

Travaux publics et
Services gouvernementaux
Canada

Canada



Serving
GOVERNMENT,
Serving
CANADIANS.

Public Opinion Research in the Government of Canada

Annual Report 2014-2015

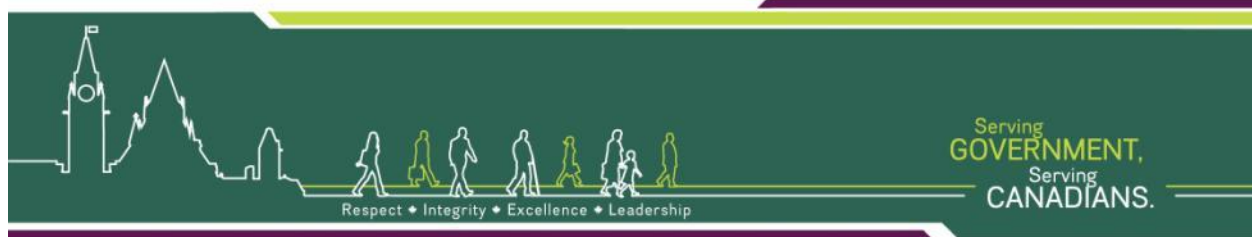




Public Works and
Government Services
Canada

Travaux publics et
Services gouvernementaux
Canada

Canada



Public Opinion Research in the Government of Canada

Annual Report 2014-2015

Published by Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC)
Fall 2015

This publication may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes only. Prior written permission must be obtained from PWGSC for all other use. For more information, please contact the Public Opinion Research Directorate at 613-995-9837.

The *Public Opinion Research in the Government of Canada – Annual Report 2014-2015* is available online at:
<http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/rop-por/rapports-reports/2014-2015/index-eng.html>.

Catalogue Number: P100-1E-PDF
ISSN: 1715-9067

Introduction

Departments and agencies of the Government of Canada conduct public opinion research studies to gather the views of their stakeholders as a means of understanding and effectively serving their diverse needs and expectations. Knowledge gained from public opinion research allows the Government of Canada to develop and tailor its programs and services to better serve and communicate with Canadians.

Research studies conducted by departments and agencies in 2014-2015 provided valuable information needed to support a diverse range of activities in areas such as public health and safety, economic development, employment, training, electronic service delivery, client satisfaction, immigration and programs for veterans. Beyond the general public, key audiences that participated in this research included seniors, youth, parents, small and medium business owners, Aboriginal persons, newcomers, and veterans.

Under the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada*¹, Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) is responsible for activities such as coordinating and providing methodological advice on public opinion research studies, developing and maintaining the [Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research](#), promoting best practices in public opinion research and publishing an annual report on government public opinion research activities. Our work supports departments and agencies to help ensure that public opinion research activities are well coordinated, transparent and managed in a way that provides value for money.

The *Public Opinion Research in the Government of Canada, Annual Report 2014-2015*, is PWGSC's 14th annual report on public opinion research. The publication provides an overview of government-wide² contracted public opinion research activities coordinated on behalf of federal departments and agencies for the period from April 1, 2014 through March 31, 2015. It includes an overview of the role of public opinion research in the Government of Canada and how it is used. It also explains how public opinion research is managed by the Government of Canada and includes appendices with business volumes and other information on public opinion research activities.

¹ *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada*, <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12316>.

