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# **BUDGET DAY 2021 - ONLINE FOCUS GROUPS**

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*Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.*

This public opinion research report presents the results of an online survey conducted by Léger Marketing Inc. on behalf of the Government of Canada. The qualitative portion of the research study was conducted with 32 Canadians on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Jour du budget 2021 : groupes de discussion en ligne.

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## Executive Summary

Leger is pleased to present the Department of Finance Canada with this report on findings from qualitative online focus groups designed to learn about Canadians opinions and perceptions on the April 19, 2021, federal budget speech.

This report was prepared by Léger who was contracted by the Department of Finance Canada (contract number 60074-191919/001/CY awarded January 29, 2020).

### 1.1 Limitation of Results

The qualitative portion of the research provides insight into the opinions of a population, rather than providing a measure in percent of the opinions held, as would be measured in a quantitative study. The results of this type of research should be viewed as directional only. No inference to the general population can be done with the results of this research.

### 1.2 Methodology—Qualitative Research

#### *Online Focus Groups and Moment to Moment Technology*

Leger recruited participants by telephone, using a thorough screening process, and those who qualified were invited to attend a 2-hour online focus group. Leger recruited 40 participants to achieve 10 participants per focus group. Three groups were conducted in English and the other one in French. This research included moment-to-moment technology built into the online focus group environment.

Participants answered introductory questions while the Budget was being delivered (to ensure participants did not watch the Budget in advance of the moment-to-moment evaluation) before providing real-time feedback using the moment-to-moment technology. Moment-to-moment technology allowed participants to evaluate the budget speech in real time. Participants provided their emotional response on a scale while watching the video recording of the speech. The measurement scale used ranked from very negative to very positive using a 0 to 100 scale.

Target	Number of participants
Parents 0-6 in English	9
Senior Canadians 65+	8
People who benefited from CERB	7
General population in the province of Quebec	8
TOTAL	32

## 1.3 Summary of Findings

The general opinion of the budget speech presented by Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Canada, was generally positive in all four focus groups. In the words of many participants, it would be difficult to be negative about this budget that included elements to "satisfy everyone in Canada", was in continuity with the efforts to limit the negative impacts of the pandemic on Canadians, as well as a "recovery-oriented budget". Some did express some reservations calling it an "electoral budget". However, the general reaction remained fairly positive, matching their "prudent optimism" about Canada moving forward (expressed before the budget speech itself).

At no point during the dial test did participants' ratings fall below 45, indicating that the worst-case scenario was a "lukewarm" reception. Beyond this initial positive impression of the budget assessment, it is rather skepticism about the implementation of certain measures and doubts about the government's ability to deliver on its promises that emerged in the discussions following the dial test. Of the four groups, the seniors' group was the most cynical or skeptical about the budget promises and how these expenditures will be paid for.

The size of the deficit (overall or relative to GDP) did not generate a lot of discussion and the dial test trendline remained positive and largely stable during that portion of the speech. This was tied to comments on feeling that this level of spending was necessary in the circumstances to keep the economy afloat, while some said it was hard for them to understand the reality of such figures.

The following are key findings from each specific audience.

### Group 1 – Parents

#### **The budget items that received highest ratings from the parent focus group were:**

- ✓ Early childhood education/ Childcare. However, there were questions around how this plan will create more childcare spaces and providers. There were also questions on how a \$10 a day system would work.
- ✓ Rural broadband fund.
- ✓ Expansion of Canada's workers benefits and an increase in the minimum wage. Most reacted positively to this and noted the importance of having an increased wage for many frontline workers.
- ✓ 500,000 work experience opportunities and 1 million jobs to be created. This resonated strongly with parents who had children who were just finishing university or just starting secondary education.
- ✓ OAS was also mentioned as a positive element to the speech
- ✓ Interest free student loans.
- ✓ Positive reactions also spiked when assistance to family businesses was mentioned, the creation of Canadian vaccines, enforcing quarantine rules, and focusing on middle class Canadians.
- ✓ Participants reacted more positively to elements that were short term, that would happen soon and that were easy to envision (childcare, access to vaccines, increased minimum

wage). They had fewer positive reactions to element that were very long term and difficult to envision (green growth, investment in private corporations, digital training for the young workforce).

**The budget items that appeared to be less supported by the parents were:**

- ✓ Participants felt the luxury tax was not inclusive enough (or bold enough) and should include more than just boats and cars.
- ✓ Concerned that this was an election budget and that it was so long term, it was hard to really understand the impact.
- ✓ The line dipped into the more negative when the speech mentioned investments in private corporations, taxation, and green growth/reduction of emissions/ net zero accelerators. When asked specifically about this, respondents were unsure what these elements included so they were more inclined to rate them negatively.

**Group 2 – Senior Canadians**

**The budget items that received highest ratings from senior participants were:**

- ✓ Pandemic related supports—extending personal supports to Canadians through EI (i.e. sickness benefits) and supporting small businesses by extending wage and rent subsidies
- ✓ Support for Long Term Care facilities. However, some questioned whether \$3 billion was enough and how does the government address the mix of private and public providers
- ✓ Luxury tax on high priced cars, aircrafts and boats

**The budget items that appeared to be less supported by senior participants were:**

- ✓ Any references regarding the “sacrifices youth and young adults made as a result of the pandemic”. You could detect a generation gap when it comes to COVID impacts
- ✓ References to Net Zero emission goals. When probed two sources of discontent: 1) The target date of 2050 too far out in the future; 2) Net Zero was interpreted as a ban on oil and this was not supported by some in the group. A couple of Alberta residents voiced concerns about this and that oil and energy in general was not mentioned in the speech at all.
- ✓ The section of the speech where Minister Freeland challenged those who would criticize spending at this time, which characterized those would do so as being ‘uncaring about some who lost their job’ or ‘uncaring about struggling small business’. This group is somewhat uneasy about the level of spending and how it gets reconciled in the future. There was a feeling it was legitimate to raise questions of spending.
- ✓ The OAS changes. Participants liked the fact payments are increasing to those age 75 and older, but they were not pleased there is nothing for those age 65 to 74. This group felt it should be from 65+. The change in spousal survivor benefits was not clearly understood in the speech, but when raised, it was noted as a good thing.

**Group 3 – Canadians who Received the CERB**

**The budget items that received highest ratings from participants who Received the CERB were:**

- ✓ This group was positive about the Canada Recovery Benefits extension and most commented that this was the piece of the budget that was most relevant to them.
- ✓ All the aspects relating to younger Canadians (child care, students) were positive with several mentioning that they have children in the house that will benefit (which, in turn, will take the pressure off of them).
- ✓ Given that the plan with the budget was to restart the economy, the overall feeling about it was positive.

**The budget items that appeared to be less supported by participants who Received the CERB were:**

- ✓ This group was generally skeptical about the ability of the reallocation of housing (office towers converted to residential) to be repurposed into affordable housing. One mentioned that this had been done in Alberta but, the result was cost-prohibitive to most.
- ✓ There were questions about frontline workers and what was being done to help them.
- ✓ There was also skepticism about whether or not the changes mentioned would affect the entire country as some believe the smaller provinces and territories get left out of the mix. As such, they suggested that the budget look at Canada as a whole and not to forget the Territories.
- ✓ While nearly all thought the budget spoke to them as Canadians, there was a lack of understanding of the foreign buyer's tax.

**Group 4 – French Group with the General Population of Quebec**

**The budget items that received highest ratings from the Quebec participants were:**

- ✓ Measures to support low-income workers who took risks being on the front lines of the pandemic (i.e. investment of \$8.9 billion in support for those workers and the increase in the federal minimum wage to \$15)
- ✓ Measures to help students and young Canadians (i.e. waiving interest on student loans, investment of \$5.7 billion in support for Canadian youth)
- ✓ Fund for improving high-speed communications in rural and remote areas of Canada
- ✓ Investment in bio-manufacturing to facilitate the manufacture of vaccines in Canada
- ✓ Investment in technology and leading sectors (i.e. artificial intelligence, geomatics, quantum, etc.)
- ✓ Luxury tax on high-priced cars, planes and boats
- ✓ Tax on vacant properties owned by foreigners

**The budget items that appeared to be less supported by the Quebec participants were:**

- ✓ Quebecers scored high on environmental measures, however, there was a sharp decline when the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 was mentioned (too far in time for some). The same was observed when the Minister mentioned the seven-year target for the implementation of the net zero accelerator. Some participants would have hoped for more clean energy measures.
- ✓ Measures concerning children and access to quality early childhood learning services were well received by Quebecers, but \$10 daycare had less of an impact on them as it is



already established in the province. The notion of it and how Quebec would be compensated was not mentioned by participants.

