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Address Enquiries to: - Adresser toutes questions à: Amaral, Paola	Buyer Id - Id de l'acheteur cy021
Telephone No. - N° de téléphone (613) 998-8588 ()	FAX No. - N° de FAX () -
Destination - of Goods, Services, and Construction: Destination - des biens, services et construction: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES CANADA 5TH FL. 350 ALBERT ST. OTTAWA Ontario K1A0S5 Canada	

Instructions: See Herein

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Signature	Date

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH STANDARDS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

PURPOSE

THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT A SOLICITATION DOCUMENT.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) IS TO OBTAIN FEEDBACK FROM INDUSTRY AND FROM DISABILITY ORGANIZATIONS ON THE DRAFT UPDATED STANDARDS FOR THE CONDUCT OF GOVERNMENT OF CANADA PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH - TELEPHONE SURVEYS AND ONLINE SURVEYS.

Pursuant to the [Directive on the Management of Communications](#), Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) coordinates public opinion research (POR) in the Government of Canada (GC) and is responsible for developing and updating GC standards for POR conducted by federal departments and agencies.

To support federal departments and agencies in improving the quality of public opinion research they conduct, the Public Opinion Research Directorate (PORD) of Public Services and Procurement Canada first established the Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research for telephone and online surveys in 2009. These standards were developed in response to the Auditor General's November 2005 report on The Quality and Reporting of Surveys, and based on extensive input from experts, departments and agencies, and the research industry. The [current standards](#) are posted on PSPC's website.

The research industry and its techniques have evolved considerably in recent years. To ensure that the standards reflect these changes and others, and continue to support survey quality, PORD launched a review process in 2017 and has undertaken the following activities:

- Preliminary consultations in 2017 with departments and agencies and with industry (via [buyandsell.gc.ca](#));
- Targeted consultations with internal experts (e.g., Access to Information and Privacy, Statistics Canada, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, PSPC Accessibility Office);
- A literature review outlining contextual changes and implications for Government of Canada public opinion research;
- An Advisory panel of experts providing advice and recommendations on key changes to the standards.

These review activities have led to content changes for many aspects of the standards, for example pertaining to data collection via mobile devices; multi-mode surveys; the statistical treatment of probability samples versus non-probability sample; privacy and data security; survey accessibility; and ways for respondents to verify the legitimacy of a survey as a GC research initiative.

Of particular note, PSPC's goal is to ensure that the goods and services the GC buys are inclusive by design and accessible by default. Considering accessibility in public procurements is now an obligation in the Treasury Board Contracting Policy and, accessibility criteria must be included in the requirements for goods and services, where appropriate. For this reason, PORD has included statements related to survey accessibility in the attached draft standards for telephone surveys and online surveys, and would like to hear from research firms whether they would be well-positioned to comply. Further, in cases where research firms are already complying with, or working towards complying with specific accessibility standards (whether Canadian or international), PORD would like to know the names of those standards. Please refer to Annex "C" – Accessibility Compliance.

This RFI is not a bid solicitation, however the finalized standards will be incorporated in the GC's future POR Standing Offers, and will become a contractual requirement for research conducted on behalf of the GC. In this context, we are inviting research suppliers to review the following attached draft standards documents:

Annex "A": Telephone survey standards

Annex "B": Online survey standards

Annex "C": Accessibility Compliance

Interested suppliers, industry associations, and disability organizations are encouraged to provide comments and a rationale for any suggested modifications, deletions or additions that they include in their response to this RFI.

Once finalized, the updated standards will be posted on PSPC's website, approximately in late spring 2020.

TREATMENT OF RESPONSES

- a) **Use of Responses:** Responses received may be used by Canada to modify the draft standards. Canada will review all responses that are received by the RFI closing date, and may at its discretion review responses received after the RFI closing date.
- b) **Review Team:** A review team composed of representatives of Canada will review the responses. Canada reserves the right to engage any independent, or use any Government resources that it considers necessary to review any response. Not all members of the review team will necessarily review all responses.
- c) **Confidentiality:** Respondents should mark any portions of their response that they consider proprietary or confidential. Canada will handle the responses in accordance with the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act.
- d) **Follow-up Activity:** Canada reserves the right to accept or reject any or all suggestions received. Canada may, at its discretion, contact any respondent to follow up with additional questions or for clarification of any aspect of a response.

ENQUIRIES

Because this is not a bid solicitation, Canada will not necessarily respond to enquires in writing or by circulating answers to all potential suppliers. However, respondents with questions regarding this RFI may direct their enquiries to:

CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

Paola Amaral

Email: paola.amaral@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca

Telephone: 613-998-8588

Mobile: 343-550-7181

Mail: 12 - 360 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

Interested parties must submit their comments in writing to the Contracting Authority specified herein, before the above-mentioned RFI closing date. Canada will review all responses that are received by the RFI closing date, and may at its discretion review responses received after the RFI closing date.

Call-up No. - N° de la commande subséquente
EP363-202290/001/CY
Client Ref. No. - N° de réf. du client
EP363-20-2290

Amd. No. - N° de la modif.
File No. - N° du dossier
cy021.EP363-202290

Buyer ID - Id de l'acheteur
cy021
CCC No./N° CCC - FMS No./N° VME

Written responses can be submitted by email or other delivery method to the attention of Paola Amaral.

Responses may be submitted in either official language of Canada.

REFERENCES

[Treasury Board's Directive on the Management of Communications Contracting Policy](#)
[Annual reports on Public Opinion Research](#)
[Security Requirements for Contracting with the Government of Canada](#)
[Standard on Web Accessibility](#)
[Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research—Qualitative Research](#)
[Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research—Telephone Surveys](#)
[Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research—Online Surveys](#)

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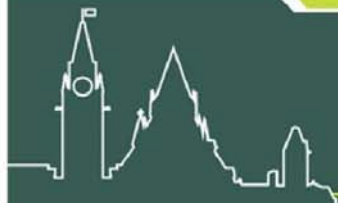
ANNEX "A"
TELEPHONE SURVEY STANDARDS



Public Works and
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Canada

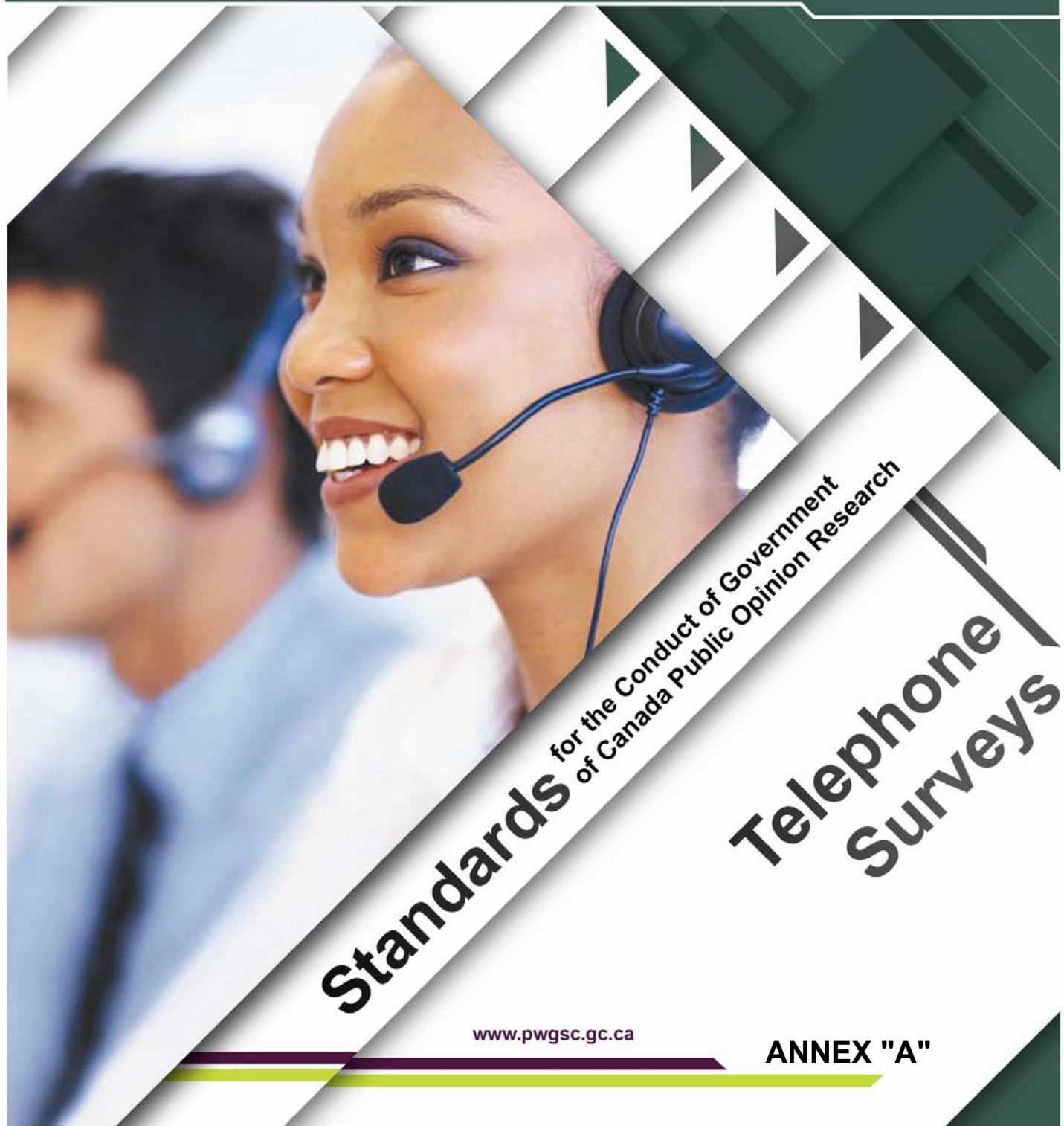
Travaux publics et
Services gouvernementaux
Canada

Canada



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GOVERNMENT,
Serving
CANADIANS.



Standards for the Conduct of Government
of Canada Public Opinion Research

**Telephone
Surveys**

www.pwgsc.gc.ca

ANNEX "A"

DRAFT for consultation purposes only

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For more information, please contact the
Public Opinion Research Directorate at: 613-995-9837.

Internet version: <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/rop-por/telephone-eng.html>
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Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research

Telephone Surveys 2020

Prepared by Public Services and Procurement Canada

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IMPORTANT NOTES

The following standards are for custom telephone public opinion research surveys conducted for the Government of Canada (see endnote [SON1](#)), where respondent input is provided primarily by voice. The standards were developed to help ensure that the level of quality of these surveys is consistently high, is transparent to research users, and aligns with the intended use of the research. If you have any questions related to this document, please contact the Public Opinion Research Directorate at Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) by email at DGSIOpinionPublique.ISBPublicOpinion@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca, or by telephone at 613-995-9837.

A. APPLICABILITY OF THESE STANDARDS

These standards apply to custom telephone public opinion research surveys conducted for the Government of Canada by contracted third parties, including questions added to omnibus/syndicated surveys. Custom studies are those in which ownership of the data rests with Canada. The standards do not apply to syndicated studies (those in which ownership of the data rests with the researcher), unless the Government of Canada contracts to place custom questions in addition to those already included in those studies. They also do not apply to internal surveys, i.e., those undertaken directly by Government of Canada departments and agencies without contracting to a third party. Nonetheless, PSPC invites all individuals to view these standards as a resource in support of the planning and execution of their internal telephone survey research projects.

To ensure that these standards are a primary consideration for researchers as they develop survey proposals, we recommend the following statement be included in all public-opinion-survey-related Statements of Work and Requests for Proposals issued by the Government of Canada:

The Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research must be respected and applied in whole to all aspects of the conduct of the research. The project authority must be informed should the firm determine that certain elements of the standards cannot be accommodated in the course of the contract. Justification must be provided and permission received from the project authority in writing in these instances.

These standards are to be understood as in addition to relevant laws, regulations, and policies, e.g., the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, the *Privacy Act*, the *Official Languages Act*, the *Accessible Canada Act*, the *Financial Administration Act*, the *Public Opinion Research Contract Regulations*, and the *Policy on Communications and Federal Identity*.

B. APPLICABILITY OF OTHER STANDARDS

Where no relevant Government of Canada standards exist, researchers must meet or exceed industry standards, including those identified by the project authority (client).

C. EXCEPTIONS

These standards were developed with “typical” studies in mind. It is recognized, however, that public opinion research surveys have individual characteristics, which can sometimes clash with a “one size fits all” approach. Therefore, while departments and agencies are

generally encouraged to apply the standards, they can also choose to waive a standard when they believe the characteristics of a study warrant it, or when a standard is not implementable. For example, some GC standards may not be implementable for custom questions added to omnibus/syndicated studies.

This document notes some of the more common instances in which it would be appropriate to waive or modify standards.

As departments and agencies are responsible for the quality of the research they undertake, no related procedure is required to waive or modify a standard. In keeping with due diligence, however, they must discuss the intention to waive or modify standards with the Public Opinion Research Directorate. They should also consider specifying which standard is being waived/modified and the related rationale in Statements of Work and other documents, such as researcher proposals and final reports.

D. FIVE-YEAR REVIEW

The following standards were first developed in 2009. Changes in technologies and other factors necessitate their periodic revision, which is carried out approximately every five years. These standards were most recently updated in 2020.

1. PROPOSAL DOCUMENTATION

Public opinion research contracts are based on the accepted final proposal from a research firm. As such, researchers must ensure that the proposal provides sufficient detail to clearly document all requirements, including those specified in the project authority's (client's) Statement of Work. Proposals must include all relevant information described below.

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. Research Purpose

- 1) Broadly describe the topic or issue to be examined and the overall intent of the research, including how the Government of Canada intends to use the results.

1.1.2. Research Objectives

- 1) Detail the specific research objectives that the research project will address (or the key questions that will be answered) in order to achieve the broader purpose.

1.2. Technical Specifications of the Research

1.2.1. Overview

- 1) Provide a brief statement summarizing:
 - a) Data collection mode(s), method(s) used to select a sample (probability, non-probability or census), and rationale for proposed methodology.
 - b) Expected final sample size (i.e., number of completed interviews).
 - c) Target population.
- 2) State that the recommended research design is cost-effective, will produce quality results, and is appropriate to meet the objectives of the research, along with a rationale for the recommendation.
- 3) Describe how respondents will be able to verify the legitimacy of the survey as a research initiative sponsored by the Government of Canada.
- 4) Identify the individual researcher(s) who will have supervising authority and accountability for the project, and state that they will be replaced only in consultation with the client and following written agreement from PSPC.
- 5) Identify all subcontractors that will be used for any aspect of the research (e.g., for fieldwork/data collection).
- 6) State that all field staff directly involved in data collection (i.e., interviewers/recruiters) will be located in Canada, and that survey data will be stored on servers and back-up servers located solely in Canada (as specified in detail in [subsection 13.3.](#)).
- 7) State that a signed statement of political neutrality will be submitted as part of the final research report.
- 8) Agree that the executive summary and report can be posted on the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) website or on any other Government of Canada website.

- 9) State that respondents will be informed of their rights under the *Privacy Act*, the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* and the *Access to Information Act*, and that respondents' rights will be protected throughout the research process.