² 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

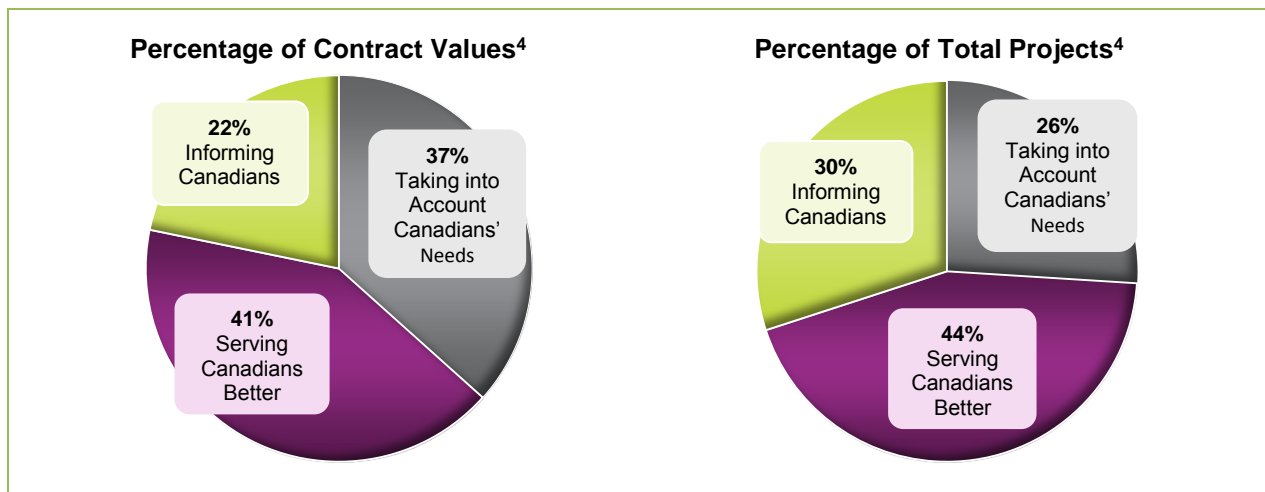
Public opinion research provides the government with a better understanding of Canadians' opinions and attitudes in order to respond to their needs. The government uses this information for three broad purposes: to identify areas to improve the way the government serves Canadians, to take Canadians' needs into account in all aspects of its activities, and to inform Canadians about its various policies, programs and services.

In 2014-2015, a total of 54 contracted public opinion research projects worth \$4.1 million were coordinated through Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC)'s Public Opinion Research Directorate. Of these projects, 24 were conducted with the objectives of ensuring easy access to information and services, helping to understand Canadians' views and measure their satisfaction in order to *better serve Canadians*; 14 projects were conducted with the objectives of strengthening policies and developing communication strategies and products that *take into account Canadians' needs*; and the remaining 16 projects supported the Government of Canada in its efforts to effectively *inform Canadians* about government programs, policies and services.

Table 1: Areas of Application for Contracted Public Opinion Research³

	Contract Value ³	Number of Projects ³
Serving Canadians Better	\$1,716,909	24
Taking into Account Canadians' Needs	\$1,527,174	14
Informing Canadians	\$892,321	16
Total:	\$4,136,404	54

Figure 1: Areas of Application for Contracted Public Opinion Research⁴



³ The number of projects and contract values (rounded to the nearest dollar) represent contractual transactions issued between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015 (including amendments to increase, cancel or reduce the value of the contracts, which may have been issued in previous fiscal years).

⁴ The figures have been rounded to the nearest percentage point.

Serving Canadians Better

Public opinion research is used to understand how people view government policies, programs and services. It helps the government assess the level of engagement and satisfaction of Canadians with respect to the services offered and the initiatives put in place by their government. It also allows the government to find ways to improve these services. This can be done by means of:


- **Market research** involves collecting information on attitudes, opinions and product attributes that will help in the design and delivery of programs and services.
- **Client satisfaction research** measures the degree to which a product or service meets client expectations. The results of client satisfaction studies help the government understand Canadians' views about and experiences with government services. This information helps the government better understand the drivers of client satisfaction and areas requiring improvement. It is also used to support a more productive work environment.
- **Program evaluation** assesses the effectiveness of programs and services and the factors related to their usefulness to Canadians.
- **Website usability testing** 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 websites meet the needs of the intended user.

Studies aimed at serving Canadians better accounted for 41 percent of the total contract value of public opinion research for the 2014-2015 fiscal year (see [Figure 1](#) on the Areas of Application for Contracted Public Opinion Research).

Taking into Account Canadians' Needs

With the research findings from public opinion research, the Government of Canada can better identify the needs of Canadians, work at improving existing policies and programs and put forward new initiatives. Public opinion research helps the government to gain a better understanding of the public's attitudes and perspectives. It also contributes to the development and delivery of government programs and information products and helps identify the best approaches and communication tools to use to reach Canadians. This is achieved with:

- **Policy development and review** gauges attitudes and opinions to help tailor public policies that reflect the needs and expectations of Canadians, or specific stakeholder groups affected by those policies.
- **Communications plan development** examines 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.
- **Communication product testing** includes the evaluation of concepts, messages, content and creative design with key target audiences.