### **Missing items or questions participants expressed about the budget speech**

- ✓ In terms of questions or what was missing in this budget, as noted above, this budget was perceived as covering a lot of ground. As one participant said: “It covered all the pain points that we have talked about during the pandemic.” Two areas that were noted without prompting as missing:
- ✓ No reference to a national pharmacare program in the speech. Several seniors saw this as an oversight on a policy that was important in the past.
- ✓ No reference to addressing homelessness. Toronto and Vancouver residents noted this. A few people said poverty was referenced but not homelessness specifically
- ✓ A couple of people referenced the \$15 an hour minimum wage rate as not something that will help low income in the long run. A few individuals said as the minimum wage goes up so will the prices charged by those employing people at this new minimum wage. Not a really negative thing on the dial – neutral.
- ✓ For example, some participants pointed out that there was no mention of healthcare in the speech.
- ✓ In addition, whether on a positive or negative note, others noted the absence of pipelines or the oil industry in the speech.

## **1.4 Notes on The Interpretation of The Findings**

The opinions and observations expressed in this document do not reflect those of the Department of Finance of Canada. This report was compiled by Leger based on research conducted specifically for this project.

Given the nature of the qualitative research undertaken, some of the findings related here will take the form of figures, numerical ratings and some comparisons will be made between different groups present in the qualitative exercise. Participants had to evaluate the budget speech in real time using a dial with numerical figures and were asked to privately answer some polling questions appearing on their computer screens. However, the reader is advised to exercise caution when reading the analysis which follows as the process remains qualitative in nature and therefore does not allow for statistical inference to be made to a larger population. The “results” presented are only directional in nature and are used to be reflective on what went on during the qualitative exercise.

## 1.5 Declaration of Political Neutrality and Contact Information

I hereby certify, as chief agent of Leger, that the deliverables are in full compliance with the neutrality requirements of the [Policy on Communications and Federal Identity](#) and the [Directive on the Management of Communications—Appendix C](#) (Appendix C: Mandatory Procedures for Public Opinion Research).

Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, party positions, or the assessment of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Christian Bourque".

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## 2.0 Detailed Results – Qualitative Research

For the conduct of the dial test, participants were asked to react in real time to the measures and topics addressed in the budget speech. Moment-to-moment technology allowed participants to provide their emotional response on a scale of 0 (very negative) to 100 (very positive), while watching the video recording of the speech.

Budget items that received the highest ratings across all groups include the intention to keep fighting COVID-19, old age security, rebuilding the national bio-manufacturing capacity, job opportunities (especially for young Canadians) and support announced to help the younger generation, the extension of support measures for workers and businesses during the pandemic, building, repairing and supporting housing, public transit and infrastructure and the luxury tax.

Items that received the lowest ratings across all groups include the mention of negative impacts that COVID-19 has had on the Canadian economy, loss of employment for many Canadian since the beginning of the pandemic and the portion of the speech in which the Minister talks about the feminist struggle to access affordable childcare.

When looking at the dial test results globally speaking, participants between the ages of 18 to 34 have the highest overall rating (73.3) meaning the budget was well received by these participants from all groups. The second highest overall rating is among women (72.2) and the third one is among parents who live in a household where there are kids between the ages of 0 and 6 (69).

These results show that the general opinion of the budget presented by Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Canada, was generally positive in all four focus groups. In the words of many participants, it would be difficult to be negative about this budget that included elements to "satisfy everyone in Canada", was in continuity with the efforts to limit the negative impacts of the pandemic on Canadians, as well as a "recovery-oriented budget".

The following sections of the report highlight the key findings from each of the four audiences of the focus groups.

### 2.1 Parents

*For this group, budget items that scored the highest were the access to early and affordable childcare, measures announced to support workers and businesses impacted during the pandemic and measures announced to support young Canadians. Budget items that scored the lowest were the tax on luxury items and the investments in technologies and leading sectors.*

### 2.1.1 Dial test results

Of the four groups, parents had the highest overall rating (68.8) meaning that the budget was well received by them and that, generally, no measures were evaluated too negatively.

Budget items that received the highest rating from the parent group were measures on access to affordable childcare, measures to support workers and businesses impacted by the pandemic, job opportunities (specially for young Canadians) and support announced to help the younger generation.

Measures on easy access to early learning systems and affordable day care were well received by parents present in the group when compared to all participants (82.2 vs 67.4). Women were particularly receptive to the announcements in this part of the speech, but also to mentions of feminism and the importance of allowing women to return to the workforce. Scores given by the mothers rose to 95.5, which was significantly higher than fathers (75.5). Younger parents in the group between 18 and 34 years of age had a more positive reaction to the \$10 daycare objective when compared to parents between 35 and 54 years of age (77.3 vs 69.6).

The measures announced for small and medium-sized businesses prompted a positive reaction from parents. The mentions of wage subsidy, rent subsidy, lockdown supports and investment in technologies to support those businesses were all well received by parents when compared to all participants (77.9 vs 69.8). This part of the speech particularly touched younger parents and women, whose scores picked respectively to 92.3 and 89.5.

The announcement of 500,000 new training and work opportunities by the end of the year also received a higher rating from parents in the group when compared to all participants (85.2 vs 75.7). Similarly, this group gave higher scores to announcements about making colleges and universities more affordable, waiving interest on student loans, and having the government promise investments that will directly help young people. Lastly, parents reacted more strongly compared to other participants when the Minister spoke of the sacrifices made by the younger generation and that: *"they need support to launch their adult lives"* (75.9 vs 64.2).

Other measures such as the investment for high-speed internet in rural regions as well as the tax on vacant properties owned by foreigners received a high rating from the parents in the group. Compared to all participants, parents had a more positive reaction to the broadband fund (81 vs 74.4). When it came to the tax on properties, mothers scored this new measure particularly high (98.8) and applauded the fact that vacant properties should be housing for Canadian families.

The budget items that appeared to have slightly lower levels of support by parents were the luxury tax and mentions of investments in technology, leading sectors, or green initiatives. When compared to all participants, parents gave a lower score to the tax on luxury items (71 vs 78), although fathers seemed to appreciate this measure (81.2 for fathers vs 61 for all parents present).

When the Minister said that the government was going to invest in *Canada's green transition and the green jobs that go with it* and when she said that *in 2021 job growth means green growth*,

scores for parents lowered both times, respectively to 68.9 (compared to 74 for all participants) and to 54.4 (compared to 60.2 for all participants). The relationship between green initiatives and employment opportunities did not seem to be clear to parents. The investments in genomics and quantum sciences also received a lower score among parents (56.4).

Parents also had strong reactions when the Minister mentioned the actions to be taken to overcome Covid-19 (i.e. purchase of vaccines, saving jobs, support youth and women, etc.). Parents gave a higher score to this portion of the speech when compared to all participants (89.2 vs 79.8). They also had a stronger reaction when the Minister spoke about how the government had failed to protect seniors during the pandemic (85 for parents vs 73 for all participants).

### **2.1.2 Poll results and discussion**

Prior to the speech, most participants in the parent group said that Canada was headed in the right direction. Some participants brought up the vaccination and the assistance programs put in place by the government since the beginning of the pandemic as an explanation for their answer. Even though some said that we are in uncertain times, a majority are optimistic. One participant clearly expressed that: *“obviously it hasn't been perfect, but I do think the country is getting vaccinated and slowly more things are opening up.”*

Most participants gave the current state of the economy a score of six out of nine. They mainly did so because they feel like the economy of the country is not *“excellent,”* but it is not *“totally down there.”* Few participants gave a score of two or three out of nine saying that: *“we are not in a very excellent position right now, given the obvious fact that we are living in, living in an unprecedented time.”* When thinking about the next six months, most Canadian parents think that the economy will get stronger. Many participants are starting to see people spending more and more money: *“I see a lot of them spending a lot more money now because it's almost like a novelty to get to go either shop or shop online or support local businesses.”*

A majority of parents think that we are in the middle of the worst period of the pandemic right now. For them, the third wave seems to be the worse one so far, and some participants felt like there seemed to be the most restrictions across Canada right now.

