including the general public, users of government services, and those in particular segments of the population presented in this table. The table presents 40 specific target groups reached by public opinion research studies conducted in 2012-2013.

Aboriginal people	Investors
Administrators and professionals	Low-income, high-income Canadians
Agricultural producers	Manufacturers
Association representatives	Marketers
Businesses	Men
Canadian Forces recruits	Newcomers
Canadians abroad	Parents and caregivers
Chief Financial Officers	People with disabilities
Clients of Government of Canada programs	People with weakened immune system
Consumers responsible for food shopping/preparation	Pregnant women
Engineers	Seniors
Entrepreneurs	Smokers
Canadians of various ethnic groups	Stakeholders
Families with school age children	Taxpayers and practitioners
First Nations people living on reserve	Teachers and counsellors
High-performance athletes	Tradespersons
Homeowners	Victim service agencies and advocates
Immigrants	Victims, victim family members
Individuals with children under 18 living at home	Women
Inuit	Youth

## Appendix V: Locations of Focus Groups Conducted for Public Opinion Research Projects in 2012-2013

The list below shows the various locations of focus groups conducted for the Government of Canada in 2012-2013 to help better understand Canadians' needs and expectations. The locations represent information submitted at the time of the contractual transactions for studies conducted between March 31, 2012 and April 1, 2013.

Airdrie, Alta.	North Vancouver, B.C.
Brampton, Ont.	Ottawa, Ont.
Calgary, Alta.	Portage la Prairie, Man.
Charlottetown, P.E.I.	Prince Albert, Sask.
Cobourg, Ont.	Prince Rupert, B.C.
Coquitlam, B.C.	Quebec City, Que.
Edmonton, Alta.	Regina, Sask.
Eskasoni, N.S.	Richmond, B.C.
Halifax, N.S.	Saint John, N.B.
High River, Alta.	Saskatoon, Sask.
Hinton, Alta.	St. John's, N.L.
Hollow Water, Man.	Saint-Hyacinthe, Que.
Kitchener, Ont.	Swift Current, Sask.
London, Ont.	Toronto, Ont.
Lower Mainland, B.C.	Trois-Rivières, Que.
Maniwaki, Que.	Vancouver, B.C.
Mississauga, Ont.	Waterloo, Ont.
Moncton, N.B.	Whitehorse, Y.T.
Montreal, Que.	Winnipeg, Man.
Nanaimo, B.C.	Yellowknife, N.W.T.

National online focus groups (participants drawn from all regions of Canada)

## Appendix VI: Standing Offers for Public Opinion Research

The standing offers<sup>13</sup> for public opinion research are made available for use by departments for research projects with a contract value of up to \$200,000 (including HST). These standing offers were established competitively for the period of April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2012 with a possibility of three extension periods of one year each. The standing offers were in effect during the 2012-2013 fiscal year as part of the first extension period.

The standing offers were designed to:

- encourage the participation of all types of public opinion research suppliers including small, medium and large businesses, joint ventures and businesses specializing in target populations (including Aboriginal people and ethnocultural populations) from various geographic locations;
- ensure that the Government of Canada has access to a broad range of subject expertise and research specializations with various target groups in Canada (therefore no limits were placed on the number of firms that could submit a response to the Request for Standing Offer);
- react to a rapidly changing technological environment, allowing for the use of a variety of research methodologies; and
- include custom qualitative research, quantitative research and a blend of the two.

Standing offers are used in the direct selection of suppliers for projects not exceeding \$200,000 (HST included) in contract value. These contracting tools enable departments to obtain public opinion research services in an efficient and effective manner with qualified research firms, at predetermined prices, terms and conditions.

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<sup>13</sup> A standing offer is not a contract. A standing offer is an agreement with an individual supplier to provide goods and services at pre-arranged prices, under set terms and conditions, that is open for acceptance by one or more authorized users on behalf of the Government of Canada during a specified period of time. A separate contract is formed each time a call-up for the provision of goods and/or services is made against a standing offer.