In 2014-2015, studies conducted *to take into account Canadians' needs* accounted for 37 percent of the total contract value of public opinion research (see [Figure 1](#) on the Areas of Application for Contracted Public Opinion Research).

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:

- **Advertising pretesting** tests advertising materials and concepts associated with major campaigns. This helps to ensure that the materials and texts are clear and well understood before they are used in advertisements. Pretesting is mandatory for campaigns with a media buy of \$1 million or more⁵.
- **Advertising post evaluation** measures 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 buy of \$1 million or more⁶. The information from these studies is used to improve the planning and development of current and future advertising campaigns.

Studies intended to inform Canadians accounted for 22 percent of the total contract value of public opinion research for the 2014-2015 fiscal year (see [Figure 1](#) on the Areas of Application for Contracted Public Opinion Research).

Research Approaches

Public opinion research relies on various data collection techniques to obtain information from a wide variety of audiences. The 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. Qualitative methodologies do not yield numeric data and the findings cannot be projected to the general population. During the 2014-2015 fiscal year, 17 projects undertaken used qualitative methodologies, accounting for an amount of \$1,204,504, or 29 percent of the total contract value for

⁵ You may refer to sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2 of the [Procedures for the Management of Advertising](#) for more information.

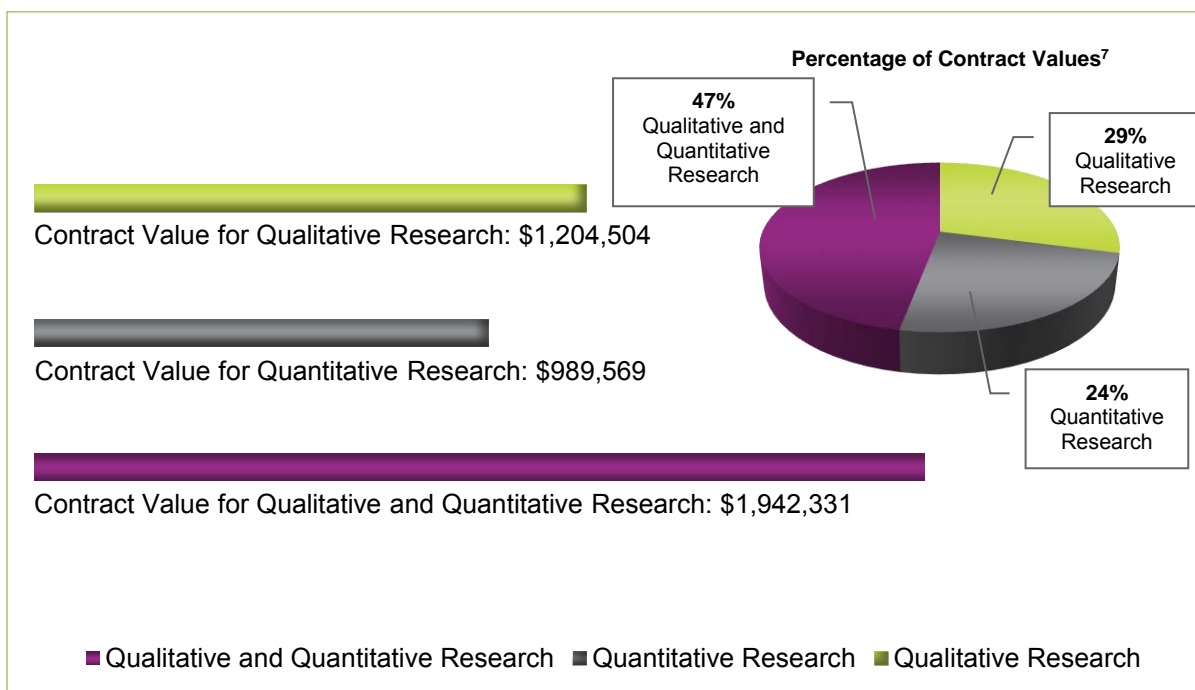
⁶ You may refer to section 6.5.1 of the [Procedures for the Management of Advertising](#) for more information.

public opinion research studies (see [Figure 2](#) on Research Methodologies Used for Contracted Public Opinion Research).