Regarding the different statements presented to the group prior to the budget viewing, parents agreed with the fact that the government is taking steps to improve gender equality, to protect the environment, to support young Canadians, to improve the fairness in the tax system, to pursue economic policies that will benefit them, and that the government is doing all it can to fight COVID-19. Many participants gave scores of agreement ranging from five to eight out of ten for those statements. With not specifying why, participants said they feel like the government is going in the right direction with respect to those areas.

Participants agreed most with the statements that the government is taking steps to promote job creation, to help support seniors and middle-class families. Most parents gave scores ranging from seven to ten in regard to those subjects. Results were divided regarding the steps taken to help indigenous people, ranging from two to nine. On that subject, one participant mentioned that: *“I*

*know they do their best for indigenous people, but until you can just give them drinking water, I feel like you've just failed."*

Most parents think that the temporary programs put in place to help Canadians and businesses affected by COVID-19 should be continued until a majority of Canadians are vaccinated. However, some participants had reservations regarding the vaccination aspect of that answer. Most participants thought that the programs should be continued, but not until everyone is vaccinated; rather, until every industry is back on its feet.

A majority of participants had somewhat positive expectations for the upcoming budget (prior to watching it), while a few mentioned they were neutral about it. They mostly said so because they felt we were in uncertain times: *"it's kind of hard to have very high or low expectations for what's to come."* One participant that had somewhat positive expectations expressed that the government is doing its best given the situation: *"the government's doing what it can to get through a very difficult time. They're actually doing somewhat positive. Yes, there's gonna be a large deficit, but what's the other option? Is the other option starving people? I don't think that's an option. "*

The budget speech had an impact on the way parents rated the Canadian economy. After having heard the speech, participants were more divided regarding the state of the economy. A majority of participants gave a score of six or seven, but a few gave a score of three or four. However, more participants said that the economy will be stronger in six months.

Most parents thought that the overall budget is positive for Canada (somewhat or very). Most also agreed that the language used in the speech was clear and easy to understand and that the budget met their expectations. About half of the parents thought that some of the measures announced in the budget will have an impact on their financial situation, while the other half do not think so. Regarding the level of agreement, the budget speech did not have a great impact on parents. The scores given were relatively the same for every subject.

If they had to describe the budget in a few words, some participants felt that the budget was: *"fair to all," "promising," "refreshing" and "necessary."* What stood out the most to parents in the group was the measures on access to affordable childcare and measures that support the young and the senior citizens. One participant expressed that he could clearly see how this budget could help his two sons and his mother who all struggle with some difficulties during this pandemic saying: *"that sort of made me feel good."* The announcement on high-speed internet in rural areas was also appreciated by most parents. One participant mentioned that his son has to drive to cafés to do his schoolwork, and that this measure will help him greatly.

Other parents shared their difficulties to find affordable daycare for their children. They applauded these new measures but were critical the fact that the number of available places had not been addressed (access to daycare now was seen as a problem): *"I know the \$10 a day sounds good, but I don't know if that's gonna help with more spaces. I hope it does."* Some participants also brought up the fact that the measures were rather vague and were to be carried out over several years. As one participant put it: *"overall I found it just frustrating that they wrote a speech to make the most people with the loudest voices happy but didn't actually address any specific*

*plan.” Another one said: “they've talked about doing things over the next five, ten years, but, if they get voted out in the next couple of years, the new government's gonna come in and scrap all those programs anyways.”*

To conclude, participants mentioned that some concepts were harder for them to grasp, in particular the announcements on new technology, artificial intelligence, green growth and the net zero accelerator. In this regard, a participant said that she “*found some of it actually was not very clear*” and she “*didn't understand a lot of that part of the speech.*” Participants mentioned that they tended to keep their cursor in neutral when they did not fully understand the topic being discussed.

## **2.2 Quebecers**

*For this group, budget items that scored the highest were the measures announced to support low-wage workers, the support for students and younger Canadians, and the taxes on luxury items and vacant housing owned by foreigners. Budget items that scored the lowest were the environmental goals and the \$10 day care announcement.*

### **2.2.1 Dial test results**

Overall, the federal budget was well received by Quebec participants. Throughout the broadcast of the budget, the average rating for Quebecers was among the highest of the four groups (68.3).

The items that received the most positive responses for this group were regarding low-wage workers, extension of support measures for workers and businesses during the pandemic, measure concerning children and access to quality early childhood learning services, measures to support young Canadians, investment in biopharmaceutical and other leading sectors, and the new taxes announced.

When compared to all participants, Quebecers gave significantly higher ratings to measures in support of low-wage workers, who have continued working during the pandemic and faced a higher risk of contamination (85.7 vs 71.3). The extension of CERB and employment insurance was also well received by Quebecers, particularly among those who have used CERB in the past year (94.5 for Quebecers who have used CERB vs 65 for Quebecers who did not use it).

Quebecers also gave a higher rating to the measure on access to early learning services and childcare system across Canada (80.6 for Quebecers vs 70.4 for all participants). These measures were particularly well received by Quebec women (79 for women vs 59.8 for men) and participants with children (93 for parents vs 77 for non-parents). Again, when compared to all participants, this group gave a higher rating to measures making colleges and universities more affordable and investments to support youth (83.3 for Quebecers vs 75.4 for all participants). Those announcements paired with the Minister's comments about the sacrifices of the younger generation during the pandemic, resonated strongly with Quebecers between 18 and 34 years of age (88 for the 18-34, 70.3 for the 35-54 and 37 for the 55+).

When it comes to biopharmaceutical and manufacturing of vaccines in Canada, Quebecers rated the announcement only slightly higher compared to all participants (84 vs 80). The investments in other leading sectors, such as genomics, quantum sciences and artificial intelligence, also received a warmer response from Quebecers (74.5 vs 65.2).

Lastly, it was the announcement of the tax on vacant properties owned by foreigners and on the luxury tax on high-priced cars, planes and boats that raised the rating to the highest points for Quebecers, respectively to 91.9 and 92.3. Quebec men gave a higher rating than women to both of those announcements.

The items that appeared to be less supported by Quebecers were the environmental objectives that seem to be quite far off in time, the \$10 daycare for children which is already a reality for most parents in Quebec and the Canada recovery hiring program.

Regarding the environment measures, Quebecers scored slightly higher compared to all participants. However, Quebecers picked lower compared to all participants when the Minister mentioned the objective for Canada to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 (50.9 for Quebecers vs 57.1). The rating for this announcement was particularly low for Quebecers between 18 and 34 years of age (43.8). The same was observed when the Minister mentioned the seven-year target for the implementation of the net zero accelerator (48.8 vs 62). On the other hand, Quebec participants 55 years of age or older gave a lower score throughout all this portion of the speech, suggesting that environment is not a priority for them.

In regard to access to early learning systems and daycare for children, once again Quebecers scored high on these measures. However, when the goal of the \$10 daycare five years from now was mentioned, there was an important decrease for Quebecers who are parents (50.3 vs 67.2 for all Canadians parents). As affordable daycare is already implemented in the province, Quebec parents did not see the benefits for them.

Lastly, the Canadian recovery hiring program, that is meant to help businesses hire back employees, received a lower score from Quebecers when compared to all participants (56.3 vs 63.6), although Quebecers who are between 35 and 54 years of age (67) and Quebecers who have used CERB (59.3) scored higher.