1.2.2. Sample/Sampling Details

- 1) Provide details related to the target population and sample size:
 - a) The definition of the target population in terms of its specific characteristics and geographic scope, including the assumed incidence of the population and any key sub-groups, and how the incidence was determined (e.g., supplied by the client, previous research, or a credible external source).
 - b) The total sample size and the sample composition, including the targeted sample sizes of any key sub-groups.
- 2) Describe the sampling method, including:
 - a) Whether a sample survey or a census will be conducted. To be described as a census, an attempt must be made to collect data from every member of the target population.
 - b) If a sample survey is used, describe whether probability or non-probability sampling will be applied. To be described as a probability sample, the sampling method must meet both of the following conditions: (1) respondents are randomly selected from the survey's target population, and (2) all units in the target population have a known, non-zero probability of being included in the sample.
 - c) A rationale for the chosen sampling method (whether census, probability or non-probability) and how it supports the achievement of the research objectives. In the case of non-probability samples, the rationale must take into account the limitations in generalizing the results to the target population and acknowledge that statistics must not be applied when reporting on the collected data.
 - d) If non-probability sampling will be used, it must not be described as a representative sampling of the target population.
- 3) Describe the sampling frame for the census or sample survey, including:
 - a) The type of sampling frame(s) (e.g., client list, telephone directory) and the extent to which the sampling frame covers the target population, including, if applicable:
 - i. Identifying under-coverage by describing any segments of the target population that are not covered by the frame (e.g., excluded provinces/territories or rural areas, households without landlines, or excluded non-panel members in the case of panel surveys). National probability samples must not exclude any area codes, including the territories.
 - ii. The estimated size of non-covered segments or an explanation why a size estimate cannot be provided.
 - iii. A description of any over-coverage and/or overlap in sampling frames (e.g., when a dual sampling frame is used), in the same manner as for under-coverage.
 - b) If applicable, the reason why no sampling frame or list will be used.

- 4) Describe the origin of the sample for the census or sample survey, including:
 - a) The sample source(s) (e.g., Government of Canada department or program, online telephone directory, panel). If it will be provided by a third party, provide the name of the sample supplier.
 - b) If websites or social media platforms will be used as sources for a sample survey (e.g., to collect phone numbers of potential respondents), the measures that the researcher will implement to confirm respondent eligibility and authenticity.
- 5) When more than one sample source or panel will be used to create the sampling frame, also provide the following:
 - a) The rationale for sourcing samples from more than one source or panel.
 - b) Steps that the researcher will take to ensure that individuals included by more than one of the sources or panels are not contacted to respond to the survey more than once.
 - c) For sample surveys intended to produce generalizable results about the general population or most of its subgroups, the ratio of cellphone sample to landline sample and the rationale for the ratio.
- 6) Describe the sample design and selection procedures for sample surveys, including:
 - a) Sample stratification variables (if any).
 - b) Sample selection procedures when selecting from a list (if relevant).
 - c) Any multi-stage sampling steps taken (e.g., enumeration areas, followed by households, followed by respondents).
 - d) Respondent eligibility/screening criteria and all variables used, and targets set, for strata sample sizes or for quota controls (e.g., gender, age group), including the rationale for each target or quota control (e.g., underlying benchmarks or parameters from census data or another high-quality data source).
 - e) In the case of panel samples, that respondents who are panel members may not have participated in any Government of Canada survey in the previous 30 days as a member of that panel or in a survey on similar subject matter by any mode, except when a study's research design requires a follow-up survey with respondents who have agreed during the initial survey to be re-contacted for that purpose.
- 7) When the research design or selection procedures will not allow the calculation of a response rate or participation rate, describe the design/selection procedure and any potential sampling bias that may result.
- 8) Provide an assessment of how likely the targeted final sample size can be achieved by the census or sample survey, taking into account such factors as the expected response rate, and in the case of panels, the active panel size and exclusion rules involving past survey participation.
- 9) When the sample will be drawn from one or more panels, describe the following for each panel:
 - a) The panel identity and source.
 - b) Active panel size in relation to the survey's target population, i.e., the number of panel members that correspond to the target population and that are available to be surveyed or screened.

- c) How the panel is recruited and maintained, including the recruitment sources used to populate it on an ongoing basis, and the proportion of panelists per source, if possible.
 - d) Any ongoing rewards or incentives for panel members who are not associated with taking part in a specific research project/survey.
 - e) How a sample of the survey's target population will be drawn from the panel, including whether existing panelist profile data will be used to identify eligible respondents and whether eligibility criteria will be re-validated during survey administration and, if not, how profile data is kept accurate and up to date.
 - f) The incentive/honoraria respondents will be offered for taking part in the survey.
- 10) Describe any additional sampling limitations or potential for sampling bias in sample surveys.

1.2.3. Response Rate/Participation Rate and Sampling Error

- 1) State expected response rates/participation rates for each survey mode or research stage that is proposed (i.e., separate rates for telephone and online components, when both are used, and separate rates for cellphones and landlines, if applicable). The expected response rate/participation rate is an estimation based on various factors such as previous response rates/participation rates or established trends. The proposal should include a brief discussion of the factors that might cause the actual response/participation rate to fall short of the stated target.
- 2) For a census or attempted census, do not state a margin of sampling error, as no sample will be drawn.
- 3) For probability samples, state the level of precision, including the margin of sampling error and confidence interval for the sample(s). (See [subsection 14.2.5](#) for detailed requirements related to margin of sampling error.)
- 4) Describe specific procedures that will be applied to prevent or minimize the impact of potential sampling errors or non-sampling errors (e.g., coverage, non-response), on the research findings.
- 5) For non-probability samples, research proposals must not include any of the following:
 - a) Margins of sampling error.
 - b) Alternative measures of precision.
 - c) Statements indicating that the sample has a level of sampling error equivalent to a probability sample of similar size.

1.2.4. Data Collection

- 1) State the mode of data collection (i.e., telephone) and whether landline and/or cellphone will be used.
- 2) For multi-mode surveys, i.e., where some respondents will complete the survey via one mode (e.g., telephone) and some respondents will complete the survey via another mode (e.g., online), provide the following:
 - a) The rationale for using a multi-mode rather than single-mode method.

- b) The rationale for the specific modes that will be used.
 - c) A description of the steps that will be taken to reduce the likelihood of mode biases, and to detect any mode biases.
- 3) For multi-stage surveys, where respondents complete the questionnaire in distinct stages, which may also involve switching modes between stages (e.g. the first part of the questionnaire is completed by phone and then the second part is completed online), provide a rationale for using a multi-stage rather than single-stage method, and a rationale for all modes that will be used.
- 4) Provide details on respondents' incentives/honoraria where applicable, including a rationale for the following (see [section 6.4](#) for considerations regarding incentives):
 - a) The type of incentive/honorarium (e.g., monetary, non-monetary).
 - b) The nature of the incentive (e.g., cash, prizes, reward points, charitable donations).
 - c) The estimated dollar value.
- 5) Describe how language requirements will be addressed during data collection.
- 6) Indicate the number of call attempts and explain call-back procedures.
- 7) Describe the planned fieldwork validation methods and procedures.
- 8) Describe how the rights of respondents/participants will be respected, including those of children, youth and vulnerable respondents, if applicable (see [section 5.](#))
- 9) Describe any efforts, as feasible, to make the telephone survey accessible for all eligible respondents and to facilitate their participation, e.g. using assistive technologies or alternative modes of data collection.

1.2.5. Questionnaire Design

- 1) Provide the approximate duration of the questionnaire in minutes.
- 2) Specify the maximum number of open-ends.
- 3) Describe how the questionnaire will be pre-tested, including:
 - a) The objectives of the pre-test.
 - b) The method for the pre-test.
 - c) The number of pre-test interviews to be completed, and if relevant, the number of pre-tests for specific subgroups of the target population (e.g., when questionnaire effectiveness may vary by language, age, level of education or other characteristic).
 - d) How the client can monitor the pre-test if the client so chooses, and how the results of the pre-test will be documented and provided to the client.

Note: If no pre-test will be conducted, a rationale must be provided.

1.2.6. Data Processing/Data Management

- 1) Describe safeguards to ensure respondent confidentiality and protection of personally identifiable information throughout data processing and data management.
- 2) Where known in advance, describe any proposed weighting.

1.2.7. Data Analysis

- 1) Briefly describe how the data will be analyzed in order to address the objectives/research questions, including any special analyses (e.g., segmentation, conjoint analysis).
- 2) For multi-mode surveys, state whether results will be reported separately by mode and/or by combining the data across modes.

1.2.8. Deliverables

- 1) List all deliverables, including their language, format, means of delivery, and number of copies, including at minimum:
 - a) Questionnaire(s) and pre-test documentation, if relevant.
 - b) Tabulated data.
 - c) Report(s).
 - d) Presentation(s), including the specific locations, if relevant.

1.2.9. Project Work Plan

- 1) Provide a detailed work plan with scheduled dates, and identify responsibilities.

1.2.10. Project Cost

- 1) Present cost information in the format designated by PSPC.

2. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

2.1. General

- 1) Survey questionnaires must be designed:
 - a) To collect only the information relevant to the stated research objectives of the study.
 - b) To minimize respondent burden while maximizing data value and utility.
 - c) To be completed in a maximum duration of 15 minutes when administered by a live interviewer, or a maximum duration of seven minutes for Interactive Voice Response (IVR). If supported by a strong rationale, exceptions to these maximum-duration limits could include projects with specialized audiences and those with pre-arranged interviews when the respondent is aware the survey will take longer than 15 minutes.

2.2. Questionnaire Introductions

- 1) The following are required elements of all Government of Canada telephone survey questionnaire introductions:
 - a) In accordance with the *Official Languages Act* and policies, introductions must include an active offer of both official languages (English and French). The language that is offered first will depend on the province in which the respondent resides (e.g., in Quebec “Bonjour/Hello”; in the rest of Canada “Hello/Bonjour”.) When relevant to a specific survey, non-official languages may also be offered.

- b) Identify the Government of Canada or the department/agency sponsoring the survey. When there is a strong rationale, the sponsor may be identified at the end of the survey instead of in the introduction (e.g., for advertising post-tests).
- c) Inform respondents of the general subject and purpose of the study. The subject and purpose of the study may be expressed in general terms, as long as the wording used cannot be construed as an attempt to misinform respondents. When the researcher makes a convincing case that stating the subject and purpose of the survey at the outset is likely to bias the sample that chooses to participate and/or to bias participants' responses, these statements may be deferred to the conclusion of the survey.
- d) Inform respondents of the expected length of the interview.
- e) Identify the researcher (research firm) and interviewer (a pseudonym may be used for the interviewer as long as the individual remains identifiable to the research firm's internal management, for quality control purposes).
- f) Inform respondents that their participation in the study is voluntary and confidential.
- g) Inform respondents that their responses will remain anonymous. In exceptional cases where the research objectives require that respondents' identity be revealed, the informed consent of the respondent must be obtained.
- h) Confirm that respondents are in a location where it is safe and convenient to be interviewed. If the interviewer perceives that the respondents' setting may endanger them (e.g., driving a vehicle), hinder their participation (e.g., background distractions), or hamper their ability to respond openly (e.g., lack of privacy), the interviewer should take proactive steps, such as rescheduling the interview.
- i) Inform respondents how they can verify the legitimacy of the survey as a research initiative sponsored by the Government of Canada.

For example, the following introduction **could** be used for telephone questionnaires:

Hello/Bonjour (pause), the Government of Canada is conducting a research survey on SUBJECT. Would you prefer that I continue in English or French? Préférez-vous continuer en français ou en anglais?

Note: If at this point the respondent prefers to respond in French, then the interviewer must be able to either proceed with the interview in French or read the following statement: "Je vous remercie. Quelqu'un vous rappellera bientôt pour mener le sondage en français."

My name is **FIRST NAME** of **NAME OF FIRM**, the company hired to do the survey. The survey takes about ## minutes to complete. Should you have any question about the survey, I can give you a contact person within the **GOVERNMENT OF CANADA/DEPARTMENT NAME**. Your participation is voluntary and confidential. Your answers will remain anonymous, and the information you provide will be administered according to the requirements of the *Privacy Act*, the *Access to Information Act*, and any other pertinent legislation. Is this a safe and convenient time for you? May I continue?

- 2) Interviewers must be prepared to repeat all or parts of the survey introduction or instructions, if requested by the respondent. In addition, interviewers must have information readily available for answering respondents' questions regarding how respondents were chosen, how privacy is protected, how they can verify that the survey is legitimately sponsored by the Government of Canada, and where the survey results can be obtained. (See [section 6.1](#) for more information on project briefing of fieldworkers).
- 3) Interviewers must be prepared to address individual respondents' accessibility issues by offering and facilitating their participation through alternative modes of data collection and/or assistive technologies, as feasible and available.

2.3. Demographic Questions

- 1) For surveys of the general population, the data from the demographic questions (along with the recording of geographic location) should allow comparison with official Statistics Canada population data for the purpose of non-response analysis, and facilitate the comparison of results among Government of Canada public opinion research studies. (See [section 14.2.5](#) for further detail on non-response bias.)
- 2) The standard set of demographic questions below must be included in all telephone surveys of the general population, unless a convincing argument is made that the research objectives are better served by excluding one or more of them. This does not preclude the use of additional demographic questions.
- 3) When surveying business or organizational populations, these standard demographic questions should be included whenever relevant, such as when the unit of analysis is the individual rather than the business or organization.
- 4) The wording used for each demographic question and its response categories must be that provided below, unless a convincing argument is made that particular research objectives require alternative wording. Note that for certain questions (e.g., age, income), the response categories may be further broken down if desired, **as long as** they can be reconstituted to yield the mandatory categories.

The exception is that for demographic questions that have relatively long lists of response options that proceed linearly (e.g. age, household income), researchers have the option of modifying the wording of the question to allow the interviewer to instruct a respondent to stop at the category that applies to them. For example, the required wording of a question could be modified by prefacing it with an introduction like: *Please stop me at the category that best describes your...* (Insert demographic dimension).

- 5) Prior to administering demographic questions at the end of the questionnaire, respondents should be informed of the purpose of the questions, and be reassured that their answers will remain anonymous and confidential.
- 6) Although the ordering of questions and the preamble wording may be modified, the following demographics questions **must** be used for telephone questionnaires:

[PREAMBLE] These last few questions will allow us to compare the survey results among different groups of respondents. Your answers will remain anonymous and confidential.

Gender

What is your gender?

Female

Male

Other*

[DO NOT READ] Prefer not to answer

*The “Other” response option could be expanded into a longer list of response options or into an “*Other-Please Specify*” option, depending on the objectives of the survey.

Age

In what year were you born? [Record year – XXXX]

[IF THE RESPONDENT PREFERS NOT TO PROVIDE A PRECISE BIRTH YEAR, ASK:]

Would you be willing to tell me in which of the following age categories you belong?

18 to 24

25 to 34

35 to 44

45 to 54

55 to 64

OR 65 or older?

[DO NOT READ] Prefer not to answer

Education

What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed? [READ LIST]

Less than a High School diploma or equivalent

High School diploma or equivalent

Registered Apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma

College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma

University certificate or diploma below bachelor's level

Bachelor's degree

Post graduate degree above bachelor's level

[DO NOT READ] Prefer not to answer

Language Spoken at Home

What language do you speak most often at home? [ACCEPT ALL THAT APPLY]

English

French

Other [SPECIFY OR DO NOT SPECIFY DEPENDING ON THE NEEDS OF THE STUDY]

[DO NOT READ] Prefer not to answer

Household Income

Which of the following best describes your total household income last year, before taxes, from all sources for all household members?

[READ LIST]?

Under \$20,000

\$20,000 to just under \$40,000

\$40,000 to just under \$60,000
\$60,000 to just under \$80,000
\$80,000 to just under \$100,000
\$100,000 to just under \$150,000
\$150,000 and above
[DO NOT READ] Prefer not to answer

Household Telephone Status

Does your household subscribe to a home phone service, also known as a landline?

Yes
No
Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Prefer not to answer

How many working cellphones does your household have?

0
1
2
3
4 or more
Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Prefer not to answer

Geographic Location

May I have the first three digits of your postal code?

[DO NOT READ] Prefer not to answer

- 7) Additional demographic questions may be included when required to satisfy the survey objectives. When an optional demographic question from the list below is included in a survey, the researcher is strongly encouraged to use the exact wording provided for both the question and its response categories, in order to facilitate the cross-comparability of surveys commissioned by the Government of Canada.