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 2014-2015, 19 of the projects undertaken used quantitative methodologies, representing an amount of \$989,569 or 24 percent of the total contract value (see [Figure 2](#) on Research Methodologies Used for Contracted Public Opinion Research).

Qualitative and quantitative research methods 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 18 projects, an amount of \$1,942,331 or 47 percent of the total contract value of the projects undertaken during the 2014-2015 fiscal year (see [Figure 2](#) on Research Methodologies Used for Contracted Public Opinion Research).

Figure 2: Research Methodologies Used for Contracted Public Opinion Research⁷



⁷ The contract values (rounded to the nearest dollar) represent contractual transactions issued between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015 (including amendments to increase, cancel or reduce the value of the contracts, which may have been issued in previous fiscal years). The figure has been rounded to the nearest percentage point.

Other Key Activities

In 2014-2015, PWGSC released for the first time [Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research – Qualitative Research](#). Qualitative research involves the use of data collection methods such as *focus groups and in-depth interviews* to explore and gain insights into people's opinions, attitudes and behaviours on a particular topic in greater depth than is possible through a survey. These new standards will complement existing standards for telephone and online surveys to help ensure uniform high quality in public opinion research studies conducted for the Government of Canada. The standards can be found on the PWGSC website at:

<http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/rop-por/pratiques-practices-eng.html>.

Under the Treasury Board [Procedures for the Management of Public Opinion Research](#), PWGSC is responsible for developing government-wide contracting tools to facilitate the purchase of public opinion research services. In 2014-2015, PWGSC began work to renew its standing offers for these services. As part of the process, PWGSC consulted with departments and agencies as well as the research industry to ensure that the resulting standing offers were reflective of anticipated services, expertise and newer available technologies. Following these consultations, PWGSC launched a competitive process on [Buyandsell.gc.ca](#). The process was designed to encourage the participation of businesses of all sizes, whether small, medium or large, many of which offer specialized services in terms of target population, geographic scope, subject matter expertise and methodology. Work will continue in 2015-2016 to complete the technical and financial evaluation of the offers submitted. The resulting standing offers will be in place until March 31, 2018, with options to renew the standing offers for three (3) additional one (1) year option periods.

Public Opinion Research Management in the Government of Canada

The [Communications Policy of the Government of Canada](#) sets out mandatory requirements for conducting public opinion research to ensure that activities are well coordinated, transparent and provide value for money. The policy applies to departments listed 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;
- Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada; and
- Offices of the Information and Privacy Commissioners of Canada.

Organizations with a Responsibility for Public Opinion Research

The [Communications Policy of the Government of Canada](#) assigns the following responsibilities to these key bodies in the public opinion research process (see [Figure 3](#) on 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.