In addition to the announcement of the specific measures, participants also had reactions on the different themes addressed during the speech. For example, there was a decrease in the rating when the Minister mentioned the treatment of seniors in long-term care facilities during the pandemic. The rating was particularly low among participants with children (14.3 vs 44.4 for all Quebecers). When the Minister talked about significant job losses and business closures to justify government spending, there was an important increase in the rating for Quebecers who had used CERB (83.5 vs 63 for Quebecers who did not use CERB). Same goes for the portion of the speech when the importance of childcare in allowing parents, but especially mothers, to return to work was raised. The feminist tone used in the speech resonated particularly with Quebec women (75.7 for women vs 44.4 for men).



### 2.2.2 Poll results and discussion

Prior to watching the federal budget, a majority of participants expressed that, in their opinion, Canada was headed in the wrong direction. They mentioned some election promises that have not been kept (i.e., gun control and the environment), the slow vaccination process compared to other countries and the general impression of not moving in the right direction fast enough according to them. One participant mentioned that he feels like the government is *“throwing money out of the window,”* and another one mentioned that *“we will be paying for a long time...”* when thinking about all the public spending related to the pandemic.

Quebec participants had quite varied answers when rating the current state of the Canadian economy. Overall, they gave ratings ranging from three to seven out of nine. Once again, the pandemic was raised by participants as a reason for these scores. While some sectors are still doing well, others (such as tourism and hospitality) are in bad shape. In the words of a participant, *“the economy is not stable at the moment and no stability is to be expected soon.”* Nevertheless, some participants are staying optimistic. One participation mentioned that: *“[he] remains confident about the economy, despite the federal debt.”*

When thinking about the next six months, most of Quebec participants think the Canadian economy will not change and a few thinks that it will be stronger. The uncertainty related to the new variants of COVID-19 and the delays of the vaccination make a majority believe that the situation will not change within six months. On the other hand, the start of the vaccination campaign gives hope to some that the economy will be stronger in the short term, because stores and restaurants will be able to open back up. On the bright side, no Quebecer thinks that the economy will be weaker in six months.

A majority of Quebec participants think that we are in the middle of the worst period of the COVID-19 pandemic. One participant refers to the new variants and the vaccination process as *“several races against the clock”* and that we are at *“a pivotal point in the pandemic.”*

Prior to watching the budget, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement on various statements on a scale of one to ten. Quebec participants gave similar levels of agreement regarding support to middle-class families, gender equality, job creation, protection of the environment, and support of the young people. Overall, they gave scores ranging from five to eight for those statements. With respect to different comments made by the participants on those subjects, some participants mentioned that the government is more generous towards families, and that they wished more measures would support people living alone. They also mentioned that they remembered some headlines in the news about these topics (gender equality, job creation, environment), but that it is rare to see concrete results. With respect to youth specifically, one participant refers to them as: *“the great forgotten of the pandemic”* and wished that more action would have been put in place to support them.

Regarding the steps taken by the government to help indigenous people, results were divided, but Quebec participants gave an average score of four out of ten. One participant mentioned that *“some steps have been taken, but they are not equivalent to the damage caused to these peoples.”* Results were also divided regarding the support provided to seniors. On the top of their heads,

most participants could not think of any concrete action taken to support the senior citizens in Canada. As for the steps taken to fight COVID-19, results were also divided among Quebecers. Many participants mentioned that the government is not proactive during this pandemic. One participant notes: *"the management of vaccines is not worthy of the economic strength of our country. For me it is a great failure."*

With regard to fairness in the tax system, the agreement level of Quebec participants was fairly low, ranging between three and five out of ten. Several participants indicated that they found the taxes imposed on the wealthy Canadians and on large corporations to be too low. Lastly, the majority of participants in this group gave a level of agreement of five out of ten when it comes to the government pursuing economic policies that will benefit them.

When it comes to the temporary programs and benefits put in place to help Canadians and businesses affected by COVID-19, most Quebec participants think that it is time to start phasing them out. Prior to watching the budget, almost half of participants had neutral expectations, while others had somewhat negative expectations or somewhat positive expectations for the upcoming budget.

After viewing the budget, Quebec participants had a generally positive impression of what they had just heard, but still mentioned some reservations. Measures to help the low-wage workers, affordable housing, domestic vaccine production, easy access to early learning for children and new taxes were all highlighted as interesting measures by participants. On the other hand, some participants have pointed out that there could have been more ambitious measures regarding the environment and others mentioned that the price of the cars, boats and planes that will now be subject to a tax, were too high: *"I think the government is playing it safe so as not to shock the wealthy."* All in all, the budget was deemed interesting by Quebec participants, but there is a general impression that this is a pre-election budget. One participant mentioned that: *"the government is casting a wide net and they want to please everyone."* With all these great measures, one participant commented that: *"there have been a lot of great announcements, but now we have to see how they will implement this."* Participants all agreed that the budget was delivered in an accessible and easy-to-understand manner, but some mentioned that the numbers and amounts allocated to measures can be difficult to grasp: *"you hear numbers, and you lose track. It's hard to know if it's a lot or if it's not a lot of money."*

Quebec participants feel the measures in the budget had an impact on the outlook in the near future. After viewing the budget, the majority now believes that Canada is headed in the right direction and when rating the economy, the average score is now a five or a six out of nine. When thinking about what they had seen or heard in the budget, most Quebec participants think that it is positive (very or somewhat), few are neutral about it and one participant think that it is somewhat negative. All participants agreed that the language used was clear and easy to understand. Regarding the expectations for the budget, results were divided. Almost half of participants said that the budget met their expectations, while the other half said otherwise. Most participants think that what was said in the budget speech will not have an impact on them or their household while a few thought that the measures will have an impact.

The measures announced in the budget have also had an impact on certain agreement levels for Quebec participants. Statement regarding middle-class families, gender equality, support of the young and the seniors all received a higher level of agreement in the second round. A majority of participants gave a score of eight out of ten for the support of middle-class families and the steps taken to improve gender equality and most participants gave a score of seven out of ten for the support of young people and a score of six out of ten for the support of seniors.

## **2.3 Recipients of the CERB**

*For this group, budget items that scored the highest were the extension of support measures for workers and businesses, measures announced to support low-wage workers and support for young Canadians. Budget item that scored the lowest was the tax on vacant housing owned by foreigners.*

### **2.3.1 Dial test results**

Overall, the federal budget was well received by the focus group whose participants had received CERB support at some point during the pandemic period. Throughout the broadcasting of the budget, the average rating for CERB participants was near the overall average of all the groups (65.8).

The items that received the most positive responses for this group were the ones regarding old age security, low-wage workers, extension of support measures for workers and businesses during the pandemic, measures to support young Canadians, building, repairing and supporting housing, public transit and infrastructure and the luxury tax.

CERB participants gave a below average rating when the topic of women and feminism came up (51.8 for CERB beneficiaries vs 62.0 for all participants). The average rating went back up, especially for the women in this group, once the topic of early learning systems and daycare for children (78.7 for women vs 42.3 for men) and when the goal of the \$10 daycare five years from now is mentioned the average rating climbs back up for men, while women's average rating stays high (74.3 for women vs 76.3 for men).

When compared to all participants, CERB recipients gave average ratings to most of the measures. The extension of CERB and employment insurance was well received this audience, especially those between the age of 18 and 34 (73.0 for 18-34 vs 63.0 for 35-54 and 67.5 for 55+).

Regarding the environment measures, CERB recipients, more specifically men, scored lower compared to all participants (42.0 for men who benefited from CERB vs 58.5 for all participants).

A drop was observed when the announcement of the tax on vacant properties owned by foreigners and on taxation in general were made in the speech to some of the lowest points for CERB participants, respectively to 43.7 and 58.7. Men who benefited from CERB gave a lower rating than women to both of those two announcements. It was when the announcement on the

luxury tax on high-priced cars, planes and boats that we can observe a raise in the rating to the highest points for CERB beneficiaries, respectively to 80.5. Women who benefited for CERB gave a slightly higher rating than men to this announcement (84.0 for women vs 82.7 for men). When it comes to biopharmaceutical and manufacturing of vaccines in Canada, CERB beneficiaries rated the announcement slightly higher compared to all participants (85 vs 80).