Disability

Do you have a physical, mental, intellectual or other disability or condition that may limit your ability to take part in any or all areas of life and society?

Yes
No
[DO NOT READ] Prefer not to answer

[IF YES TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION, ASK:]

Which of the following categories best describes the nature of your disability or condition? [READ LIST — ACCEPT ALL THAT APPLY]

A chronic health condition or pain

A mobility issue
Issues with flexibility or dexterity
A seeing disability
A hearing disability
A sensory/environmental disability
A mental health issue
A cognitive disability
An intellectual disability
Other [SPECIFY OR DO NOT SPECIFY DEPENDING ON THE NEEDS OF THE STUDY]
[DO NOT READ] Prefer not to answer

Sexual Orientation

What is your sexual orientation?
Heterosexual (straight)
Homosexual (lesbian or gay)
Bisexual
Other [SPECIFY OR DO NOT SPECIFY DEPENDING ON THE NEEDS OF THE STUDY]
[DO NOT READ] Prefer not to answer

Mother Tongue

What is the language you first learned at home as a child and still understand? [READ LIST — ACCEPT ALL THAT APPLY]
English
French
Other [SPECIFY OR DO NOT SPECIFY DEPENDING ON THE NEEDS OF THE STUDY]
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Prefer not to answer

Employment Status

Which of the following categories best describes your current employment status? Are you... [READ LIST – ACCEPT ONE ANSWER ONLY]
Working full-time, that is, 35 or more hours per week?
Working part-time, that is, less than 35 hours per week?
Self-employed?
Unemployed, but looking for work?
A student attending school full-time?
Retired?
Not in the workforce? [FULL-TIME HOME MAKER, UNEMPLOYED, NOT LOOKING FOR WORK]
[DO NOT READ] Other – [DO NOT SPECIFY]
[DO NOT READ] Prefer not to answer

2.4. Multi-mode Questionnaires

- 1) When designing questionnaires for multi-mode surveys, researchers should:
 - a) Ensure as much comparability as possible in the wording, ordering and presentation of questions and response options across the different survey modes, to facilitate combining and comparing the collected data.

- b) Include benchmarking questions for which there are high-quality population data available to facilitate the detection of any mode biases, e.g., demographic, behavioural or attitudinal questions that may correlate with key measures in the survey.

3. PRE-TESTING

3.1. General

- 1) Pre-test all components of a new or revised survey questionnaire that may influence data quality, respondent behaviour, or interviewer performance.
- 2) Include probing that invites pre-test participants to provide input about their comprehension of, and reaction to, the questions. If requested by the client, a full cognitive pre-test should be conducted.
- 3) Before recruiting pre-test participants, seek the client's approval of socio-demographic characteristics to be targeted, to help ensure questionnaire effectiveness across key subgroups (by language, age, level of education, etc.)
- 4) Provide a means for the client to monitor pre-tests if the client so chooses (e.g., by telephone, in-person, or by audio-recording).
- 5) Conduct a minimum of 10 pre-test interviews in each language in which the final survey will be fielded. An exception could be projects with small survey populations, in which case the researcher must seek the client's approval to conduct a smaller number of pre-tests to ensure questionnaire quality; alternatively a cognitive pre-test may be warranted.
- 6) For multi-mode surveys, if one mode is interviewer-administered and another mode is self-administered by the respondent, conduct a minimum of 10 pre-test interviews in each language per mode.
- 7) Pre-test completions must not be included in the final dataset. Exceptions could be:
 - a) Projects with hard-to-reach target groups.
 - b) When **no** changes are made to the questionnaire following the pre-test.
- 8) Results of the pre-test(s) must be shared with the client before the questionnaire is finalized and approved. If shared verbally, written documentation of the pre-test results must follow as soon as possible afterwards. The documentation must include (at minimum):
 - a) A description of the pre-test approach and number of interviews completed in each language.
 - b) Findings and any resulting modifications.
 - c) Average survey completion time.
 - d) A statement of whether or not pre-test cases will be retained in the final data set.

4. RETAINING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

4.1. General

- 1) Researchers must make every reasonable effort to gain, retain and increase public confidence in their own organizations, and in public opinion research conducted for the Government of Canada.
- 2) Researchers must act in a manner that respects survey respondents and ensures their rights are protected as they relate to participation in Government of Canada survey research. Interviews must be conducted free of embarrassment and in an environment of trust and goodwill.
- 3) The researcher must take all reasonable steps to ensure that respondents are not in any way harmed or embarrassed by any interview, and that they are not in any way adversely affected as a result of it. Researchers must address sensitive subject matter in a way that will minimize discomfort and apprehension for both respondents and interviewers.

4.2. Respondent Rights and Protections

4.2.1. Informed Consent and Use of Information

- 1) In obtaining the necessary agreement from respondents to participate, the researcher must inform them of the study sponsor and of the general subject and purpose of the survey (subject to exceptions described in [section 2.2](#), paragraph 1), and that their participation is voluntary and confidential.
- 2) Survey questions must be limited to gathering information relevant to the stated research objectives. The researcher must ensure that the data collected will not be used for any other purpose, unless the respondent provides explicit informed consent for that additional use (e.g., to help resolve a customer complaint).
- 3) The survey data and personal information must not under any circumstances be used for direct marketing or other sales approaches to the respondent or the respondent's household.
- 4) Researchers must answer any questions that the respondent has about the research in a clear, honest, and non-deceptive manner.

4.2.2. Right to Refuse

- 1) Researchers must respect the right of a respondent to refuse to participate in a survey or to respond to particular questions, and to terminate the interview at any point.

4.2.3. Language of Participation

- 1) Interviewers must include an active offer of both official languages (English and French) in questionnaire introductions, in accordance with the *Official Languages Act* and policies.

4.2.4. Accessibility

- 1) Researchers are required to make telephone surveys accessible for eligible respondents when standard data collection practices impede their participation, by

accommodating their needs, e.g., through assistive technologies or alternative modes of data collection, as feasible.

4.2.5. Identity of Interviewer, Research Firm

- 1) Interviewers must clearly state their name (first name or unique identifying nickname is sufficient) and the name of the research firm. If a respondent requests it, interviewers must provide contact information sufficient to allow them to re-contact the researcher without difficulty.

4.2.6. Protection of Anonymity and Confidentiality

- 1) The anonymity of respondents must be preserved, unless they have given their informed and explicit consent to the contrary. The researcher must ensure that the information will be used for research purposes only, OR, if requested by the respondent, to resolve a customer complaint. The same holds true when respondents' answers are, with their informed consent, linked or merged with pre-existing data that allows their identification (e.g., with administrative data from a Government of Canada program). Information must not be used for any non-research purpose, such as direct marketing, list-building, credit rating, fund-raising, or any marketing activities directed at those individual respondents.
- 2) Completed questionnaires or other material (e.g., digital media) containing respondent identity, or information that might allow respondents to be identified, must not be released by researchers to clients or other third parties.
- 3) When verbatim comments are collected, they must not be attributed to the respondent, directly or indirectly, without the respondent's explicit informed consent. Care must be taken when reporting verbatim comments to ensure that nothing in the comment, including content, vocabulary and/or style of speech, could serve to identify the individual respondent.
- 4) When recording or observation techniques will be used, researchers must advise the respondent at the beginning of the interview.

4.2.7. Use of Lists

- 1) Where lists are used for sample selection, the source of the list must be disclosed to potential respondents, if respondents ask. When the sample comprises individuals who are not employees of the Government of Canada, researchers must ensure that lists are permission-based for research purposes, including, when appropriate, obtaining written assurances from the list provider (who may be the client) that this is the case.
- 2) When the sample comprises employees of the Government of Canada, employee lists may be used even if no explicit permission to use that information for survey purposes has been obtained, as long as the survey topic is relevant to the respondents' employment (e.g., an employee satisfaction survey).
- 3) Client-supplied lists provided for specific projects must not be used for any other project or for adding names to the researcher's databases or panels. If they have been updated by the researcher during the project (e.g., to correct errors), those updated lists must be returned to the client upon completion of the project. All client-supplied lists still in the researcher's possession at project completion must be destroyed after any updates have been forwarded to the client.

4.3. Avoiding Nuisance or Harassment

- 1) Using the respondent's local time, telephone interviewing can be conducted only from 9:00 to 21:00 Monday to Friday, 10:00 to 21:00 Saturday, and 12:00 to 21:00 Sunday and statutory holidays, except when a pre-arranged interview is requested by the respondent outside these hours.
- 2) There must be no or minimal (one-second) pause before the interviewer acknowledges that a potential respondent has answered the telephone.

4.4. Use of Interactive Voice Response

Characteristics of Interactive Voice Response (IVR) surveys, notably the impersonal style conveyed by automation, may be inconsistent with the manner in which the Government of Canada usually wishes to engage Canadians. However:

- 1) IVR can be used as an alternative data collection method when the specific information to be collected is essential for making important decisions and cannot be obtained effectively through other means. For example,
 - a) When the opinions of a hard-to-reach (low-incidence) group are critical to the research objectives, and the very high call volume made economical by IVR is likely to markedly increase participation from members of that group in the survey.
 - b) For time-sensitive surveys where the field duration is very short.
 - c) As part of a mixed-mode design, e.g., when respondents identified through another survey mode are directed to an IVR, or a design in which there is switching between a live interviewer and IVR.
 - d) When there is significant risk of social desirability bias, and for recruitment of participants for other phases of research (e.g., to complete a longer online survey).
 - e) When respondents have agreed beforehand to this method.
- 2) When IVR is used, the survey introduction must include the same information required for interviews conducted by live interviewers (sponsor, purpose, researcher, participation is voluntary, assurance of confidentiality, etc.)
- 3) As required by the Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules, Part IV, section 4(d), of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), the introduction must provide an email address or postal mailing address and a local or toll-free number at which a representative can be reached, in addition to identifying the survey sponsor and purpose. If the IVR message exceeds sixty seconds, the same information must be repeated at the end of the call.
- 4) Early in the introduction, respondents must be provided with an easy method to opt out of the survey (e.g., by pressing a specific key) so that the call is terminated gracefully and no more calls are made to that number.
- 5) The same requirements for the time-of-day of calls and delay in acknowledging an answered call (see [section 4.3.](#)) apply to the use of IVR.
- 6) IVR surveys must follow the relevant rules in the Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules of the CRTC.

4.5. Photographs and Recordings

- 1) Photographs, video and audio recordings collected from survey respondents must be collected, processed and stored as personal data. They can be shared with a client only after respondents give informed consent, with knowledge of the specific purpose for which it will be used and once the data has been stripped of all personally identifiable information (such as through pixelization or voice modification). The client must agree to make no attempt to identify individual identities.

If respondents are asked to make recordings as part of their survey input, they should be given specific limited tasks (e.g. taking images of objects) that do not have the potential to capture the personal data of others.

5. DATA COLLECTION FROM CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE OR VULNERABLE RESPONDENTS

5.1. General

- 1) Researchers must take special care when interviewing children and young people and respondents who are otherwise vulnerable. (A "child" is defined as "under the age of 13" and a "young person" as "aged 13-15".) The welfare of children, young people and vulnerable persons must be the researcher's primary consideration. These respondents must not be disturbed or harmed by the interview experience. Sensitive topics or issues that could upset children and young people (e.g., relationships with other children or with parents, sexual activities, use of drugs or alcohol) or vulnerable persons (e.g., social embarrassment related to the source of their vulnerability) must be dealt with using special care, to minimize any discomfort or apprehension.
- 2) All explanations related to data protection, privacy policy, adult consent and other notices must be capable of being understood by children.
- 3) In addition to these standards, researchers must observe all relevant laws specifically related to children and young people.

5.2. Consent of Responsible Adult

- 1) When interviewing a child or young person under 16, interviewers must obtain the consent of the parent or responsible adult (guardian, etc.) before the child/young person is approached for an interview. Sufficient information must be provided to this responsible adult to enable an informed decision about giving such consent. In particular, the researcher must specify the nature of any potentially sensitive questions when seeking parental consent for the child's/young person's participation in the research. The name of the adult giving the consent must be recorded, as well as that person's relationship to the child/young person.
- 2) The adult's consent allows the interviewer only to invite the child/young person to participate. The child/young person must be given an opportunity to agree or refuse to take part in the survey. To that end, the researcher must inform the child/young person of the purpose of the research in terms that the person is likely to readily understand.

- 3) When conducting telephone interviews, it might be difficult to determine with certainty the age of the respondent and whether or not the consent of a responsible adult is required. The researcher must make every reasonable effort to comply with the requirements set out in these standards.
- 4) When it is not possible to obtain parental/guardian consent (e.g., street kids) **and** the client deems that the benefits of the research will outweigh the possible harm to respondents (e.g., youth engaged in risky behaviour), the client may choose to waive the researcher's responsibility to follow this standard.

5.3. Adult Accompaniment

- 1) For studies with sensitive subject matter, it is recommended that interviewers suggest that a responsible adult (aside from the interviewer) remains close – not necessarily in the same room – while the interview is carried out, in the event that the child or young person reacts negatively during the interview and requires attention.

5.4. Collection of Personal Information

- 1) Personal information relating to other people (e.g., parents) must not be collected from children. Consistent with the *Privacy Act* and the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Document Act*, "personal information" means information about an identifiable individual. The researcher may collect the contact information of a parent or responsible adult for purposes of obtaining parental consent.

6. DATA COLLECTION

6.1. Project Briefing

- 1) Fieldworkers must be given a briefing and/or instructions for each project.
- 2) The briefing and/or instructions will be the responsibility of a staff member with a full understanding of the project requirements.
- 3) Briefings and/or instructions should be delivered face-to-face whenever possible; however, other means are acceptable (e.g., phone or recordings). Records must be kept to show the content of the briefing/instructions and that all fieldworkers allocated to the project were briefed/instructed. Briefings and/or instructions in writing only should be avoided.
- 4) The briefing must be of sufficient detail as to ensure that each interviewer is familiar with the questionnaire, the sample and respondent selection procedures, and potential problem areas in the administration of the survey. Interviewers must be familiar with question wording before commencing with the interviews. Normal standards of practice include rehearsal interviews and pre-testing.
- 5) The briefing and/or instructions should also include, as appropriate, the following information:
 - a) Purpose of the project.
 - b) Sponsor of the research.
 - c) How the information will be used.

- d) Means for respondents to verify survey legitimacy (e.g., client contact information).
- e) Fieldwork dates.
- f) Sampling procedure.
- g) Quotas to be attained.
- h) Methodology.
- i) Alternative modes of data collection and/or assistive technologies that are available to address respondents' potential accessibility issues.
- j) Other special requirements of the project.
- k) Instructions/conditions for administration of the questionnaire.

6.2. Call Attempts

- 1) Researchers must make a minimum of six call attempts before retiring a landline telephone number or substituting it with another number, or a minimum of five call attempts in the case of a cellphone number. The call attempts must be made at varying days and times over a minimum seven-day period, except when the field period is too short to allow this.
- 2) Call attempts must be recorded and retained as part of the disposition of the contact sample, so that outcomes rates may be calculated, as [per section 7](#).
- 3) If an appointment is arranged, every effort must be made to call back the respondent on the agreed date and time.
- 4) Researchers must make no attempt to call back refusals.

6.3. Fieldwork Validation

6.3.1. General

- 1) Researchers will carry out validation to establish that data collection by fieldworkers has been carried out according to project instructions, including administering questionnaires in the manner that they were designed to be administered.
- 2) Validation must be carried out as soon as practical after the fieldwork, and before the resulting data are processed and/or reported to clients.
- 3) Clients must be given an opportunity to check the quality/validity of fieldwork, subject to any applicable legal constraints.