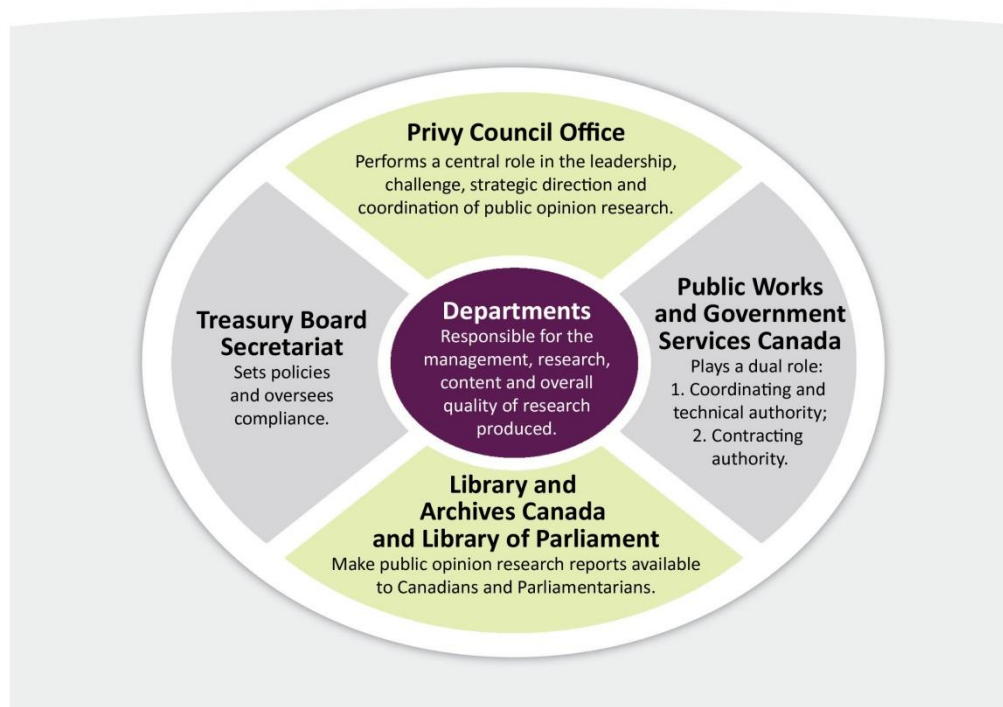
The **Privy Council Office** performs a central role in the leadership, challenge, strategic direction and coordination of departmental and horizontal public opinion research activities.

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.

By providing access to public opinion research reports, **Library and Archives Canada** (LAC) promotes transparency. LAC receives electronic copies of final reports from departments within six months of the completion of fieldwork. The [LAC's website](#) provides access to bilingual executive


summaries and final reports from research contracted after August 1, 2006. LAC also provides electronic copies of these reports to the **Library of Parliament**, which makes the reports available to Members of Parliament and the media.

Figure 3: Organizations with a Responsibility for Public Opinion Research



Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) works with other federal organizations to serve Canadians efficiently and cost-effectively. The Department serves as the Government of Canada's coordinating, technical and contracting authority for public opinion research. PWGSC exercises this authority through two of its directorates, the Public Opinion Research Directorate and the Communications 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 for 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 **Communications 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 2014-2015, 54 contracted public opinion research projects worth \$4.1 million were coordinated by the Public Opinion Research Directorate.

Fiscal Year	Contract Value ⁸	Number of Projects ⁸
2014-2015	\$4,136,404	54
2013-2014	\$4,932,349	81
2012-2013	\$4,304,177	72
2011-2012	\$6,513,824	100
2010-2011	\$7,902,871	136

Appendix II: Procurement Methods for Public Opinion Research in 2014-2015

The Government of Canada uses various procurement methods to contract public opinion research. Standing offers were established competitively for the three main approaches to custom research (qualitative, quantitative and a combination of the two). [Appendix V](#) includes a complete list of contractors on the standing offers that were in effect during the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

Procurement Methods	Contract Value ⁹	% Contract Value ⁹	Number of Projects ⁹	% Number of Projects ⁹
Standing Offers	\$3,916,433	94.68%	52	96.30%
Public Tenders (BuyandSell.gc.ca)	\$199,999	4.84%	1	1.85%
Other Methods	\$19,973	0.48%	1	1.85%
Total:	\$4,136,404	100%	54	100%

⁸ The number of projects and contract values (rounded to the nearest dollar) represent contractual transactions issued between April 1st and March 31st for each of the fiscal years (including amendments to increase, cancel or reduce the value of the contracts, which may have been issued in previous fiscal years).

⁹ The number of projects and contract values (rounded to the nearest dollar) represent contractual transactions issued between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015 (including amendments to increase, cancel or reduce the value of the contracts, which may have been issued in previous fiscal years).

Appendix III: Listing of Departments Engaged in Public Opinion Research in 2014-2015

A total of 19 departments were involved in public opinion research during 2014-2015.