When discussing what they had just heard after the dial test, the main things participants remembered hearing about spontaneously was that *“there was a lot in there for women and childcare, which is a very positive thing”*. The majority of CERB recipients thought what they had just heard was very encouraging, especially the idea of *“restarting the economy and the government helping get everyone on their feet”*. However, some participants had some reservation regarding the \$15 minimum wage, because they felt this might *“kill small businesses who can’t afford to pay their employees that much”*.

Overall, CERB beneficiaries felt the budget was *“cautiously optimistic”* and addressed what Canadians need for the most part: *“they [the Government] tapped into what most people are concerned about. They did their best in including something for everybody”*.

### **2.3.2 Polls results and discussion**

Prior to the budget announcement, almost half of the participants in this group said they felt that Canada is generally headed in the right direction, while some felt it is headed in the wrong direction and some were not comfortable choosing a direction. Participants who felt Canada is heading in the right direction mentioned they felt that because the government had a good reaction when the pandemic hit the country and helped Canadians worry less about not having a steady money income.

CERB participants were *“middle-of-the-road”* when asked to rate the current state of the Canadian economy. Indeed, the majority gave a score between 5 and 7 out of 9. They mentioned that *“the country as a whole is in survival mode”* but they still feel that in the end, the country should come out of this *“OK”*. Participants are aware that the government had to use a lot of extra money to help Canadians during the last year so the hope there is not going to be a *“COVID tax”* or anything like that in their future.

The majority of CERB recipients thought the Canadian economy will get stronger over the next six months. They mainly feel so because *“now that Canadians have access to the vaccine and are getting vaccinated”* it is a step in the right direction. The participants who feel that there should not be any changes in the next six months feel so because not everybody will have received both vaccine doses so it will not be *“business as usual”* in six months from now. Some participants were also unable to decide: *“as we’ve done for the past year, we have to take it day by day. Vaccines are new, who knows if they will really work. There is too much unknown to say anything with a certitude”*.

Participants were divided when asked if they felt the worst of the pandemic is behind us, yet to come or if we are in the middle of it. Some feel that we have been at it for over a year and we see

little to no change and they don't see how the worst could be behind us. Others felt that with the variants hitting the younger demographic, we are now in the middle of the worst of the pandemic. No participants seemed too confident with their answer, one participant mentioned: *"everything is so unpredictable, everything can change everyday. It's the big unknown"*.

Prior to watching the budget, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement on various statements using a scale of one to ten. Quebecers gave similar level of agreement regarding support to middle-class families, gender equality and protection of the environment. Overall, they gave notes ranging from five to eight for those statements. They mentioned that they remembered some headlines in the news about these topics, but that it is hard to see concrete results and have a strong opinion on those matters. The other statements regarding help to Indigenous people, the fairness in the tax system, promoting job creation, the pursuing of economic policies that will benefit them, support of the young people and taking positive steps to help seniors, participants' opinions were more polarized and some participants were more on the negative side of the scale. The majority of participants did not agree with the last statement about the government doing all it can to fight COVID. The majority feels so mainly because the borders are still open.

Almost all participants agreed to the Government of Canada should continue their temporary programs and benefits to help Canadians and businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic until a majority of Canadians are vaccinated. They feel *"people are losing their livelihood, their business, so it's important to keep helping them"*.

Thinking about the upcoming federal budget seemed cautious with their expectations. Some had somewhat positive expectations: *"elections are coming up, and generally they want to get re-elected, so they usually present a positive budget"*. Others had somewhat negative expectations and some others were neutral because they *"would have to be more informed to have an opinion"*.

All participants in this group agreed that, generally speaking, Canada was headed in the right direction and they all gave a rating between 5 and 7 out of 9 to the current state of the Canadian economy, on a scale where 1 meant terrible and 9 meant excellent.

After viewing the budget, CERB participants had a generally positive impression of what they had just heard, but still had some reservations: *"talk is cheap. We've heard them talk a lot, and this budget was very positive, but something doesn't sit right. Like it's too good to be true"*. Measures to help the low wage workers, affordable housing, domestic vaccine production, easy access to early learning for children and new taxes were all highlighted as interesting measures by participants. On the other hand, some participants have pointed out that seniors and people living with disabilities were completely left out. All in all, the budget was judged interesting by the participants, but there was a general impression that this is a pre-election budget. One participant mentioned that: *"the government definitely wanted to please everyone"*. With all these great measures, one participant commented that: *"there have been a lot of great announcements, but now we have to see IF they will implement them"*. Participants all agreed that the budget was delivered in an accessible and easy-to-understand manner, but some mentioned that the numbers and amounts allocated to measures can be difficult to grasp: *"you hear numbers, and you lose track. It's hard to know if it's a lot or if it's not enough money"*.

The announcements made in the budget have had a significant impact on CERB participants. After viewing the budget, the majority now believe that Canada is headed in the right direction and were more positive when rating the short-term growth of the Canadian economy. Participants' expectations were met or exceeded for the majority. When thinking about what they had seen or heard in the budget, most participants think that it is positive (very or somewhat) and a few are neutral about it. Most participants think that what was said in the budget speech will not have an impact on them or their household while a few think that the measures will have an impact. The measures announced in the budget have also had an impact on certain agreement levels for CERB participants on a series of statements asked both before and after listening to the budget speech. Statements regarding middle-class families, gender equality, support of the young and the seniors all received a higher level of agreement the second time around. A majority of participants gave a note of eight out of ten for the support of middle-class families and the steps taken to improve gender equality and most participants gave a rating of seven out of ten for the support of young people and a rating of six out of ten for the support of seniors.

## 2.4 Seniors

*For this group, budget items that scored the highest were the measures regarding old age security and the extension of the pandemic related support for workers and businesses. Budget items that scored the lowest were the access to early childcare and the net zero emission goal.*

### 2.4.1 Dial test results

Overall, the federal budget was well received by the seniors group. However, throughout the broadcast of the budget, the average rating for seniors was the lowest average of all the groups (61.1 for seniors' vs 66.1 overall average).

The items that received the most positive responses for this group were the measures regarding old age security, measures to support young Canadians and students, extension of support measures for workers and businesses during the pandemic, building, repairing and supporting housing, public transit and infrastructure and the introduction of the national tax on vacant property owned by non-residents/non-Canadians.

When compared to all participants, seniors in the group gave higher ratings to measures for old age security (86.5 for seniors' vs 76.7 for non-seniors' groups). The extension of employment insurance was also well received by seniors, particularly among those who have used CERB in the past year (83.5 for seniors who have used CERB vs 63 for seniors who did not use it).

The introduction of the national tax on vacant property owned by non-residents/non-Canadians was also appreciated by seniors (83 for seniors' vs 72.7 average for non-seniors groups). Just as it was the case for other groups, the building, repairing and supporting housing, public transit and infrastructure was also well received by the seniors group (60.4 for seniors' vs 63.5 average for the other groups).

The items that received the most negative responses for this group were the ones regarding early learning systems and daycare for children, investments in leading sectors, the environmental measures and immigration support and programs.

We can observe the average rating for the seniors' group peak down when the subject of early learning systems and daycare for children is addressed, especially when the goal of the \$10 daycare five years from now is mentioned (46.4 for seniors vs 63.7 for the average of the other groups). We can also observe the rating slowly go down once the topic of investments in leading sectors, such as genomics, quantum sciences and artificial intelligence, hitting one of the lowest points when the topic of environment measure came up. Indeed, when the Minister mentioned the objective to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, the seniors' group had an average score of 45.9 compared to an average score of 57.7 for the other groups. The average score for men in the seniors group went down to 33.8 at that time in the speech, suggesting that environment is not a priority for them.

Compared to the other groups, seniors also lost interest when the Minister started talking about immigration program and support (52.4 for seniors' vs 65.7 on average for the other groups). We can also observe one last dip in the rating for seniors when the Minister mentions that the government has a plan and keeps its promises (47.8 for seniors' vs 64.6 on average for the other groups).

When observing results for the seniors' group based on gender, the general average rating for women is higher than the men's (69 for senior women vs 56.4 for senior men). The highest highs and the lowest lows of this group are reached by the women participants, while the men average score rarely rises above 75 and oscillated around 60 for most of the budget speech.