6.3.2. Validation Methods

- 1) Depending on the type of data collection, validation must be undertaken as specified below, by means of ongoing monitoring, checking the data records produced (e.g., questionnaires, Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) data files), and/or re-contacting respondents.
- 2) Ongoing monitoring must be carried out throughout the field period. Monitoring will involve listening to interviews as they are being carried out (using appropriate equipment) or listening to recordings of the interviews.
- 3) Checking of data records may involve, as appropriate, validating the completeness of the data records, that strata sample sizes or quotas are respected, that

responses are consistent, and comparing responses against normal data or between fieldworkers. Checks may be made manually or by computer.

- 4) Respondent re-contact must include confirming that the interview took place and that instructions were followed, the length of the interview, and responses to key questions, including demographics and other qualifying questions related to strata/quotas, etc. Re-contact may be by any medium involving direct communication with the respondent (e.g., face-to-face, by phone, or by email).
- 5) Both interviewer and respondent must be audible. Interviewers should be aware that any interview may be monitored, but not know whether a specific interview is being monitored. Where interviewing is multilingual, staff fluent in the relevant languages must carry out monitoring.

6.3.3. Validation Levels

- 1) The researcher must validate the data collection, by either monitoring or re-contacting respondents to the levels shown below, whether or not data records are also checked. Validation levels must be calculated on the basis of achieved interviews and achieved validations.
 - a) The minimum monitoring validation level must be 10% of the interviews/cases, with at least 75% of the whole interview monitored/listened to.
 - b) The minimum re-contact validation level must be 10% of the interviews/cases.
- 2) Every fieldworker working on a project must be validated or monitored.
- 3) If re-contact validation identifies frequent or recurring problems with an individual fieldworker's work, that fieldworker's interviews (on the project) must be 100% validated, and any non-validated interviews must be rejected.
- 4) In exceptional cases, it can be organizationally impossible to carry out re-contact or monitoring to the required level, or at all, or it may be considered contrary to respondents' interests. In such cases, project records must explain why this is the case and what other steps (e.g., checking data records) have been taken to validate data collection.

6.4. Incentives/Honoraria

6.4.1. General

- 1) When including incentives/honoraria in a project, researchers must ensure that it is legal and ethical to do so. Survey incentives must not be coercive or unduly affect a respondent's choice to voluntarily participate.
- 2) Researchers should consider whether incentives/honoraria are necessary for achieving the research objectives within the project timeline, and whether alternative means could be effective for motivating participation.
- 3) When selecting the type and value of incentives/honoraria, researchers should minimize their potential to introduce bias or error in the final sample, e.g., by affecting the response rates of various segments of the target population differently.

6.4.2. Children, Young People or Vulnerable Individuals

- 1) When survey respondents are children, young people or vulnerable individuals, the researcher must:
 - a) Take ethical considerations into account before including an incentive or determining its type and value (e.g., ensure payment is not coercive, and does not expose children, young people or vulnerable individuals to a risk that they would otherwise have avoided).
 - b) Decide in advance who will receive an incentive, i.e., the parent / responsible adult (e.g., guardian), the respondent, or both.
 - c) Obtain the agreement of the parent or responsible adult before offering any incentive to the child, young person, or vulnerable individual.

6.4.3. Incentives for Government of Canada Employees

- 1) Incentives should not be provided to employees of the Government of Canada for research conducted while on duty (i.e., during working hours).
- 2) Incentives may be offered to employees of the Government of Canada for research studies conducted while off duty (i.e., outside of working hours), as long as:
 - a) Employees are made aware that their acceptance cannot be misconstrued as an official duty and therefore subject to overtime.
 - b) Employees are made aware that they must consult the Treasury Board [*Policy on Conflict of Interest and Post-Employment*](#) or their organizational policy on conflict of interest, where applicable, and consider whether their acceptance of the incentive is likely to give rise to a conflict of interest with their official duties, to constrain their capacity to perform their official duties, or to undermine the neutrality of the public service.
 - c) If they have doubts as to whether accepting an incentive could breach the Policy, they should discuss the situation with their manager and, if necessary, report and seek written direction from their deputy head or their delegated authority.

7. OUTCOME RATES

7.1. General

- 1) Researchers should apply the definitions below when assigning cases to each case category and when calculating outcome rates.
- 2) Researchers must calculate the response rate/participation rate for telephone surveys in the manner described below, and include it in the final report that the Government of Canada's client will submit to Library and Archives Canada, as per the [*POR Contract Regulations*](#).

- 3) Monitoring of call dispositions/reasons for non-response must be carried out on an ongoing basis, throughout the entire field period, and this information must be provided to the client upon request.

7.2. Case Category Definitions

- 1) Cases involved in telephone surveys should be assigned to four broad categories:

Invalid numbers:

These can include only clearly invalid telephone numbers when surveying households, such as numbers not in service, fax/modem, and business/non-residential.

Unresolved (U):

These include all the cases where it cannot be established whether the call was made to an eligible or an ineligible respondent or unit (e.g., household). Examples include when a line is always busy, there is no response, or an answering machine or voice mail is reached but it cannot be established that this is not a household.

In-scope non-responding (IS):

These include all refusals, either implicit or explicit, whether at the household or respondent level; early break-offs of known eligible respondents; and other eligible non-respondents (e.g., illness/incapacity, language barrier).

Responding units (R):

These include cases (e.g., households) who would have participated but who were disqualified by the interviewer (e.g., not of the language group targeted; no one 18 years old or older living at this address). It also includes all completed interviews or partially completed interviews that meet the criteria set by the researcher to be included in the analysis of the data.

Unresolved (U), in-scope (IS), and responding units (R) are all included in the broad category of “potentially eligible” cases. However, invalid numbers/cases are not included in the calculation of outcome rates.

7.3. Outcome Rates Definitions

- 1) Researchers must calculate and report the response rate/participation rate as defined below. However, the other rates (cooperation, refusal and contact) are optional, and researchers are encouraged to include them in reports when the rates help to understand the causes of low response rates or provide context and insight regarding data quality.

Response Rate/Participation Rate:

Total number of responding units divided by the total number of potentially eligible cases (including those whose eligibility could not be determined).

Response Rate/Participation Rate = $R/(U+IS+R)$

The term “response rate” pertains only to probability sample surveys and censuses, while the term “participation rate” pertains only to non-probability sample surveys.

Cooperation Rate:

Total number of responding units divided by the total number of known eligible cases (excluding those whose eligibility could not be determined).

Refusal Rate:

Total number of refusals (including break-offs) divided by the total number of potentially eligible cases (including those whose eligibility could not be determined).

Contact Rate:

Total number of contacts that were made successfully (regardless of whether or not a contact was made with the targeted respondent, e.g., when a family member who does not qualify intercepts the call) divided by the total number of potentially eligible cases (including those whose eligibility could not be determined).

7.4. Outcome Rates for Multi-Mode Surveys

When calculating outcome rates for mixed-mode surveys, researchers should calculate the outcome rate for each mode or stage of sampling, and if feasible and appropriate, calculate a single aggregated outcome rate.

8. DATA ENTRY

- 1) The researcher must ensure that data entry specifications for CATI accurately reflect the client-approved questionnaire.
- 2) In rare cases where data are captured on paper questionnaires and entered into a database or other software:
 - a) The researcher must systematically verify data entry at a minimum level of 10% of completed surveys.
 - b) The work of each employee performing data entry must be verified, and verification must be undertaken by a second person.
 - c) If an employee’s work contains frequent errors, that employee’s work (on the project) must be 100% verified and all errors corrected. If necessary, appropriate retraining must be given to that employee until error rates are acceptable.

9. CODING

9.1. Developing Code Frames

- 1) The initial code list/frame must be developed based on a systematic review of a minimum of 10% of open-ended responses and 50% of partial open-ended responses, where a frame does not already exist. The initial code list/frame must be provided to the client for approval.
- 2) The researcher must ensure that coders working on the project are fluent in the language of the collected data that they are coding, and provided with instructions and training, which must include, as a minimum:
 - a) An overview of the project.
 - b) Identification of questions or variables to be coded.
 - c) The minimum proportion or number of completed questionnaires used to produce code frames.
 - d) Where necessary or appropriate, specific segments of the sample to consider when developing code frames (e.g., regions, user or non-user).
 - e) Guidelines for the inclusion of codes in the code frame (e.g., decisions or rules regarding what must be included or excluded from a given code).
 - f) Any use to be made of code frames from a previous project or stage.
 - g) Any other requirements or special instructions specific to the project.

9.2. Coding Procedures

- 1) Where “don’t know” and “no response” options have been used during data collection, these must remain distinguishable from each other during coding.
- 2) “Other” or catch-all categories must not exceed 10% of responses to any question.
- 3) Researchers must ensure that there is a systematic method of verifying the accuracy of coding for a minimum of 10% of questionnaires per project, and that the verification must be undertaken by a second person.

10. DATA EDITING/IMPUTATION

10.1. Standards

- 1) Researchers must keep an accurate record of any changes made to the original data set for a minimum of three years, to ensure that any changes undertaken can be replicated at a later date. All imputation processes used, and their logic, must be documented and provided to the client. All edit specifications must be documented.
- 2) Data editing/imputation must be used cautiously. The degree and impact of imputation must be considered when analyzing the data, as the imputation methods used may have a significant impact on distributions of data and the variance of estimates.
- 3) In those rare cases where data are captured in paper questionnaires and editing is required prior to data entry:

- a) It must be possible to distinguish the original answers of the respondent or interviewer from the codes or answers allocated by the person(s) carrying out the editing.
- b) The logic and rules applied must be documented, and employees performing the editing must be briefed about the types of verification and corrections they should carry out.

11. DATA ANALYSIS

11.1. Inferences and Comparisons

Researchers must base statements of comparisons and other statistical conclusions derived from survey data on generally accepted statistical practice.

11.2. Analysis Records

Researchers must keep accurate and descriptive records of the analysis process for a minimum of three years, to ensure that any analysis undertaken can be replicated at a later date.

11.3. Data Analysis Verification

- 1) Researchers must establish and follow procedures to verify the tabulations and other outputs to ensure the following:
 - a) Their completeness, i.e., that all tables are present as specified, including the results of all reported significance tests.
 - b) That abbreviations for headings or open-ended responses accurately reflect the full content.
 - c) That the base for each table is correct against other tables or frequency counts.
 - d) That the standard breaks/banner points are checked against source questions.
 - e) That all derived data items are checked against their source.
 - f) That the figures for subgroups and nets are correct.
 - g) That weighting is applied appropriately (e.g., by test tables).
 - h) That frequency counts are run prior to running tables, in order both to ensure the accuracy of data and to determine base sizes for subgroups.
 - i) Spelling and legibility.
 - j) That any statistical analysis used is appropriate and correct, in both its descriptive and inferential aspects.

12. DELIVERY OF DATA TABLES

12.1. Producing Stand-Alone Data Tables

- 1) When data are provided to the client, the following must be included, as appropriate:
 - a) The source question to which the data pertain.
 - b) A description of any weighting method applied to the data.
 - c) Clear identification of any subgroups used.
 - d) The sample bases for each question (i.e., the number of respondents who have actually answered the question).
 - e) The number or proportion of respondents who replied “don’t know” or gave no answer.
 - f) Both weighted and unweighted bases.
 - g) A definition and explanation of all variables used in the analysis of the data, such as any significance testing, indexing, scoring, scaling and calculations of means, medians, modes and standard deviations.
 - h) The types of statistical tests being used and their level of precision.
 - i) Information on cell suppression and other measures to assure confidentiality.
 - j) Warnings on results that may be unreliable because of very small sample sizes.

12.2. Electronic Data Delivery

- 1) Researchers must provide the client with a data file containing individual records, which has been checked for the following:
 - a) Completeness (i.e., all records are in the file).
 - b) Inclusion of all appropriate documentation to allow for replication of the data analysis and additional analyses, including, where applicable:
 - i. Labelling of the contents of the file, i.e., fully labelled variables and value labels.
 - ii. Identification and description of any computed or recoded variables, and instructions on limitations of use.
 - iii. Labelled weighting variables and a description of how these were applied.
 - iv. All personal identifiers per the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* have been removed from the files (i.e., any information that could identify specific individuals).

12.3. Respondent Confidentiality

- 1) To ensure respondent confidentiality, tabulated data must not show demographic or respondent characteristic categories with a column or row total of fewer than 10 respondents.

- 2) Particular care must be taken when respondent verbatim statements are included in data tables. Protection of confidentiality may require that larger minimum row and column totals are applied.

13. DATA SECURITY AND STORAGE

13.1. Retention of Technical Data

- 1) Researchers must, for a period of three years, maintain the technical data that are not already included in the final report and provide them to the client, if requested. Technical data to be maintained include:
 - a) The information pertaining to data processing and analysis, such as:
 - i. Raw data files.
 - ii. Code frames.
 - iii. Project files, including project management information and survey programming files.
 - iv. Relevant correspondence.
 - b) Where the format, content or layout of the raw data have been changed in any way – e.g., through editing, cleaning, or recoding the data – documentation of all changes must be kept.

13.2. Retention of Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

After their contract ends, researchers should retain personally identifiable information or data (whether provided by the client for sampling or data collection, or collected during the research) for no longer than one year, without a strong rationale agreed to by the client.

13.3. Protection of Data/Servers

- 1) Researchers must use up-to-date technologies to protect survey data collected or stored on servers or on portable devices (e.g., laptops, USB keys) against illegal or unsanctioned access by third parties (i.e. “hacking”). The researcher must also control access to all databases on which any data relating to the survey are stored, so that only individuals with the appropriate security clearance are able to access the database, either by using a password or other form of access control (such as biometric controls).
- 2) Because some jurisdictions allow their authorities, under certain circumstances, to access all data stored on servers located in that jurisdiction (e.g., in the United States under provisions of the *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act*, known as the USA PATRIOT Act: see the [Treasury Board Secretariat's overview](#)), the researcher must protect data against legally sanctioned access by ensuring that all call centres and interviewers employed in survey data collection be located in Canada. The researcher must also ensure that all databases containing any information related to the survey be stored on **servers and back-up servers** located solely in Canada.

- a) If the client has first consented in writing, these call centres and/or servers may be located in another country where:
 - i. Equivalent protections are given to personal information as in Canada under legislation such as the *Privacy Act*, R.S. 1985, c. P-21, and the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, S.C. 2000, c. 5, and under any applicable policies of the Government of Canada.
 - ii. The laws do not allow the government of that country or any other entity or person to seek or obtain the right to view or copy any information relating to the survey without first obtaining the client's written consent.
 - b) In connection with giving consent to locating a call centre and/or server in another country, the client may, at the client's option, require the researcher to provide a legal opinion (from a lawyer qualified in the foreign country) that the laws in that country meet the requirements of paragraph 2) a) above, or may require the researcher to pay for the Government of Canada to obtain such a legal opinion. The Government of Canada has the right to reject any request to store survey data in a country other than Canada if there is any reason to be concerned about the security, privacy, or integrity of the data. The Government of Canada may also require that any data sent or processed outside of Canada be encrypted with Government of Canada-approved cryptography, and that the private key required to decrypt the data be kept in Canada, in accordance with key management and storage processes approved by the Government of Canada.
 - c) The researcher must ensure that all servers, including back-up servers, on which any data relating to the survey are stored, be physically and logically independent (meaning there is no direct or indirect connection of any kind) from all other databases, unless those databases are located in Canada (or in another country approved by the client under paragraph 2) a)) and otherwise meet the requirements of this section.
 - d) The researcher must ensure that all data relating to the survey be processed only in Canada or in another country approved by the client under paragraph 2) a).
 - e) The researcher must ensure that all domestic network traffic (meaning traffic or transmissions initiated in one part of Canada to a destination or individual located in another part of Canada) be routed exclusively through Canada, unless the client has first consented in writing to an alternative route. The client will consider only requests to route domestic traffic through another country that meets the requirements of paragraph 2) a).
- 3) The researcher must not subcontract (including to an affiliate) any function that involves providing a subcontractor with access to any data relating to the survey unless the client first consents in writing.
 - 4) Protection of data from international surveys: When the target population for a survey comprises individuals residing in a jurisdiction outside Canada, researchers must ensure that data be stored in a manner consistent with the relevant laws of that jurisdiction.
 - 5) Protection against physical damage to servers: Researchers must also put in place measures to ensure the "physical" security of data and servers.