Government Organization	Contract Value ¹⁰	Number of Projects ¹⁰
Canada Revenue Agency	\$363,963.03	4
Canadian Heritage	\$161,406.85	3
Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission	\$56,287.65	2
Canadian Transportation Agency	\$168,078.47	1
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	\$375,794.76	3
Employment and Social Development Canada ¹¹	\$404,805.07	3
Finance Canada	\$511,923.06	5
Financial Consumer Agency of Canada	\$215,352.23	2
Health Canada	\$287,857.59	5
Library and Archives Canada	\$49,388.59	2
National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces	\$57,700.88	3
National Research Council Canada	\$108,165.47	2
Natural Resources Canada	\$327,583.50	3
Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions	\$134,847.47	4
Parks Canada	\$99,096.41	1
Privy Council Office	\$553,594.12	4
Public Safety Canada	\$37,350.20	1
Transportation Safety Board of Canada	\$37,503.93	1
Veterans Affairs Canada	\$185,704.83	5
Total:	\$ 4,136,404.11	54

¹⁰ The number of projects and contract values (rounded to the nearest dollar) represent contractual transactions issued between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015 (including amendments to increase, cancel or reduce the value of the contracts, which may have been issued in previous fiscal years).

¹¹ Formerly known as Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

Appendix IV: Listing of Contractors Engaged in Public Opinion Research in 2014-2015

A total of 17 contractors were involved in public opinion research during 2014-2015.

Supplier	Contract Value ¹²	Number of Projects ¹²
Angus Reid Public Opinion, a division of Vision Critical	\$24,860.00	1
Corporate Research Associates Inc.	\$171,708.63	2
Ekos Research Associates Inc.	\$217,930.63	2
Elemental Data Collection Inc.	\$19,972.75	1
Environics Research Group	\$573,486.59	6
Gregg, Kelly, Sullivan & Woolstencroft: The Strategic Counsel	\$99,524.19	2
Harris/Decima Inc.	\$1,105,267.25	17
Ipsos-Reid Corporation	\$153,208.77	4
Léger Marketing	\$461,108.56	4
NRG Research Group	\$643,826.48	5
Opinion Search Inc.	\$37,350.20	1
Phase 5	\$59,990.78	1
Phoenix SPI	\$187,471.98	4
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.	\$199,998.70	1
Research Strategy Group Inc.	\$70,714.61	1
Sage Research Corporation	\$62,093.43	1
TNS Canada Ltd	\$47,890.56	1
Total:	\$4,136,404.11	54

¹² The number of projects and contract values (rounded to the nearest dollar) represent contractual transactions issued between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015 (including amendments to increase, cancel or reduce the value of the contracts, which may have been issued in previous fiscal years).

Appendix V: Standing Offers for Public Opinion Research

The standing offers¹³ 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 2014-2015 fiscal year as part of the third 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.

¹³ 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.

Appendix V: Standing Offers for Public Opinion Research (continued)

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

Standing Offer Holders*	Fieldwork and Data Tabulation		Online Pre-testing of Advertisement	Target Populations											
				Series A: Qualitative			Series B: Quantitative			Series C: Qual./Quant.					
	Telephone	Online		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 Council					•		•		•	•	•		•		•
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.

Appendix V: Standing Offers for Public Opinion Research (continued)

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

Standing Offer Holders*	Fieldwork and Data Tabulation		Online Pre-testing of Advertisement	Target Populations								
				Series A: Qualitative			Series B: Quantitative			Series C: Qual./Quant.		
	Telephone	Online		General	Aboriginal	Ethno	General	Aboriginal	Ethno	General	Aboriginal	Ethno
NRG Research Group	•			•	•	•						
Opinion Search Inc.	•	•										
Patterson, Langlois Consulting				•								
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.				•			•			•		
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 VI: 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 (LAC) 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 the Management of Public Opinion Research](#): supports and facilitates implementation of the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada.

Appendix VII: 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

In-Depth 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 and geographic scope.

Interview

A conversation between two or more people where questions are asked by the interviewer to elicit information from one or more persons.

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 transmitted 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), 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 2014-2015 fiscal year.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact:

Public Opinion Research Directorate

Integrated Services Branch
Public Works and Government Services Canada
350 Albert Street, 5th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0S5

E-mail:

DGSIOpinionPublique.ISBPublicOpinion@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca

Online version:

<http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/rop-por/rapports-reports/2014-2015/index-eng.html>