## Firms on the Government of Canada's Standing Offers for Public Opinion Research

STANDING OFFER HOLDERS *	FIELDWORK & DATA TABULATION		ONLINE PRE-TESTING OF ADVERTISE.	TARGET POPULATIONS								
	TELEPHONE	ONLINE		SERIES A: QUALITATIVE			SERIES B: QUANTITATIVE			SERIES C: QUAL./QUANT.		
				GENERAL	ABORIGINAL	ETHNO	GENERAL	ABORIGINAL	ETHNO	GENERAL	ABORIGINAL	ETHNO
Ascentum		•		•			•			•		
Campaign Research	•											
COMPAS Inc.				•		•						
Corbin Partners Inc.				•								
Corporate Research Associates Inc.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•
CROP INC.	•											
DataPath Systems							•					
Ekos Research Associates Inc.	•	•		•	•	•	•	•		•	•	
Environics Research Group	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Gadd Research Inc.			•									
Genesis Public Opinion Research Inc.				•			•			•		
Gregg, Kelly, Sullivan & Woolstencroft: The Strategic Counsel				•		•	•	•	•	•		•
Harris/Decima Inc.	•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	
HRSRG				•								
Innovative Research Group Inc.	•								•			
Insightrix Research Inc.	•	•					•					
IPSOS-REID CORPORATION	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Jolicoeur & Associés	•											
Léger Marketing		•	•	•		•	•		•	•		•
MacPhie & Company Inc.				•								
Nanos Research Corporation	•	•		•			•			•		

\* The company names listed in this appendix are their operating names as they appear in the Government of Canada standing offers.



## Firms on the Government of Canada's Standing Offers for Public Opinion Research (continued)

STANDING OFFER HOLDERS *	FIELDWORK & DATA TABULATION		ONLINE PRE-TESTING OF ADVERTISE.	TARGET POPULATIONS										
	TELEPHONE	ONLINE		SERIES A: QUALITATIVE			SERIES B: QUANTITATIVE			SERIES C: QUAL/QUANT.				
				GENERAL	ABORIGINAL	ETHNO	GENERAL	ABORIGINAL	ETHNO	GENERAL	ABORIGINAL	ETHNO		
NRG Research Group	•			•	•	•								
OpinionSearch Inc.	•	•												
Patterson, Langlois Consultants				•										
Phase 5			•	•			•				•			
Phoenix SPI	•	•		•	•	•	•	•			•	•		
Pollara		•		•			•				•			
Praxicus Public Strategies Inc.				•			•				•			
Probe Research Inc.				•	•									
Quorus Consulting Group Inc.				•			•				•			
Research Strategy Group Inc.				•	•	•	•				•			
Sage Research Corporation				•			•				•			
Saine Marketing Inc.		•					•							
SOM Inc.	•	•					•							
Sylvain Laroche, consultant, Inc.				•			•				•			
Synovate Ltd.			•				•							
The Logit Group Incorporated	•	•												
TNS CANADIAN FACTS INC.	•	•	•	•			•			•	•			•
torontoinsights.com	•	•												
Veraxis Research & Communications Inc.				•			•				•			
Vision Critical Communications		•	•	•			•			•	•			•
Walker Consulting Group				•			•	•			•			

\* The company names listed in this appendix are their operating names as they appear in the Government of Canada standing offers.

## Appendix VII: Public Opinion Research Related Acts, Regulations, Policies and Procedures

### Acts

- [\*Financial Administration Act\*](#): prohibits verbal-only public opinion research reporting.
- [\*Library and Archives of Canada Act\*](#): requires departments to provide written reports to Library and Archives Canada within six months of completion of data collection.

### Regulations

- [\*Public Opinion Research Contract Regulations\*](#): standardizes the form and content of contracted public opinion research reports.

### Policies

- [\*Common Services Policy\*](#): identifies Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) as a mandatory common service organization for the coordination and contracting of public opinion research.
- [\*Communications Policy of the Government of Canada\*](#): outlines mandatory requirements to ensure coherent, cost-effective management of public opinion research throughout the government.
- [\*Contracting Policy\*](#): requires departments to notify PWGSC when a public opinion research project may require a contract.