13.4. Temporary Storage of Data on Servers

If the temporary storage of data collected takes place on a server that is operated by another provider, the researcher must place the provider under the obligation to take the necessary steps to ensure that the requirements described in [subsection 13.3](#) be met. Temporary storage of the collected data on the server must be terminated at the earliest possible time.

13.5. Transmission of Data Internationally

Before data are sent over the Internet to another country, researchers must check with competent authorities that the data transfer is permissible. The recipient may need to provide safeguards necessary for the protection of the data and ensure compliance with the requirements described in [subsection 13.3](#).

13.6. In the Event of any Data Breach

In the event of any data breach, the client must be informed immediately, and provided with details about both the nature and the extent of the data breach.

14. SURVEY REPORT REQUIREMENTS

This section describes the **mandatory** survey report requirements, including those that are **legally required** under the *Public Opinion Research Contract Regulations* for all public opinion research conducted by an external research firm for the Government of Canada.

14.1. Regulatory and Administrative Mandatory Requirements

It is a legal requirement for federal institutions to send written reports to Library and Archives Canada (LAC) within six months of the completion of the data collection for all contracted public opinion research.

- 1) Pursuant to the *Public Opinion Research Contract Regulations*, the *Directive on the Management of Communications (Appendix C: Mandatory Procedures for Public Opinion Research)*, LAC deposit instructions, and PSPC instructions, final reports must include the following at a minimum:
 - a) On the covering page:
 - i. The title of the project.
 - ii. The name of the research firm that entered into the contract.
 - iii. The contract number, the contract value, and the award date.
 - iv. The POR Registration Number.
 - v. The delivery date (the date the final version of the report was received by the project authority).
 - vi. The name of the client department or agency sponsoring the research.
 - vii. The departmental contact information in the form of a generic email address.
 - viii. The departmental signature and the Canada wordmark.

- ix.* For the English report, the statement “Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.”
 - x.* For the French report, the statement “This report is also available in English.”
 - xi.* Copyright information, including the Government of Canada catalogue number, the International Standard Book Number (ISBN), copyright notice and year of publication, and departmental notice on the rights to reproduce the report.
 - b)* A narrative executive summary, in English and French, submitted separately and consisting of, at a minimum:
 - i.* A statement of the research purpose and objectives.
 - ii.* A summary of key findings, except where the person who entered into the contract is not responsible for the design, development of the methodology and analysis of the research.
 - iii.* A brief description of the methodology used.
 - iv.* A statement as to the extent to which the findings can be extrapolated to a broader audience.
 - v.* An outline of how the results were used, if possible, and if not
 - vi.* How the information is expected to be used.
 - vii.* A political neutrality certification signed by the research firm.
 - viii.* The contract value of the POR study.
 - c)* Appendices containing:
 - i.* A full set of tabulated data, which, to ensure respondent confidentiality, must in no case show demographic or respondent characteristic categories with a column or row total of fewer than 10 respondents.
 - ii.* Sample size, sampling procedures and dates of research fieldwork.
 - iii.* A discussion of the potential for bias in the research findings due to sampling errors or non-sampling errors (e.g., coverage, non-response).
 - iv.* If applicable, weighting procedures, the confidence interval, and the margin of error.
 - v.* If applicable, the response rate/participation rate and method of calculation.
 - vi.* The research instruments in all languages and, if applicable, the test material in all languages in which they were used and tested.
 - vii.* All other information about the execution of the fieldwork that would be needed to replicate the research initiative.

14.2. Additional Reporting Requirements

The following minimum details must be documented in the project report. These allow the reader to understand how the research project was conducted and the implications of its results.

14.2.1. Background

- 1) Detailed description of the project background including, at minimum:
 - a) Research purpose.
 - b) How the research will be used.
- 2) Specific research objectives, research questions.

14.2.2. Sample

- 1) Whether a sample survey or a census was conducted.
- 2) Detailed description of the following:
 - a) The target population for the research project and its geographic location (*where applicable*), as well as any key sub-groups.
 - b) The sample source(s), and if the sampling frame and/or the sample itself was provided by a third party, the name of the sample supplier.
 - c) The sampling frame(s) (e.g., lists, telephone records) and the extent to which the sampling frame covers the target population, identifying under-coverage by describing any segments of the target population that are not covered by the frame (e.g., excluded provinces/territories or rural areas, households without landlines, or excluded non-panel members in the case of panel surveys), and the estimated size of non-covered segments or an explanation why a size estimate cannot be provided.
 - d) If applicable, over-coverage and/or overlapping sampling frames (e.g., when a dual sampling frame is used, e.g. landline and cellphone frames) must be described in the same manner as under-coverage. If no sampling frame or list was utilized, this must be indicated.
 - e) The sampling method, including probability or non-probability, and the sampling design (e.g., stratification, clustering) or procedure for selecting respondents.
 - f) The rationale for the chosen sampling method, including how it supported the achievement of the research objectives. In the case of non-probability samples, the rationale must take into account the limitations in generalizing the results to the target population and acknowledge that statistics must not be applied when reporting on the collected data.
 - g) Screening procedures, including eligibility/screening criteria and any variables used, and targets set for strata sample sizes or for quota controls (e.g., gender), including the rationale for each target or quota control (e.g., underlying benchmarks or parameters from Census data or another high-quality data source).
 - h) If the sample was drawn from a pre-recruited panel or pool, the methods used to recruit the panelists or participants and the procedures for managing the membership, participation, maintenance and refreshment of the panel or pool.
 - i) The achieved sample size compared with the projected sample size, both for the overall sample and for any key sub-groups, as well as reasons for not obtaining the projected sample size, strata size targets, or quota controls, if applicable.
 - j) The weighting procedures, if applicable, including any underlying parameters or benchmarks used to establish the weights, and their source.

14.2.3. Data Collection

- 1) Detailed description of the methodology, including:
 - a) The data collection method(s), mode(s), and their rationale.
 - b) Accessibility provisions for respondents using adaptive technologies, if applicable.
 - c) The dates of fieldwork (for each phase/wave, if applicable).
 - d) The average interview duration and the range.
 - e) The type and amount of incentives, if applicable.
- 2) Any relevant stimuli (e.g., radio advertisement).
- 3) Details of any strategies used to help gain cooperation (e.g., advance contact, incentives/honoraria), whether for participation in a panel or for participation in a particular survey.

14.2.4. Quality Controls

- 1) A description of questionnaire pre-testing and any key resulting modifications to improve data quality or respondent experience, if applicable.
- 2) The estimating and imputation procedures, and any editing of the data, if applicable.
- 3) A brief summary of other quality controls and procedures used. Where applicable, this includes re-contacts to confirm that the interview occurred and/or to verify the respondent's identity, measures taken to prevent respondents from completing the same survey more than once, and other quality control procedures (e.g., logic checks and tests for speeding and patterning). If no such efforts were undertaken, this will be disclosed.
- 4) For multi-mode surveys, detailed description of any data quality issues arising from combining data collected via different modes/instruments. The description must also include:
 - a) Rationale for decisions about combining or not combining data from different modes in reporting the results.
 - b) Description of any steps taken to detect and mitigate mode effects and mode biases in the survey results.

14.2.5. Results

The detailed results in reports must include:

- 1) An executive summary of key results and conclusions, linked to the survey objectives and research questions.

- 2) Specifications for any indices constructed or statistical modeling in sufficient detail to allow replication.
- 3) For probability samples, state the level of precision, including the margin of sampling error and confidence interval for an observed percentage of 50% for yes-no (two option) type questions asked of the total sample and any key subgroups.

Clearly indicate that the results for subgroups have a larger margin of sampling error than for the overall sample because of their smaller sample sizes. Also, the margin of sampling error is highest for questions where 50% of the respondents gave one answer and the other 50% gave another answer. The margin of sampling error decreases for questions where the observed percentage for a particular response approaches 0% or 100%.

Results for subgroups must not be reported as significant differences in instances where differences between the groups are within the margin of sampling error for the survey as a whole.

- 4) When subsets of the sample (e.g., regions, age groups, language groups) have been over- or under-sampled, adjust for the design effect [S4N1](#) due to weighting when calculating the margin of sampling error.
- 5) For non-probability samples, the report and executive summary must contain a prominently displayed statement in the methodology description regarding why no margin of sampling error is reported, based on the following template: "The results of this survey are not statistically projectable to the target population because the sampling method used does not ensure that the sample represents the target population with a known margin of sampling error. Reported percentages are not generalizable to any group other than the sample studied, and therefore no formal statistical inferences can be drawn between the sample results and the broader target population it may be intended to reflect. [If weighting was done, include a sentence to describe the weighting, for example:] The sample data have been weighted to reflect the demographic composition of (target population)."
- 6) For non-probability surveys, no alternative measures of precision may be cited, and no statements may be made to indicate that the sample has a level of sampling error equivalent to a probability sample of similar size.
- 7) For census surveys, the report must contain a statement on why no margin of sampling error is reported, based on the following template: "Because the entire population of [target population] was invited to participate in this study, there is no margin of sampling error to be estimated or reported. The potential impact of non-sampling error due to non-response is discussed in the results section of the report. [If weighting was done, include the following statement:] The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of [the target population (if known) or the sampling frame (e.g., client-supplied list)] in relation to its key known characteristics."
- 8) For multi-mode surveys, if the data collected via different modes are combined for analysis and reporting purposes, the report must discuss whether this leads to any data quality issues. This could include, for example, discussion of possible impacts

of mode on key survey variables, the impact of any differences in response rate/participation rate by mode, and non-response bias analyses by mode.

- 9) The report must provide the final dispositions of cases in sufficient detail to allow secondary analysis of all reported outcome rates. The record of final case dispositions must identify invalid numbers, unresolved cases (U), in-scope non-responding units (IS), and responding units (R).
- 10) For all types of surveys (probability sample, non-probability sample, census) the report must state the response rate/participation rate achieved, which must be calculated according to the formula:

Response Rate/Participation Rate = $R/(U+IS+R)$

- 11) All survey reports must discuss the potential for non-response bias for the survey as a whole and for key survey variables. The report must describe, to the extent possible, the degree to which characteristics of the respondents match or depart from known characteristics (e.g., demographics) of the target population or sampling frame, and discuss the possible influence of any resulting non-response bias on the interpretation of survey results.
 - a) When authoritative sources of comparison exist, as is the case when conducting a survey of the general population, the analysis of non-response bias will consist of a comparison of at least three variables in the survey sample with the equivalent parameters of the population, normally available from Statistics Canada. No extra surveys or interviews are required.
 - b) If no authoritative sources of comparison exist, key variables in the sample could alternatively be compared to variables in the sampling frame. If no such variables exist, only then should the non-response bias discussion be based on comparison of early versus late responders or on observations made during data collection about characteristics of non-responders.
- 12) The results that are based on subgroups and the number of cases used in subgroup analysis (i.e., unweighted sample sizes for reported subgroup estimates.)

14.2.6. Appendices

The following materials must be provided in appendices attached to the final report:

- 1) Study materials, including, when relevant, the recruiting instruments, questionnaires, descriptions, transcriptions or representations of any visual or auditory aids, and other data collection documents, **in all languages in which the research was conducted.**
- 2) A version of the questionnaires displaying the following:
 - c) The exact wording and presentation of questions and response options whose results are reported. This includes preceding interviewer or respondent instructions and any preceding questions that might reasonably be expected to influence responses to the reported results.

- 3) Any other instructions (skip, terminate, etc.) needed to understand the logic and flow of the questionnaire.
- 4) A full set of tabulated data (see Regulatory and Administrative Mandatory requirements, [subsection 14.1.](#), paragraph 1) c) *i.*).
- 5) A statement of political neutrality signed by the researcher, as an appendix.

ENDNOTES

Important Notes

SON1: Survey projects may involve more than one methodology (e.g., on-line and telephone surveys). As such, it may be necessary to consult more than one set of standards.

Section 14.2.5 Results.

S4N1: The design effect due to weighting equals one plus the variance of the weights. The 'effective' sample size for which to calculate the margin of sampling error is the actual sample size divided by the design effect. (See: Spencer, B. 2000. An approximate design effect for unequal weighting when measurements may correlate with selection probabilities. *Survey Methodology* Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 137-138.)

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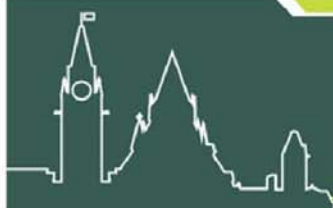
ANNEX "B"
ONLINE SURVEY STANDARDS



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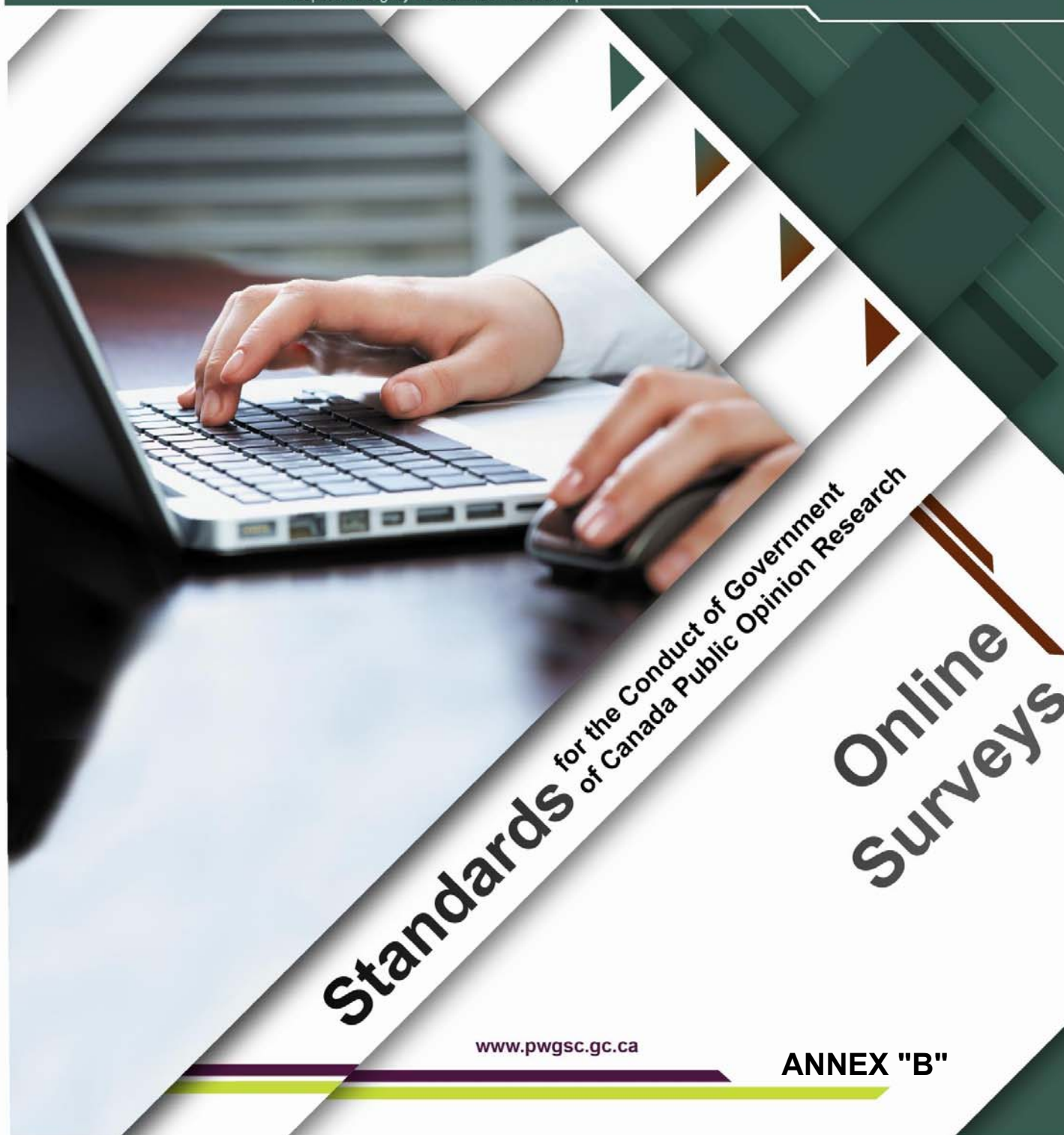
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**Online Surveys
2020**

Prepared by Public Services and Procurement Canada

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IMPORTANT NOTES

The following standards are for custom online public opinion research surveys conducted for the Government of Canada (see endnote [SON1](#)). The standards were developed to help ensure that the level of quality of these surveys is consistently high, is transparent to research users, and aligns with the intended use of the research. If you have any questions related to this document, please contact the Public Opinion Research Directorate at Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) by email at DGSIOpinionPublique.ISBPublicOpinion@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca or by telephone at 613-995-9837.