### **2.4.1 Polls results and discussion**

Prior to watching the budget speech, almost half of senior participants said that Canada was headed in the right direction, while the other half said that the country was headed in the wrong direction. From both perspectives, seniors gave the vaccination campaign as an explanation. Some were optimistic about the beginning of the vaccination campaign and the fact that this could help the economy to open back up: *"I'm feeling pretty positive about the vaccines coming out in a timely fashion. I know it's taken quite a while for everything to, uh, really come about, because of our supply issues, and it's really not the fault of our government."* Others were pessimistic as they felt the vaccination campaign was not progressing fast enough: *"the whole thing with the vaccines. I think they did a very bad job at it."* Some seniors who said that Canada was headed in the right direction also mentioned the programs quickly put in place by the government in the beginning of the pandemic to justify their answer. Most seniors gave the Canadian economy a score of six or seven out of ten, showing relative optimism again.

Most seniors in the group think that the economy will be stronger in the next six months. Once again, the vaccination campaign was brought up by participants: *"the virus is not going to go*



away. But I think now, that if they get it more under control, and the vaccines sort of start to work, we can open up more places, and the economy will get a bit stronger". Few seniors think that the economy is going to be weaker in six months, and mostly blame the planning of aid programs: "I think we're going to get weaker. I think the whole strategy with COVID, the programs that the fed's rolled out, was not well thought out." Regarding the Covid-19 situation, seniors in the group tended to be divided. Some think that the worst is yet to come, while others think that we are in the worst period right now, and fewer believe that the worst is behind us.

Prior to watching the budget speech, seniors were asked to indicate their level of agreement on various statements on a scale of one to ten. With respect to government taking positive steps to help middle class families, indigenous people, to promote gender equity, to pursue policies that will benefit them, to support young people and to support seniors, most participants gave a score ranging from six to eight out of ten. Results were more divided on the fairness of the tax system, protection of the environment, job creation and the fight against COVID-19. On these latter topics there was no consensus among senior participants who gave scores on the full range between 1 and 10. Overall, participants mentioned that they heard some announcements on these topics but are having trouble to remember concrete actions taken by the federal government: "I just think it's all fair that they're talking, they say things but they're not doing anything."

According to most seniors in the group, programs and benefits put in place to help Canadians and businesses during the pandemic should be continued until a majority of Canadians are vaccinated, while fewer thought that it is time to start phasing them out. Almost half of seniors had negative expectations about the upcoming budget speech, while others remained on the neutral side.

The budget speech did not have a major impact on seniors' evaluations provided in the post-speech polling questions. The only statements that received different scores compared to pre-speech were the positive steps taken to help seniors and that the government was doing all it can to fight COVID-19. After hearing the speech, seniors gave more divided scores (ranging from one to ten) to the steps taken to help seniors, as if they were no longer convinced that the government was doing the right thing.

The overall impression of the budget was mostly positive (somewhat or very), and seniors all agree that the language used in the budget was easy to understand. Despite positive impressions, many seniors admit to being skeptical about this budget: "I really have no confidence that this is sustainable or can be implemented." Another participant mentioned: "I just feel that the government must have a money tree someplace, I don't know how they're going to be able to pluck it all off the tree to do what they say they're gonna do". Many felt like the Minister was just "tossing numbers and large sums out there."

When asked to describe the budget in one sentence, one participant expressed that it was a "Feel good budget" and that it was really an "election budget." Senior participants feel like the government wanted to please as many people as possible: "they looked at all the sore points, all the points that were hurting, promising to throw money at seniors, promising to throw money at youth and everybody in between..."



## Appendix

### A.1 Qualitative Methodology

#### *Online Focus Groups and Moment to Moment Technology*

Leger recruited participants by telephone, using a thorough screening process, and those who qualified were invited to attend a 2-hour online focus group. Leger recruited 40 participants to achieve 10 participants per focus group. Three groups were conducted in English and the other one in French. This research included moment-to-moment technology built into the online focus group environment.

Participants answered introductory questions while the budget was being delivered (to ensure they did not watch the budget in advance) before providing real-time feedback using the moment-to-moment technology. Moment-to-moment technology allowed participants to evaluate the budget speech in real time. Participants provided their emotional response on a scale of 0 to 100 while watching the video recording of the speech. The measurement scale used ranked from very negative (0) to very positive (100). All participants in the focus group received an honorarium of \$100.

Target	Number of participants
Parents 0-6 in English	9
Senior Canadians 65+	8
People who received the CERB	7
General population in the province of Quebec	8
TOTAL	32

## A.2 Screening Guide

### DISCUSSION GROUPS DESCRIPTION (General Population)

The target population for this whole research project is comprised of different groups of Canadians adults 18 and over:

**The objective is to recruit 10 participants per discussion group.**

	DATE / HEURE	PARTICIPANT PROFILE
<b>GROUP 1</b> 10 participants		<b>Group in English with parents of young children 0-6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults over 18 (varied sociodemographics)</li> <li>• Parents of children 0-6</li> <li>• Language spoken English</li> </ul>
<b>GROUP 2</b> 10 participants		<b>Group in English with senior 65 and over</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior 65 and over (varied sociodemographics)</li> <li>• Language spoken English</li> </ul>
<b>GROUP 3</b> 10 participants		<b>Group in English with who had been on CERB at some point over past year</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults over 18 (varied sociodemographics)</li> <li>• Have benefited from the CERB at some point in the past year</li> <li>• Language spoken English</li> </ul>
<b>GROUP 4</b> 10 participants		<b>Group in French in Quebec</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults over 18 (varied sociodemographics)</li> <li>• Gender: a good mix</li> <li>• Language spoken: French</li> <li>• Age group: a good mix</li> <li>• Education: a good mix</li> <li>• Occupation: a good mix</li> <li>• Income: a good mix</li> </ul>

For each participant, collect the following information:

Participant name:	
Phone number at home:	
Cell phone:	
Email address:	
Recruitment date:	Recruiter :

Group #:

Confirmation (date):

**STEP 1 (WEB) – SCREENING AND PROFILING**

**INTRO**

Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ of Leger, a public opinion company. We are currently organizing discussion groups on behalf of the Government of Canada. The objective of the discussion group is to collect opinions and perceptions about general topics.

We are preparing to hold a few discussion groups with Canadians like you. These discussion groups will be conducted "online" and will be led by a research professional with up to ten participants. All opinions will remain anonymous and will be used for research purposes only in accordance with laws designed to protect your privacy. We don't have anything to sell and we don't advertise and it's not an opinion poll on current events or politics.

Your participation is voluntary. All information collected, used and/or disclosed will be used for research purposes only and the research is entirely confidential. We are also committed to protecting the privacy of all participants. The names of the participants will not be provided to any third party. May I continue?

[INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF ASKED ABOUT PRIVACY LAWS, SAY: "The information collected through the research is subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act, the legislation of the Government of Canada, and to the provisions of relevant provincial privacy legislation.]

The discussion group will take place online on the (INSERT DATE/TIME) and will be a maximum of **2 hours**. You will be compensated **\$125** for your time.

**Q0**

Are you available to participate in this focus group at **INSERT DATE/TIME**?

Yes	1
No	2 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>

**A1. Are you interested in participating?**

Yes	1	<b>CONTINUE</b>
No	2	<b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>

I would now like to ask you a few questions to see if you meet our eligibility criteria to participate.

A2. The group discussions we are organizing are going to be held **over the Internet**. They are going to be "online focus groups". Participants will need to have a **computer**, a **high-speed Internet connection**, and a **WebCam** in order to participate in the group. Would you be able to participate under these conditions?