### Procedures

- [\*Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research\*](#): supports and facilitates implementation of the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada*.
  - [\*Policy Notice: Amendments to the Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research \(June 17, 2009\)\*](#)

## Appendix VIII: Glossary of Public Opinion Research Related Key Research Terms

### A

#### **Audience**

Used to refer to the population of interest or target population for a survey. Also referred to as the population.

### C

#### **Custom survey**

A survey commissioned by a single client, as opposed to shared-cost surveys, such as omnibus surveys.

### D

#### **Data collection**

One of the key elements of the research process, this involves obtaining information from the research population.

#### **Discussion Guide**

Outline of the topics to be discussed during group discussions or interviews. The objective of the guide is to anchor the discussion.

### F

#### **Focus group**

A group of individuals selected according to specific criteria to participate in a discussion about a particular topic introduced by a discussion leader called a moderator. Participants are encouraged to offer their opinions about the topic of interest and to react to comments from others in the group. For in-person focus groups, 10 to 12 participants are usually recruited to ensure that 8 to 10 take part in the actual group. *See also Online focus group.*

### I

#### **Interview**

Questions asked to one person at a time, to get in-depth information with often hard-to-reach experts or to obtain information on more sensitive topics. Interviews can be conducted over the telephone or in-person depending on the sensitivity of the subject.

### M

#### **Moderator**

Qualitative researcher who leads focus group discussions according to the client's needs and objectives. The moderator's responsibility is to ensure that the participants give rich responses by adapting the discussion guide to yield useful information.

## O

### **Omnibus survey**

Refers to a survey where questions on a variety of subjects are included together, typically paid for and created by multiple research clients. Clients can include a question or several questions on an omnibus survey, reducing the cost for each client individually.

### **Online focus group**

Refers to a group of participants who access a virtual facility through a user name and password. The participants reply to questions posted by the moderator and interact with other respondents, either in real-time or over the course of several days.

## P

### **Participant**

Refers to individuals from whom information is sought in qualitative research. Typically, it is the term used to designate a member of a focus group.

### **Population**

The target audience or group of interest to be investigated for the study (e.g., all Canadians, 18 years and older; men between the ages of 18 and 30 years who listen to the radio).

### **Post evaluation**

Refers to the evaluation of the effectiveness of an advertisement or other communication product after it has been launched to its intended audience.

### **Pretest**

In quantitative research, a pretest is a trial run to assess how well a questionnaire flows, is understood by respondents, and whether it elicits the required information. It may also be used to assess how long the questionnaire takes to administer, as well as the proportion of the target population that meets the survey eligibility requirements.

In qualitative research, a pretest usually refers to the evaluation of advertisements or other communication products still in development or before they are released to the public.

### **Public opinion research**

Public opinion research in the Government of Canada is the planned gathering, by or for a government institution, of opinions, attitudes, perceptions, judgments, feelings, ideas and reactions or views intended to be used for any government purpose, whether that information is collected from persons (including employees of government institutions), representatives of businesses, institutions or other entities, through quantitative or qualitative methods irrespective of size or cost.

## Q

### **Qualitative research**

This refers to information obtained about some members of a target population through unstructured or semi-structured procedures, such as discussions, observations or interviews. No projections of results to the target population can be made from this type of research.



## **Quantitative research**

This refers to information obtained about some or all members of a target population through structured procedures, such as a census or a survey, allowing conclusions to be made for the total target population.

### **R**

## **Respondent**

Refers to individuals from whom information is sought in quantitative research (i.e., the person chosen for the survey interview).

### **S**

## **Segment**

In public opinion research, segments refer to subgroups of the target population that share some characteristic relevant to the research purpose. Subgroups can be organized by age, income, education, occupation, lifestyle, media habits, product use, etc.



## For More Information

This report provides an overview of public opinion research activities in the Government of Canada during the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact:

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