A. APPLICABILITY OF THESE STANDARDS

These standards apply to custom online public opinion research surveys conducted for the Government of Canada by contracted third parties, including questions added to omnibus/syndicated surveys. Custom studies are those in which ownership of the data rests with Canada. The standards do not apply to syndicated studies (those in which ownership of the data rests with the researcher) unless the Government of Canada contracts to place custom questions in addition to those already included in those studies. They also do not apply to internal surveys, i.e., those undertaken directly by Government of Canada departments and agencies without contracting to a third party. Nonetheless, PSPC invites all individuals to view these standards as a resource in support of the planning and execution of their internal online survey research projects.

To ensure that these standards are a primary consideration for researchers as they develop survey proposals, we recommend the following statement be included in all public-opinion-survey-related Statements of Work and Requests for Proposals issued by the Government of Canada:

The Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research must be respected and applied in whole to all aspects of the conduct of the research. The project authority must be informed should the firm determine that certain elements of the standards cannot be accommodated in the course of the contract. Justification must be provided and permission received from the project authority in writing in these instances.

These standards are to be understood as in addition to relevant laws, regulations, and policies, e.g., the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, the *Privacy Act*, the *Official Languages Act*, the *Accessible Canada Act*, the *Financial Administration Act*, the *Public Opinion Research Contract Regulations*, and the [Policy on Communications and Federal Identity](#).

B. APPLICABILITY OF OTHER STANDARDS

Where no relevant Government of Canada standards exist, researchers must meet or exceed industry standards, including those identified by the project authority (client).

C. EXCEPTIONS

These standards were developed with “typical” studies in mind. It is recognized, however, that public opinion research surveys have individual characteristics, which can sometimes clash with a “one size fits all” approach. Therefore, while departments and agencies are generally encouraged to apply the standards, they can also choose to waive a standard

when they believe the characteristics of a study warrant it, or when a standard is not implementable. For example, some GC standards may not be implementable for custom questions added to omnibus/syndicated studies.

This document notes some of the more common instances in which it would be appropriate to waive or modify standards.

As departments and agencies are responsible for the quality of the research they undertake, no related procedure is required to waive or modify a standard. In keeping with due diligence, however, they must discuss the intention to waive or modify standards with the Public Opinion Research Directorate. They should also consider specifying which standard is being waived/modified and the related rationale in Statements of Work and other documents, such as researcher proposals and final reports.

D. FIVE-YEAR REVIEW

The following standards were first developed in 2009. Changes in technologies and other factors necessitate their periodic revision, which is carried out approximately every five years. These standards were most recently updated in 2020.

1. PROPOSAL DOCUMENTATION

Public opinion research contracts are based on the accepted final proposal from a research firm. As such, researchers must ensure that the proposal provides sufficient detail to clearly document all requirements, including those specified in the project authority's (client's) Statement of Work. Proposals must include all relevant information described below.

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. Research Purpose

- 1) Broadly describe the topic or issue to be examined and the overall intent of the research, including how the Government of Canada intends to use the results.

1.1.2. Research Objectives

- 1) Detail the specific research objectives that the research project will address (or the key questions that will be answered) in order to achieve the broader purpose.

1.2. Technical Specifications of the Research

1.2.1. Overview

- 1) Provide a brief statement summarizing:
 - a) data collection mode(s), method(s) used to select a sample (probability, non-probability or census), and rationale for proposed methodology;
 - b) expected final sample size (i.e., number of completed interviews);
 - c) target population.
- 2) State that the recommended research design is cost-effective, will produce quality results, and is appropriate to meet the objectives of the research, along with a rationale for the recommendation.
- 3) Describe how respondents will be able to verify the legitimacy of the survey as a research initiative sponsored by the Government of Canada.
- 4) Identify the individual researcher(s) who will have supervising authority and accountability for the project, and state that these individual(s) will be replaced only in consultation with the client and following written agreement from PSPC.
- 5) Identify all subcontractors that will be used for any aspect of the research (e.g., for fieldwork/data collection).
- 6) State that all field staff directly involved in data collection will be located in Canada, and that survey data will be stored on servers and back-up servers located solely in Canada (as specified in detail in [subsection 12.3.](#)).
- 7) State that a signed statement of political neutrality will be submitted as part of the final research report.
- 8) Agree that the executive summary and report can be posted on the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) website or on any other Government of Canada website.
- 9) State that respondents will be informed of their rights under the *Privacy Act*, the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, and the *Access to*

Information Act, and that respondents' rights will be protected throughout the research process.

1.2.2. Sample/Sampling Details

- 1) Provide details related to the target population and sample size:
 - a) the definition of the target population in terms of its specific characteristics and geographic scope, including the assumed incidence of the population and any key sub-groups, and how the incidence was determined (e.g., supplied by the client, previous research, or a credible external source);
 - b) the total sample size and the sample composition, including the targeted sample sizes of any key sub-groups.
- 2) Describe the sampling method, including:
 - a) Whether a sample survey or a census will be conducted. To be described as a census, an attempt must be made to collect data from every member of the target population.
 - b) If a sample survey is used, describe whether probability or non-probability sampling will be applied. To be described as a probability sample, the sampling method must meet both of the following conditions: (1) respondents are randomly selected from the survey's target population, and (2) all units in the target population have a known, non-zero probability of being included in the sample.
 - c) A rationale for the chosen sampling method (whether census, probability or non-probability) and how it supports the achievement of the research objectives. In the case of non-probability samples, the rationale must take into account the limitations in generalizing the results to the target population and acknowledge that statistics must not be applied when reporting on the collected data.
 - d) If non-probability sampling will be used, it must not be described as a representative sampling of the target population.
- 3) Describe the sampling frame for the census or sample survey, including:
 - a) The type of sampling frame(s) (e.g., client list, online directory) and the extent to which the sampling frame covers the target population, including, if applicable:
 - i. Identifying under-coverage by describing any segments of the target population that are not covered by the frame (e.g., excluded provinces/territories or rural areas, individuals without Internet access; or excluded non-panel members in the case of panel surveys).
 - ii. The estimated size of non-covered segments or an explanation why a size estimate cannot be provided.
 - iii. A description of any over-coverage and/or overlap in sampling frames (e.g., when a dual sampling frame is used), in the same manner as for under-coverage.
 - b) If applicable, the reason why no sampling frame or list will be used.
- 4) Describe the origin of the sample for the census or sample survey, including:

- a) The sample source(s) (e.g., Government of Canada department or program, online directory, panel). If it will be provided by a third party, provide the name of the sample supplier.
 - b) If websites or social media platforms will be used as sources for a sample survey (e.g., to collect contact information of potential respondents), the measures that the researcher will implement to confirm respondent eligibility and authenticity.
- 5) When more than one sample source or panel will be used to create the sampling frame, also provide the following:
 - a) The rationale for sourcing samples from more than one source or panel.
 - b) Steps that the researcher will take to ensure that individuals included by more than one of the sources or panels are not contacted to respond to the survey more than once.
- 6) Describe the sample design and selection procedures for sample surveys, including:
 - a) Sample stratification variables (if any).
 - b) Sample selection procedures when selecting from a list (if relevant).
 - c) Any multi-stage sampling steps taken (e.g., points of service, followed by service categories, followed by individual clients);.
 - d) Respondent eligibility/screening criteria and all variables used, and targets set, for strata sample sizes or for quota controls (e.g., gender, age group), including the rationale for each target or quota control (e.g., underlying benchmarks or parameters from census data or another high-quality data source).
 - e) In the case of panel samples, that respondents who are panel members may not have participated in any Government of Canada survey in the previous 30 days as a member of that panel or in a survey on similar subject matter by any mode, except when a study's research design requires a follow-up survey with respondents who have agreed during the initial survey to be re-contacted for that purpose.
- 7) When the research design or selection procedures will not allow the calculation of a response rate or participation rate (e.g., when a sample router is used to screen potential respondents and assign them to one of several surveys), describe the design/selection procedure and any potential sampling bias that may result.
- 8) Provide an assessment of how likely the targeted final sample size can be achieved by the census or sample survey, taking into account such factors as the expected response rate, and in the case of panels, the active panel size and exclusion rules involving past survey participation.
- 9) When the sample will be drawn from one or more panels, describe the following for each panel:
 - a) The panel identity and source.
 - b) Active panel size in relation to the survey's target population, i.e., the number of panel members that correspond to the target population and that are available to be surveyed or screened.
 - c) How the panel is recruited and maintained, including the recruitment sources used to populate it on an ongoing basis, and the proportion of panelists per source, if possible.

- d) Any ongoing rewards or incentives for panel members that are not associated with taking part in a specific research project/survey.
 - e) How a sample of the survey's target population will be drawn from the panel, including whether existing panelist profile data will be used to identify eligible respondents and whether eligibility criteria will be re-validated during survey administration and, if not, how profile data are kept accurate and up to date.
 - f) The incentives/honoraria respondents will be offered for taking part in the survey.
- 10) Describe any additional sampling limitations or potential for sampling bias in sample surveys.

1.2.3. Response Rate/Participation Rate and Sampling Error

- 1) State expected response rates/participation rates for each survey mode or research stage that is proposed (i.e., separate rates for telephone and online components, when both are used, and separate rates, if applicable, for online devices such as laptops, tablets and cell phones). The expected response rate/participation rate is an estimation based on various factors, such as previous response rates/participation rates or established trends. The proposal should include a brief discussion of the factors that might cause the actual response/participation rate to fall short of the stated target.
- 2) For a census or attempted census, do not state a margin of sampling error, as no sample will be drawn.
- 3) For probability samples, state the level of precision, including the margin of sampling error and confidence interval for the sample(s). (See [subsection 13.2.5](#) for detailed requirements related to margin of sampling error.)
- 4) Describe specific procedures that will be applied to prevent or minimize the impact of potential sampling errors or non-sampling errors (e.g., coverage, non-response), on the research findings.
- 5) For non-probability samples, research proposals must not include any of the following:
 - a) Margins of sampling error.
 - b) Alternative measures of precision.
 - c) Statements indicating that the sample has a level of sampling error equivalent to a probability sample of similar size.

1.2.4. Data Collection

- 1) State the mode of data collection.
- 2) For multi-mode surveys, i.e., where some respondents will complete the survey via one mode (e.g., telephone) and some respondents will complete the survey via another mode (e.g., online), provide the following:
 - a) The rationale for using a multi-mode rather than single-mode method.
 - b) The rationale for the specific modes that will be used.
 - c) A description of the steps that will be taken to reduce the likelihood of mode biases, and to detect any mode biases.

- 3) For multi-stage surveys, where respondents complete the questionnaire in distinct stages, which may also involve switching modes between stages (e.g. the first part of the questionnaire is completed by phone and then the second part is completed online), provide a rationale for using a multi-stage rather than single-stage method, and a rationale for all modes that will be used.
- 4) Provide details on respondents' incentives/honoraria where applicable, including a rationale for the following (see [section 6.6](#) for considerations regarding incentives):
 - a) The type of incentive/honoraria (e.g., monetary, non-monetary).
 - b) The nature of the incentive (e.g., cash, prizes, reward points, charitable donations).
 - c) The estimated dollar value.
- 5) Describe how language requirements will be addressed during data collection.
- 6) Indicate the number of contact attempts and explain re-contact procedures.
- 7) Describe the planned fieldwork validation methods and procedures.
- 8) Describe how the rights of respondents/participants will be respected, including those of children, youth and vulnerable respondents, if applicable (see [section 5.](#))
- 9) Describe efforts to make the online questionnaire accessible, as per the Treasury Board [Standard on Web Accessibility](#), for all eligible respondents and to facilitate their participation as feasible, e.g., using assistive technologies or alternative modes of data collection.

1.2.5. Questionnaire Design

- 1) Indicate that the online questionnaire design will be mobile-friendly, to allow respondents to complete the survey on a range of devices, including a computer (desktop or laptop), tablet or smartphone. If a mobile-friendly design will not be used, describe the rationale, and potential impacts on response rates and coverage of the target population.
- 2) Provide the approximate duration of the questionnaire in minutes.
- 3) Specify the maximum number of open-ends.
- 4) Describe how the questionnaire will be pre-tested, including:
 - a) The objectives of the pre-test.
 - b) The method for the pre-test.
 - c) The number of pre-test interviews to be completed, and if relevant, the number of pre-tests for specific subgroups of the target population (e.g., when questionnaire effectiveness may vary by language, age, level of education or other characteristic).
 - d) How the results of the pre-test will be documented and provided to the client.

Note: If no pre-test will be conducted, a rationale must be provided.

1.2.6. Data Processing/Data Management

- 1) Describe safeguards to ensure respondent confidentiality and protection of personally identifiable information throughout data processing and data management.

- 2) Where known in advance, describe any proposed weighting.

1.2.7. Data Analysis

- 1) Briefly describe how the data will be analyzed in order to address the objectives/research questions, including any special analyses (e.g., segmentation, conjoint analysis).
- 2) For multi-mode surveys, state whether results will be reported separately by mode and/or by combining the data across modes.

1.2.8. Deliverables

- 1) List all deliverables including their language, format, means of delivery and number of copies, including at minimum:
 - a) Questionnaire(s) and pre-test documentation, if relevant.
 - b) Tabulated data.
 - c) Report(s).
 - d) Presentation(s), including the specific locations, if relevant.

1.2.9. Project Schedule

- 1) Provide a detailed work plan with scheduled dates and identify responsibilities.

1.2.10. Project Cost

- 1) Present cost information in the format designated by PSPC.

2. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

2.1. General

- 1) Survey questionnaires must be designed:
 - a) To collect only the information relevant to the stated research objectives of the study.
 - b) To minimize respondent burden while maximizing data value and utility.
 - c) To be completed in a maximum duration of 15 minutes. If supported by a strong rationale, an exception to the maximum-duration limit could include projects with specialized audiences where the respondent is aware the survey will take longer than 15 minutes.
- 2) The technical design of online questionnaires should facilitate respondent participation and minimize the potential for mode effects by optimizing the presentation and functionality of questions for a range of devices, including computer (desktop or laptop), tablet and smartphone. Accordingly:
 - a) Alternative approaches that should be considered when designing online questionnaires include the following:
 - i. Mobile-first, which uses a mobile-friendly design for all devices, large and small, by optimizing the questionnaire design for the smallest screen, (smartphones).
 - ii. Responsive design, which optimizes question design and layout for each screen size across the range of devices to achieve the best design

- for each. This option may lead to different designs and layouts across devices.
- iii. Combination, which uses a mobile-first design for some questions and responsive design for others, to balance the dual objectives of facilitating respondent participation and minimizing potential mode effects.
- b) “Mobile-friendly” questionnaire design practices should be implemented when possible, for example by:
 - i. Avoiding the need for horizontal scrolling.
 - ii. Minimizing visual clutter.
 - iii. Minimizing images and other high-bandwidth requirements.
 - iv. Using short questions and limiting the number of response options.
 - v. Avoiding complex interactive elements such as sliding scales or drag-and-drop.
 - vi. Allocating sufficient space for touch selection of response options.
 - vii. Limiting the need for respondents to type or enter text.
 - viii. Using page breaks wisely.
- c) Researchers are required to make online questionnaires accessible for all eligible respondents and facilitate their participation as feasible, using assistive technologies or alternative modes of data collection.

2.2. Questionnaire Introductions

- 1) The following are required elements of all Government of Canada online survey questionnaire introductions:
 - a) In accordance with the *Official Languages Act* and policies, introductions must include an active offer of both official languages (English and French). The language that appears first in the text will depend on the province in which the respondent resides (e.g., French for Quebec and English for the rest of Canada), or will be the respondent’s official language of preference when this information is available (e.g., in the sample list). The respondent must be able to easily select the other official language, for example by clicking on a clearly labelled link. When relevant to a specific survey, non-official languages may also be offered.
 - b) Identify the Government of Canada or the department/agency sponsoring the survey. When there is a strong rationale, the sponsor may be identified at the end of the survey instead of in the introduction (e.g., for advertising post-tests).
 - c) Inform respondents of the general subject and purpose of the study. The subject and purpose of the study may be expressed in general terms, as long as the wording used cannot be construed as an attempt to misinform respondents. When the researcher makes a convincing case that stating the subject and purpose of the survey at the outset is likely to bias the sample that chooses to participate and/or to bias participants’ responses, these statements may be deferred to the conclusion of the study.
 - d) Inform respondents of the expected length of the interview.
 - e) Identify the researcher (research firm).
 - f) Inform respondents that their participation in the study is voluntary and confidential.

- g) Inform respondents that their responses will remain anonymous. In exceptional cases where the research objectives require that respondent identity be revealed, the informed consent of the respondent must be obtained.
- h) Inform respondents how they can verify the legitimacy of the survey as a research initiative sponsored by the Government of Canada.
- i) Provide respondents with a means to communicate their specific accessibility needs to enable survey participation, for example through an alternative mode of data collection or assistive technology.

For example, in addition to other material used to communicate with respondents (e.g., invitations), the following introduction **could** be used for online questionnaires:

The Government of Canada is conducting this research survey on **subject. Name of firm** has been hired to administer the survey. Si vous préférez répondre au sondage en français, veuillez cliquer sur français [Direct the respondent to the French language version]. The survey takes about ## minutes to complete and your participation is voluntary and confidential. Your answers will remain anonymous and the information you provide will be administered according to the requirements of the *Privacy Act*, the *Access to Information Act*, and any other pertinent legislation. To view our privacy policy, click here. If you need an alternative means of accessing the survey, click here.

Should you have any question about the survey please contact the **GOVERNMENT OF CANADA/DEPARTMENT NAME** at **Generic email address of departmental client or specific contact**.

2.3. Demographic Questions

- 1) For surveys of the general population, the data from the demographic questions (along with the recording of geographic location) should allow comparison with official Statistics Canada population data for the purpose of non-response analysis and facilitate the comparison of results among Government of Canada public opinion research studies. (See [section 13.2.5](#) for further detail on non-response bias.)
- 2) The standard set of demographic questions below must be included in all online surveys of the general population, unless a convincing argument is made that the research objectives are better served by excluding one or more of them. This does not preclude the use of additional demographic questions.
- 3) When surveying business or organizational populations, these standard demographic questions should be included whenever relevant, such as when the unit of analysis is the individual rather than the business or organization.
- 4) The wording used for each demographic question and its response categories must be that provided below, unless a convincing argument is made that particular research objectives require alternative wording. Note that for certain questions (e.g., age, income), the response categories may be further broken down if desired, **as long as** they can be reconstituted to yield the mandatory categories.

- 5) Prior to administering demographic questions at the end of the questionnaire, respondents should be informed of the purpose of the questions and be reassured that their answers will remain anonymous and confidential.
- 6) Although the ordering of questions and the preamble wording may be modified, the following demographic questions **must** be used for online questionnaires:

[PREAMBLE] These last few questions will allow us to compare the survey results among different groups of respondents. Your answers will remain anonymous and confidential.

Gender

What is your gender?
Female
Male
Other*
Prefer not to answer

*The “Other” response option could be expanded into a longer list of response options or into an “*Other-Please Specify*” option, depending on the objectives of the survey.

Age

In what year were you born? [XXXX]

[IF THE RESPONDENT PREFERS NOT TO PROVIDE A PRECISE BIRTH YEAR, ASK:]

Would you be willing to indicate in which of the following age categories you belong?
18 to 24
25 to 34
35 to 44
45 to 54
55 to 64
65 or older
Prefer not to answer

Education

What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

Less than a High School diploma or equivalent
High School diploma or equivalent
Registered Apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma
University certificate or diploma below bachelor’s level
Bachelor’s degree
Post graduate degree above bachelor’s level
Prefer not to answer

Language Spoken at Home

What language do you speak most often at home? [ACCEPT ALL THAT APPLY]
English

French

Other [SPECIFY OR DO NOT SPECIFY DEPENDING ON THE NEEDS OF THE STUDY]

Household Income

Which of the following best describes your total household income last year, before taxes, from all sources for all household members?

Under \$20,000
\$20,000 to just under \$40,000
\$40,000 to just under \$60,000
\$60,000 to just under \$80,000
\$80,000 to just under \$100,000
\$100,000 to just under \$150,000
\$150,000 and above
Prefer not to answer

Geographic Location

May I have the first three digits of your postal code?

Prefer not to answer

- 7) Additional demographic questions may be included when required to satisfy the survey objectives. When an optional demographic question from the list below is included in a survey, the researcher is strongly encouraged to use the exact wording provided for both the question and its response categories, in order to facilitate the cross-comparability of surveys commissioned by the Government of Canada.

Disability

Do you have a physical, mental, intellectual or other disability or condition that may limit your ability to take part in any or all areas of life and society?

Yes
No
Prefer not to answer

[IF YES TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION:]

Which of the following categories best describes the nature of your disability or condition? [ACCEPT ALL THAT APPLY]

A chronic health condition or pain
A mobility issue
Issues with flexibility or dexterity
A seeing disability
A hearing disability
A sensory/environmental disability
A mental health issue
A cognitive disability
An intellectual disability

Other [SPECIFY OR DO NOT SPECIFY DEPENDING ON THE NEEDS OF THE STUDY]

Prefer not to answer

Sexual Orientation

What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual (straight)

Homosexual (lesbian or gay)

Bisexual

Other [SPECIFY OR DO NOT SPECIFY DEPENDING ON THE NEEDS OF THE STUDY]

Prefer not to answer

Mother Tongue

What is the language you first learned at home as a child and still understand? [ACCEPT ALL THAT APPLY]

English

French

Other [SPECIFY OR DO NOT SPECIFY DEPENDING ON THE NEEDS OF THE STUDY]

Don't know

Prefer not to answer

Employment Status

Which of the following categories best describes your current employment status? Are you... [ACCEPT ONE ANSWER ONLY]

Working full-time, that is, 35 or more hours per week?

Working part-time, that is, less than 35 hours per week?

Self-employed?

Unemployed, but looking for work?

A student attending school full-time?

Retired?

Not in the workforce? [FULL-TIME HOME MAKER, UNEMPLOYED, NOT LOOKING FOR WORK]

Other – [DO NOT SPECIFY]

Prefer not to answer

2.4. Multi-mode Questionnaires

- 1) When designing questionnaires for multi-mode surveys, researchers should:
 - a) Take steps to ensure as much comparability as possible across the different survey modes, in terms of question wording and presentation of response options, when the plan is to combine or compare data collected via different modes in the data analyses.
 - b) Include benchmarking questions for which there are high-quality population data available to facilitate the detection of any mode biases, for example demographic, behavioural or attitudinal questions that may correlate with key measures in the survey.

3. PRE-TESTING

3.1. General

- 1) Pre-test all components of a new or revised survey questionnaire that may influence data quality or respondent behaviour. This includes the online appearance and functionality of the questionnaire.
 - a) For mobile-friendly surveys, researchers must also do internal pre-testing on the types and sizes of devices that respondents might use.
- 2) Include probing that invites pre-test participants to provide input about their comprehension of, and reaction to, the questions. If requested by the client, a full cognitive pre-test should be conducted.
- 3) Before recruiting pre-test participants, seek the client's approval of socio-demographic characteristics to be targeted, to help ensure questionnaire effectiveness across key subgroups (by language, age, level of education, etc.)
- 4) Conduct a minimum of 10 pre-test interviews in each language in which the final survey will be fielded. An exception could be projects with small survey populations, in which case the researcher must seek the client's approval to conduct a smaller number of pre-tests to ensure questionnaire quality; alternatively a cognitive pre-test may be warranted.
- 5) For multi-mode surveys, if one mode is interviewer-administered and another mode is self-administered by the respondent, conduct a minimum of 10 pre-test interviews in each language per mode.
- 6) Pre-test completions must not be included in the final dataset. Exceptions could be:
 - a) projects with hard-to-reach target groups; or
 - b) when **no** changes are made to the questionnaire following the pre-test.
- 7) Results of the pre-test(s) must be shared with the client before the questionnaire is finalized and approved. If shared verbally, written documentation of the pre-test results must follow as soon as possible afterwards. The documentation must include (at minimum):
 - a) A description of the pre-test approach and number of interviews completed in each language.
 - b) Findings and any resulting modifications.
 - c) Average survey completion time.
 - d) A statement of whether or not pre-test cases will be retained in the final data set.

4. RETAINING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

4.1. General

- 1) Researchers must make every reasonable effort to gain, retain and increase public confidence in their own organizations and in public opinion research conducted for the Government of Canada.
- 2) Researchers must act in a manner that respects survey respondents and ensures their rights are protected as they relate to participation in Government of Canada

survey research. Survey participation must take place free of embarrassment and in an environment of trust and goodwill.

- 3) The researcher must take all reasonable steps to ensure that respondents are not in any way harmed or embarrassed by survey participation, and that they are not in any way adversely affected as a result of it. Researchers must address sensitive subject matter in a way that will minimize discomfort and apprehension for respondents.

4.2. Respondent Rights and Protections

4.2.1. Informed Consent and Use of Information

- 1) In obtaining the necessary agreement from respondents to participate, the researcher must inform them of the study sponsor and of the general subject and purpose of the survey (subject to exceptions described in [section 2.2.](#) paragraph 1), and that their participation is voluntary and confidential.
- 2) Survey questions must be limited to gathering information relevant to the stated research objectives. The researcher must ensure that the data collected will not be used for any other purpose unless the respondent provides explicit informed consent for that additional use (e.g., to help resolve a customer complaint).
- 3) The survey data and personal information must not under any circumstances be used for direct marketing or other sales approaches to the respondent or the respondent's household.
- 4) Researchers must provide online respondents with a means to ask questions about the research, and answer any questions in a clear, honest and non-deceptive manner.

4.2.2. Right to Refuse

- 1) Researchers must respect the right of a respondent to refuse to participate in a survey or to terminate the survey at any point.

4.2.3. Accessibility

- 1) As indicated in 2.1 2) c), researchers are required to make online questionnaires accessible for all eligible respondents and facilitate their participation as feasible, using assistive technologies or alternative modes of data collection.

4.2.4. Identity of Research Firm

- 1) The research firm conducting the survey must be identified, and sufficient information must be provided to allow survey respondents to contact the researcher without difficulty, if desired.

4.2.5. Protection of Anonymity and Confidentiality

- 1) The anonymity of respondents must be preserved unless they have given their informed and explicit consent to the contrary. The researcher must ensure that the information will be used for research purposes only, OR, if requested by the respondent, to resolve a customer complaint. The same holds true when respondents' answers are, with their informed consent, linked or merged with pre-existing data that allows their identification (e.g., with administrative data from a Government of Canada program). Information must not be used for any non-

research purpose, such as direct marketing, list-building, credit rating, fund-raising, or any marketing activities directed at those individual respondents.

- 2) Completed questionnaires or other material (e.g., digital media) containing respondents' identity, or information that might allow respondents to be identified, must not be released by researchers to clients or other third parties.
- 3) When verbatim comments are collected, they must not be attributed to the respondent, directly or indirectly, without the respondent's explicit informed consent. Care must be taken when reporting verbatim comments, to ensure that nothing in the comment, including content, vocabulary and/or style of writing, could be used to identify the individual respondent.

4.2.6. Use of Lists

- 1) Where lists are used for sample selection, the source of the list must be disclosed to potential respondents, upon inquiry. When the sample comprises individuals who are not employees of the Government of Canada, researchers must ensure that lists are permission-based for research purposes, including, when appropriate, obtaining written assurances from the list provider (who may be the client) that this is the case.
- 2) When the sample comprises employees of the Government of Canada, employee lists may be used even if no explicit permission to use that information for survey purposes has been obtained, as long as the survey topic is relevant to the respondents' employment (e.g., an employee satisfaction survey).
- 3) Client-supplied lists provided for specific projects must not be used for any other project or for adding names to the researcher's databases or panels. If they have been updated by the researcher during the project (e.g., to correct errors), those updated lists must be returned to the client upon completion of the project. All client-supplied lists still in the researcher's possession at project completion must be destroyed after any updates have been forwarded to the client.

4.3. Avoiding Nuisance or Harassment

- 1) Researchers must reduce any inconvenience or irritation their invitations (e.g., via email or text message) might cause the recipient, by clearly stating its purpose in the first sentence and keeping the total invitation message as brief as possible.

4.4. Privacy Issues Specific to Online Survey Research

- 1) Researchers must have a readily accessible policy statement concerning the use of cookies, log files and, if applicable, software. This statement may be either included in their privacy policy or it may appear in a separate document.
- 2) Software must not be installed on respondents' computers or other devices without their knowledge or consent, and specific care must be taken to ensure compliance, if relevant, with the Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation sections 10(4) and 10(5). In addition, respondents must be able to remove the researcher's software easily from their devices (e.g., for Windows users, the software must appear in the Add/Remove Programs folder in their Control Panel).
- 3) Any links to data protection, privacy policy or cookie policy statements must be provided at the start of the questionnaire.

- 4) A respondent's email address or mobile number is personal information and must be protected in the same way as other identifiers.

4.5. Photographs and Recordings

- 1) Photographs, video and audio recordings collected from survey respondents must be collected, processed and stored as personal data. They can be shared with a client only after respondents give informed consent, with knowledge of the specific purpose for which it will be used and once the data has been stripped of all personally identifiable information (such as through pixelization or voice modification). The client must agree to make no attempt to identify individual identities.

If respondents are asked to make recordings as part of their survey input, they should be given specific limited tasks (e.g., taking images of objects) that do not have the potential to capture the personal data of others.