Yes	1	<b>CONTINUE</b>
No	2	<b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>

## PROFILING

### INTRO1. Socio-demographic questions

1. Do you or anyone in your immediate family work or have you ever worked in ...?

Marketing Research	1 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>
Marketing and Advertising	2 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>
Public relations, communications	3 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>
Media (newspapers, television, radio, etc.)	4 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>
Telecommunications	5 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>
None of the above	9

### Sex

2. Are you...?

... a man	1
... a woman	2
Other	3

### Province

3. In which province or territory do you live?

British Columbia	1
Alberta	2
Saskatchewan	3
Manitoba	4
Ontario	5
Quebec	6
New Brunswick	7
Nova Scotia	8
Prince Edward Island	9
Newfoundland	10
Northwest Territories	11
Yukon	12

Nunavut	13
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#### 4. Area

4. Do you currently live in a urban or rural area?

Urban	1
Rural	2

#### 5. Language

5. What is your *first official language spoken*?

French	1	<b>QUALIFY FOR GR4 if from Québec</b>
English	2	<b>QUALIFY FOR GR1 -2 -3</b>

#### 6. AGE.

6. What age category do you fall into?

Under 18	99	<b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>
18 to 24	1	
25 to 34	2	
35 to 44	3	
45 to 54	4	
55 to 64	5	
65 and over	6	<b>Prioritize GR2 if spoken language is English</b>

#### 7. EDUCATION.

7. What is the highest level of education you completed?

Some high school or less	1
High school diploma or equivalent	2
Registered Apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma	3
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	4
University certificate or diploma below bachelor's level	5
Bachelor's degree	6
Postgraduate degree above bachelor's level	7

### 8 - CHILD 0-6

8. Are you the parent of at least one young child aged 0-6?

Yes	1	<b>Prioritize GR1 if spoken language is English</b>
No	2	

### 9. CERB

9. In this past year, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, have you used the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) at any time?

Yes	1	<b>Prioritize GR3 if spoken language is English</b>
No	2	

### 10. OCCUPATION

10. Which of the following categories best describes your **current** employment status? Are you...

Working full-time (35 or more hours per week)	1
Working part-time (less than 35 hours per week)	2
Self-employed	3
Unemployed, but looking for work	4
A student attending school full-time	5
Retired	6
Not in the workforce (full-time homemaker, full-time parent, or unemployed and not looking for work)	7
Other employment status. Please specify.	8

### 11 – INCOME

11. 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.

Under \$20,000	<b>1</b>
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Between \$20,000 and just under \$40,000	2
Between \$40,000 and just under \$60,000	3
Between \$60,000 and just under \$80,000	4
Between \$80,000 and just under \$100,000	5
Between \$100,000 and just under \$150,000	6
\$150,000 and above	7

#### Privacy Notice

The personal information you provide to the Government of Canada is governed in accordance with the *Privacy Act*. We only collect the information we need to conduct the research project.

**Purpose of collection:** We require your personal information to determine your eligibility and record your consent to participate in this research.

**Other uses or disclosures:** Your personal information will not be shared. In limited and specific situations, your personal information may be disclosed without your consent in accordance with subsection 8(2) of the *Privacy Act*.

#### Do you consent to participate in this research?

- Yes (continue)
- No (STOP)

**Participant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### INVITATION

Thank you. We'd like to invite you to participate in the discussion group.

The discussion group will take place at [XX], on \_\_\_XX\_\_\_ (date/time) \_\_\_XX\_\_\_.

Just a quick reminder that you will need a computer, a high-speed Internet connection in order to participate in the chat group. You cannot participate using a mobile phone.

Representatives from the Government of Canada and research analyst may observe the discussion group, but will not have access to any of your personal information. Do you consent to participate in this discussion group ?

Yes	1
No	2 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>

Now I have a few questions that relate to privacy, your personal information and the research process. We will need your consent on a few issues that enable us to conduct our research. As I run through these questions, please feel free to ask me any questions you would like clarified.

We need to provide the **online platform** and **session moderator** with the names and profiles of the people attending the discussion group because only the individuals invited are allowed in the session and the facility and moderator must have this information for verification purposes. Please be assured that this information will be kept strictly confidential. **GO TO P1**

P1) Now that I've explained this, do I have your permission to provide your name and profile **to the online platform and moderator?**

Yes	1 GO TO P2
No	2 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>

P2) A recording of the discussion group session will be produced for the research project purposes. The recording will only be used by **the team of people working on the project at Léger and the Government of Canada** to assist in preparing a report on the research findings.  
Do you agree to be recorded for research purposes only?

Yes	1 COMPLETE THE INVITATION
No	2 <b>Read information below and P2A</b>

It is necessary for the research process for us to record the discussion group session as the researcher needs this material to complete the report.

P2a) Now that I've explained this, do I have your permission for recording the discussion group?

Yes	1 COMPLETE THE INVITATION
No	2 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>



As we are only inviting a small number of people to take part, your participation is very important to us. If for some reason you are unable to participate, please call so that we can get someone to replace you. You can reach us at \_\_\_\_\_ at our office. Please ask for \_\_\_\_\_.

We will send your login information to the online chat group to your email address. Please confirm receipt of this information when it reaches you.

Your \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_ address \_\_\_\_\_ :

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**Thank you very much!**

Name:

Phone number (during the day):

Phone number (during the evening):

Email address:

## A.3 Discussion Guide

<b>BLOCK 1</b>	<b>Introduction and explanation</b>
<b>Length</b>	<b>10 MINUTES</b>

### WELCOME AND PRESENTATION

- Reception of participants

- **Introduction of the moderator:** Hello everyone and welcome to this discussion group. I hope everyone is doing well. Let me introduce myself, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am \_\_\_\_\_ at Léger Marketing

- **Presentation of Leger** - Léger Marketing is a public opinion and consumer research firm. Some of you probably already know Leger Marketing from our surveys and our presence in the various media across the country. In addition to surveys, we organize discussion groups, like this one, on a variety of different topics.

### PRIMARY AIM

The research is being conducted by Léger Marketing on behalf of the Government of Canada. The objective of the meeting is to learn about your opinion and perception on the Federal Budget.

### RULES OF DISCUSSION

- Discussion groups are designed to stimulate an open and honest discussion. My role as a moderator is to guide the discussion and encourage everyone to participate. Another function of the moderator is to ensure that the discussion stays on topic and on time.
- Your role is to answer questions and voice your opinions. We are looking for minority as well as majority opinion in a focus group, so don't hold back if you have a comment even if you feel your opinion may be different from others in the group. There may or may not be others who share your point of view. Everyone's opinion is important and should be respected.
- I would also like to stress that there are no wrong answers. We are simply looking for your opinions and attitudes. This is not a test of your knowledge. We did not expect you to do anything in preparation for this group. It is important to give your personal, spontaneous and honest opinions as well as reacting respectfully to the opinions of others.

### PRESENTATION OF THE GROUP ROOM

- The session is being recorded for analysis purposes, in case we need to double-check the proceedings against our notes. These recordings remain in our

- possession and will not be released to anyone without written consent from all participants.
- There are observers representing the government who will be watching the discussion remotely.
  - It is also important for you to know that your responses today will in no way affect your dealings with the Government of Canada.
  - **Confidentiality** – Please note that anything you say during these groups will be held in the strictest confidence. We do not attribute comments to specific people. Our report summarizes the findings from the groups but does not mention anyone by name. The report can be accessed through the Library of Parliament or Archives Canada.

### **RESULTS CONFIDENTIALITY**

- The discussions we will have this evening will remain confidential at all times.
- Your name will never be mentioned in the report
- Information collected for study purposes only

Please note that the moderator is not an employee of the Government of Canada and may not be able to answer some of your questions about what we will be discussing. If important questions do come up over the course of the group, we will try to get answers for you before you leave.

### **Do you have any questions before we get started?**

### **INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

- What's your first name?
- Your place of residence (province and city)?
- What is your main occupation?

## **BLOCK 2**

### **Warm-up exercise**

## **LENGTH**

**5 MINUTES**

The first part of the group will get you comfortable with the technology, explain how they work, in both real time as well as with closed ended questions.

We will be **using technology** so you can share your impressions of the Federal Budget that will be announced shortly. Briefly explain. We will measure your reaction to the speech. **EXPLAIN THE TECHNOLOGY BRIEFLY.**

We will get you to answer some questions before and after listening to the Budget speech.

After, we will follow with a discussion about what you saw/heard, using how you reacted using the dials as reference points.

So the first step is to answer initial questions, then we will watch the speech (which will be 30-45 minutes in length), answer some questions and have a discussion.

<b>BLOCK 3</b>	<b>PRE-SPEECH QUESTIONS</b>
<b>LENGTH</b>	<b>15 MINUTES</b>

You will now see a question appear on your screen. Please answer this question personally before we discuss your answers.

Q1. Some people say that Canada is generally headed in the right direction. Other people say that there are more things going badly than well in Canada right now and that the country is headed in the wrong direction. Which of those two statements is closer to your own opinion?

0 – Don't know/no response

1 - Right direction

2 - Wrong direction

**DISCUSS THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTION WITH THE PARTICIPANTS**

PROBE: Why do you think that? What makes you say this?

Q2. How would you rate the current state of the Canadian economy? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent.

10 – Excellent

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

- 1 – Terrible
- 0 – Don't know/no response

**DISCUSS THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTION WITH THE PARTICIPANTS**

PROBE: Why do you think that? What makes you say this?

Q3. Over the next six months, do you think the Canadian economy will be stronger, weaker or will there be no change?

- 3 - Stronger
- 2 - Weaker
- 1 - No change
- 0 - Don't know/no response

**DISCUSS THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTION WITH THE PARTICIPANTS**

PROBE: Why do you think that? What makes you say this?

Q4. Which of the following best describes your outlook on the COVID-19 pandemic?

- 1 - The worst is behind us
- 2 - The worst is yet to come
- 3 - We are in the middle of the worst period
- 0 - Don't know/no response

**DISCUSS THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTION WITH THE PARTICIPANTS**

PROBE: Why do you think that? What makes you say this?

As you know, we have three level of government in Canada – federal, provincial and municipal. Today, I want to focus specifically on the federal government. (The federal government is responsible for issues that affect the entire country, such as citizenship, national defence and international trade. The provincial government is responsible for areas of jurisdiction such as education, health, some natural resources and traffic laws. Municipal governments are responsible for managing areas of jurisdiction such as libraries, parks, water systems, roads and parking.)

Q5. For each of the following statements please indicate whether you agree or disagree with them. Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.

The government is pursuing policies that will help middle class families  
The government is taking positive steps to help Indigenous people  
The government is taking positive steps to improve gender equity  
The government is taking positive steps to improve fairness in the tax system  
The government is taking positive steps to promote job creation  
The government is taking positive steps to protect the environment  
The government is pursuing economic policies that will benefit me  
The government is taking positive steps to help young people  
The government is taking positive steps to help seniors  
The government is doing all it can to fight COVID

**DISCUSS THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTION WITH THE PARTICIPANTS**

PROBE: Why do you think that? What makes you say this?

Q6. The Government of Canada has introduced temporary programs and benefits to help Canadians and businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Do you think it is now time to end these programs, start phasing them out, or should they be continued for a few more months?

- 1 - It is now time to end these programs
- 2 - It is time to start phasing them out
- 3 - They should be continued until a majority of Canadians are vaccinated
- 0 - Not sure

**DISCUSS THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTION WITH THE PARTICIPANTS**

PROBE: Why do you think that? What makes you say this?

Q7. Now thinking about the upcoming federal Budget, to what extent would you say that your expectations are positive or negative?

- 0 - Don't know/no response
- 5 – Very positive
- 4 – Somewhat positive
- 3 – Neutral
- 2 – Somewhat negative
- 1 – Very negative

**DISCUSS THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTION WITH THE PARTICIPANTS**

PROBE: Why do you think that? What makes you say this?

**BLOCK 4** BUDGET SPEECH**LENGTH** 50 MINUTES

EXPLAIN THE DIAL EXERCISE TO PARTICIPANTS - REMIND THEM THAT THEY SHOULD CONTINUOUSLY EVALUATE THROUGHOUT THE BUDGET SPEECH ACCORDING TO THEIR OPINION OF WHAT THEY HEAR: POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE. THEY SHOULD USE THE SCALE TO NUANCE THEIR OPINION.

PRESENT THE EXPLANATORY VIDEO

**BLOCK 5** POST-SPEECH QUESTIONS**LENGTH** 15 MINUTES

**NOTE TO MODERATORS:** NO NEED TO DISCUSS THE ANSWERS TO EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS.

Now, before we have a discussion, I would like to ask you some more questions ...

**NOTE TO READER: WE RE-ASK THE FIRST THREE QUESTIONS FROM THE PRE-BUDGET EXERCISE TO SEE IF THE BUDGET SPEECH SHIFTED ANY VIEWS ON THEIR PERCEPTIONS ON THE ECONOMY.**

Q8. Some people say that, Canada is generally headed in the right direction. Other people say that there are more things going badly than well in Canada right now and that the country is headed in the wrong direction. Which of those two statements is closer to your own opinion?

- 0 - Don't know/no response
- 1 - Right direction
- 2 - Wrong direction

Q9. How would you rate the current state of the Canadian economy? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent.

- 10 – Excellent
- 9
- 8
- 7

6

5

4

3

2

1 – Terrible

0 – Don't know/no response

Q10. Over the next six months, do you think the Canadian economy will be stronger, weaker or will there be no change?

3 - Stronger

2 - Weaker

1 - No change

0 - Don't know/no response

Q11. Now thinking about the overall federal Budget, to what extent would you say that what you saw and heard was for the most part positive or for the most part negative?

0 - Don't know/no response

5 – Very positive

4 – Somewhat positive

3 – Neutral

2 – Somewhat negative

1 – Very negative

Q12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the language used in the budget speech was clear and easy to understand?

0 - Don't know/no response

4 – Strongly agree

3 – Agree

2 – Disagree

1 – Strongly disagree

Q13. And would you say that what you saw and heard exceeded your expectations, met your expectations, or did not meet your expectations?

0 - Don't know/no response



- 1 – Exceeded expectations
- 2 – Met expectations
- 3 – Did not meet expectations

Q14. Was there anything you heard in the budget that would have an impact on your personal or household financial situation?

- 1 – Yes
- 2 – No
- 0 - Don't know/no response

<b>BLOCK 6</b>	<b>POST-SPEECH DISCUSSION</b>
<b>LENGTH</b>	<b>45 MINUTES</b>

Now I would like to have more of a discussion about what you saw/heard in the federal budget...

What was your overall impression of speech?

**PROBE:** Why?

What were the main things that you remember hearing in the budget?

What are your impressions of this element? **PROBE:** Why?

What were the best ideas in the speech? **PROBE:** Why?

What were the less positive aspects in the speech? **PROBE:** Why?

How would you sum up the budget in one sentence?

What will have the largest impact on you and your family?

Do you think the budget is addressing the issues facing the country today? **PROBE:** Why? Why not?

As you know, you were using the dial to register your impressions of the speech as it was read. What I would like to do is ask about some specific aspects of the speech that appeared to resonate.

**MODERATOR WILL HAVE THE DATA AND WILL LOOK AT THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SPIKES OVER THE COURSE OF THE SPEECH. WILL SELECT 3 TO 4 TOPICS FROM POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CHANGES AND PROMPT ON THOSE.**

Let's start with some of the **positives**...**FOR EACH TOPIC IDENTIFIED...**

What did you like about this aspect from the budget? **PROBE:** Why?

What did it mean to you? Was it clear? How could it have been clearer?

Is it relevant to you personally?

Let's turn our attention to areas where there were some **declines** in impressions...**FOR EACH TOPIC IDENTIFIED...**

What was your impression about this aspect from the budget? **PROBE:** Why?

What did it mean to you? Was it clear? How could it have been clearer?

Were there parts that you didn't understand? **PROBE:** Which parts?

Is it relevant to you personally?

Do you feel like with certain topics announced, you feel as though your current living situation will be or in the future any easier or harder? Why is that?

While you were observing the speech, did you think the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was addressing politicians and economists, or mostly to average Canadians?

Why do you say that?

**BLOCK 9**

**CONCLUSION**

**LENGTH**

**5 MINUTES**

We have covered a lot of topics today and really appreciate you taking the time and energy to join us and give your opinion. Your input is very important and insightful!

To conclude, I wanted to ask you whether you have any last thoughts that you want to give the Government of Canada?

**CONCLUDE AND END THE MEETING.**

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COLLABORATION!**