5. DATA COLLECTION FROM CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE OR VULNERABLE RESPONDENTS

5.1. General

- 1) Researchers must take special care when collecting survey data from children and young people, and respondents who are otherwise vulnerable. (A "child" is defined as "under the age of 13" and a "young person" as "aged 13-15".) The welfare of children, young people and vulnerable persons must be the researcher's primary consideration. These respondents must not be disturbed or harmed by the interview experience. Sensitive topics or issues that could upset children and young people (e.g., relationships with other children or with parents, sexual activities, use of drugs or alcohol) or vulnerable persons (e.g., social embarrassment related to the source of their vulnerability) must be dealt with using special care to minimize any discomfort or apprehension.
- 2) The protection of children, young people, and vulnerable individuals is of particular concern for online research. These respondents may be familiar with using the Internet, but more prone to disclosing information about themselves or their households without realizing the implications of doing so. Researchers must exercise a greater burden of care to ensure children, young people, and vulnerable individuals are not exploited as a result of their participation in research.
- 3) All explanations related to data protection, privacy policy, adult consent and other notices must be capable of being understood by children.
- 4) In addition to these standards, researchers must observe all relevant laws specifically related to children and young people.

5.2. Consent of Responsible Adult

- 1) Before conducting a survey with a child or young person under 16, researchers must obtain the consent of the parent or responsible adult (guardian, etc.). Sufficient information must be provided to the responsible adult to enable an informed decision about giving such consent. In particular, the researcher must specify the nature of any potentially sensitive questions when seeking parental

consent for the child's/young person's participation in the research. The name of the adult giving the consent must be recorded, as well as that person's relationship to the child/young person.

- 2) The adult consent allows the researcher only to invite the child/young person to participate. The child/young person must be given an opportunity to agree or refuse to take part in the survey. To that end, the researcher must inform the child/young person of the purpose of the research in terms that the person is likely to readily understand.
- 3) Surveys made openly available on websites must require respondents to give their age before any other information is requested. If the age given is less than 16 years, the child/young person must be excluded from giving further information until the appropriate adult consent has been obtained. Information about how informed consent can be obtained can be provided to the child/young person at that time if their participation is desired.
- 4) It might be difficult to determine with certainty the age of the respondent and whether or not the consent of a responsible adult is required. The researcher must make every reasonable effort to comply with the rules set out in these standards.
- 5) When it is not possible to obtain parental/guardian consent (e.g., street kids) **and** the client deems that the benefits of the research will outweigh the possible harm to respondents (e.g., youth engaged in risky behaviour), the client may choose to waive the researcher's responsibility to follow this standard.

5.3. Process for Obtaining Consent

5.3.1. Parent Contact Details

- 1) Researchers are permitted to ask children/young people to provide contact details for a parent/responsible adult in order for consent to be sought, as long as this purpose is made clear in the request.

5.3.2. Children/Young People of Online Panelists or Other Approved List Members

- 1) In cases where survey data are to be collected from children of adult online panelists or children/young people of other online list members, an e-mailed request for consent to the adult panelist or list member must contain:
 - a) A notice stipulating that the online survey is intended for the child/young person within the household.
 - b) The name and contact details of the researcher and the name of the client (if the client agrees).
 - c) An explanation of the objectives of the research and nature of the data to be collected from the child/young person.
 - d) An explanation of how the data will be used.

5.3.3. Children Recruited through Websites

- 1) In cases where children are being recruited from websites, the following measures must be implemented:
 - a) On websites aimed at persons under age 16, a note to children/young people that informs them of the requirement for adult consent must be prominently displayed in all notices about the survey (i.e., before the

respondent can access the survey itself). This note must include a clear explanation of the subject matter and objectives of the research, and the name and contact information of the researcher. The notice must request the contact information (e.g., email address) of the parent or other responsible adult, and make clear that the authentic responsibility of this individual consent will be verified (through a separate follow-up by telephone, regular mail, etc.).

- b) For websites aimed at adults, a notice to parents or guardians seeking their consent to ask their child to participate in the research must be posted on the website. This notice must include:
 - i. A heading explaining that this is a notice for parents.
 - ii. the name and contact details of the researcher and the name of the client (if the client agrees);
 - iii. An explanation of the objectives of the research and nature of the data to be collected from the child/young person.
 - iv. An explanation of how the data will be used.
 - v. A description of the procedure for giving and verifying consent.
 - vi. A request for a parent's contact e-mail address, address or phone number for verification of consent.

5.3.4. Acceptable Forms of Consent

- 1) A return email from a parent or guardian giving consent is acceptable, as long as additional steps are taken by the researcher to ensure that the consent actually came from a parent — for example, following up with an email, letter or phone call.

5.4. Collection of Personal Information

- 1) Personal information relating to other people (for example, parents) must not be collected from children. Consistent with the *Privacy Act* and the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, "personal information" means information about an identifiable individual. The researcher may collect the contact information of a parent or responsible adult for purposes of obtaining parental consent (see [subsection 5.3.1.](#)).

6. DATA COLLECTION

6.1. Collection of Email Addresses

- 1) Researchers are prohibited from using any subterfuge in obtaining email addresses of potential respondents, such as using technologies or techniques to collect email addresses without individuals' awareness, and collecting email addresses under the guise of some other activity.
- 2) Researchers may collect publicly available email addresses from organizational sources for the purpose of business-to-business research (i.e., research directed at private-sector firms, non-profit organizations, agencies of other levels of government, professional associations, etc.), when the research topic can reasonably be deemed relevant to organizational responsibilities.

6.2. Data Collection and Recruitment Techniques

- 1) Researchers must not make use of surreptitious, misleading or unsolicited data collection or recruitment techniques – including using spambots, spiders, sniffers or other ‘agents’ that collect personal information without the respondent’s explicit awareness.
- 2) Passive data collection entails the collection of information about survey respondents without their active input.
 - a) Passive detection and collection of the browser characteristics and settings, including the type of device a respondent is using, is permitted for the purpose of optimizing application performance and survey rendering.
 - b) Researchers must not use passive data collection of personal information, (e.g., web use and browsing history, application usage statistics, geolocation, biometric data, social media data, and other data generated by respondents’ mobile devices or computers) during online surveys or for recruitment purposes unless:
 - i. Respondents have previously given their informed consent, or
 - ii. The passive collection of the data is legally permissible, for example according to the Terms of Use of the website, service or application from which the data are sourced.

6.3. Misleading Email Return Addresses

- 1) Researchers are prohibited from using false or misleading return email addresses, including spoofing the “from” label of email messages, when recruiting respondents over the Internet.

6.4. Opt-out

- 1) A respondent must be able to refuse participation in the survey via a suitable option, and to refuse further contact in connection with the survey.

6.5. Access Panel Participation Frequency

- 1) When recruiting respondents to a Government of Canada survey, researchers must ensure that panel members have not participated in any Government of Canada survey as a member of that panel or any other panel, or a survey on a similar subject matter by any data collection mode in the previous 30 days. An exception would be when a study’s research design requires a follow-up survey with respondents, and the respondent has agreed at the time of the initial survey to be re-contacted for that purpose.

6.6. Incentives/Honoraria

6.6.1. General

- 1) When including incentives/honoraria in a project, researchers must ensure that it is legal and ethical to do so. Survey incentives must not be coercive or unduly affect a respondent’s choice to voluntarily participate.

- 2) Researchers should consider whether incentives/honoraria are necessary for achieving the research objectives within the project timeline, and whether alternative means could be effective for motivating participation.
- 3) When selecting the type and value of incentives/honoraria, researchers should minimize their potential to introduce bias or error in the final sample, for example by affecting the response rates of various segments of the target population differently.

6.6.2. Children, Young People or Vulnerable Individuals

- 1) When survey respondents are children, young people or vulnerable individuals, the researcher must:
 - a) Take ethical considerations into account before including an incentive or determining its type and value (e.g., ensure payment is not coercive, and does not expose children, young people or vulnerable individuals to a risk that they would otherwise have avoided).
 - b) Decide in advance who will receive an incentive i.e., the parent / responsible adult (e.g., guardian), the respondent, or both.
 - c) Obtain the agreement of the parent or responsible adult before offering any incentive to the child, young person, or vulnerable individual.

6.6.3. Incentives for Government of Canada Employees

- 1) Incentives should not be provided to employees of the Government of Canada for research conducted while on duty (i.e., during working hours).
- 2) Incentives may be offered to employees of the Government of Canada for research studies conducted while off duty (i.e., outside of working hours), as long as:
 - a) Employees are made aware that their acceptance cannot be misconstrued as an official duty and therefore subject to overtime.
 - b) Employees are made aware that they must consult the Treasury Board [*Policy on Conflict of Interest and Post-Employment*](#) or their organizational policy on conflict of interest, where applicable, and consider whether their acceptance of the incentive is likely to give rise to a conflict of interest with their official duties, to constrain their capacity to perform their official duties, or to undermine the neutrality of the public service.
 - c) If they have doubts as to whether accepting an incentive could breach the Policy, they should discuss the situation with their manager and, if necessary, report and seek written direction from their deputy head or their delegated authority.

6.7. Monitoring of Online Survey Fieldwork

- 1) Each online survey must be closely monitored throughout the fieldwork to ensure that responses are valid, that the survey is administered consistently throughout the data collection period, and that the responses are being recorded accurately.
- 2) If requested, clients must be provided with interim data tabulation within the first few days and throughout the fieldwork period. Appropriate care must be taken to ensure that no individual can be identified by their responses.

6.8. Detecting and Dealing with Satisficing

- 1) The panel provider shall implement procedures to identify and remove fraudulent and inattentive panel members or respondents, documenting these procedures and actions taken.

6.9. Reminders to Non-Respondents

- 1) Where feasible, researchers must remind non-respondents of the invitation to participate in the survey.
- 2) A maximum of three reminders may be sent.
- 3) Reminders must not be sent to individuals who have opted out of the survey.
- 4) When feasible, reminders must not be sent to individuals who have completed the survey, even if the survey was submitted only partially completed.

6.10. Ensure Respondents Answer a Survey Only Once

- 1) Researchers must implement and document their procedures to limit the possibility that an eligible respondent can answer a survey more than once.

6.11. Data Storage

- 1) Data must be stored according to the requirements described in [section 12](#).

7. OUTCOME RATES

7.1. General

- 1) Researchers should apply the definitions below when assigning cases to each case category and when calculating outcome rates.
- 2) Researchers must calculate the response rate/participation rate for online surveys in the manner described below and include it in the final report that the Government of Canada client will submit to Library and Archives Canada, as per the [POR Contract Regulations](#).
- 3) Monitoring of case dispositions/reasons for non-response must be carried out on an ongoing basis, throughout the entire field period, and this information must be provided to the client upon request.

7.2. Case Category Definitions

Cases involved in online surveys can be broken down into four broad categories:

Invalid Cases:

These can include only clearly invalid cases (e.g., invitations mistakenly sent to people who did not qualify for the study, incomplete or missing email addresses in a client-supplied list).

Unresolved (U):

These include all the cases where it cannot be established whether the invitation was sent to an eligible or an ineligible respondent or unit (e.g., when email invitations bounce back or remain without an answer before the candidate could be qualified).

In-scope non-responding (IS):

These include all refusals, either implicit or explicit; all non-contacts and early break-offs of known eligible cases; and other eligible non-respondents (due to illness, leave of absence, vacation or other).

Responding units (R):

These include cases who have participated but who were disqualified afterwards (e.g., when admissible quotas have been reached). It also includes all completed surveys or partially completed surveys that meet the criteria set by the researcher to be included in the analysis of the data.

Cases in categories 2 through 4 are all included in the broad category of “potentially eligible” cases. However, cases in category 1 are considered “invalid” and are not included in the calculation of outcome rates.

7.3. Outcome Rates Definitions

- 1) Researchers must calculate and report the response rate/participation rate as defined below. However, the other rates (cooperation, refusal and contact) are optional, and researchers are encouraged to include them in reports when the rates help to understand the causes of low response rates or provide context and insight regarding data quality.

Response Rate/Participation Rate:

Total number of responding units divided by the total number of potentially eligible cases (including those whose eligibility could not be determined).

$$\text{Response Rate/Participation Rate} = R/(U+IS+R)$$

The term “response rate” pertains only to probability sample surveys and censuses, while the term “participation rate” pertains only to non-probability sample surveys.

Cooperation Rate:

Total number of responding units divided by the total number of known eligible cases (excluding those whose eligibility could not be determined).

Refusal Rate:

Total number of refusals (including break-offs) divided by the total number of potentially eligible cases (including those whose eligibility could not be determined).

Contact Rate:

Total number of contacts that were made successfully (regardless of whether or not a contact was made with the targeted respondent, for example when a family member who does not qualify intercepts the survey invitation) divided by the total number of potentially eligible cases (including those whose eligibility could not be determined).

7.4. Outcome Rates for Multi-mode Surveys

When calculating outcome rates for mixed-mode surveys, researchers should calculate the outcome rate for each mode or stage of sampling, and if feasible and appropriate, calculate a single aggregated outcome rate.

8. CODING

8.1. Developing Code Frames

- 1) The initial code list/frame must be developed based on a systematic review of a minimum of 10% of open-ended responses and 50% of partial open-ended responses, where a frame does not already exist. The initial code list/frame must be provided to the client for approval.
- 2) The researcher must ensure that coders working on the project are fluent in the language of the collected data that they are coding, and provided with instructions and training that must include, as a minimum:
 - a) An overview of the project.
 - b) Identification of questions or variables to be coded.
 - c) The minimum proportion or number of completed questionnaires used to produce code frames.
 - d) Where necessary or appropriate, specific segments of the sample to consider when developing code frames (e.g., regions, user or non-user).
 - e) Guidelines for the inclusion of codes in the code frame (e.g., decisions or rules regarding what must be included or excluded from a given code).
 - f) Any use to be made of code frames from a previous project or stage.
 - g) Any other requirements or special instructions specific to the project.

8.2. Coding Procedures

- 1) Where “don’t know” and “no response” options have been used during data collection, these must remain distinguishable from each other during coding.
- 2) “Other” or catch-all categories must not exceed 10% of responses to any question.
- 3) Researchers must ensure that there is a systematic method of verifying the accuracy of coding for a minimum of 10% of questionnaires per project, and that the verification must be undertaken by a second person.

9. DATA EDITING/IMPUTATION

9.1. Standards

- 1) Researchers must keep an accurate record of any changes made to the original data set for a minimum of three years, to ensure that any changes undertaken can be replicated at a later date. All imputation processes used, and their logic, must be documented and provided to the client. All edit specifications must be documented.

- 2) Data editing/imputation must be used cautiously. The degree and impact of imputation must be considered when analyzing the data, as the imputation methods used may have a significant impact on distributions of data and the variance of estimates.

10. DATA ANALYSIS

10.1. Inferences and Comparisons

Researchers must base statements of comparisons and other statistical conclusions derived from survey data on generally accepted statistical practice.

10.2. Analysis Records

Researchers must keep accurate and descriptive records of the analysis process for a minimum of three years, to ensure that any analysis undertaken can be replicated at a later date.

10.3. Data Analysis Verification

- 1) Researchers must establish and follow procedures to verify the tabulations and other outputs to ensure the following:
 - a) Their completeness, i.e., that all tables are present as specified, including the results of all reported significance tests.
 - b) That abbreviations for headings or open-ended responses accurately reflect the full content.
 - c) That the base for each table is correct against other tables or frequency counts.
 - d) That the standard breaks/banner points are checked against source questions.
 - e) That all derived data items are checked against their source.
 - f) That the figures for subgroups and nets are correct.
 - g) That weighting is applied appropriately (e.g., by test tables).
 - h) That frequency counts are run prior to running tables, in order both to ensure the accuracy of data and to determine base sizes for subgroups.
 - i) Spelling and legibility.
 - j) That any statistical analysis used is appropriate and correct, in both its descriptive and inferential aspects.

11. DELIVERY OF DATA TABLES

11.1. Producing Stand-Alone Data Tables

- 1) When data are provided to the client, the following must be included, as appropriate:
 - a) The source question to which the data pertain.
 - b) A description of any weighting method applied to the data.
 - c) Clear identification of any subgroups used.
 - d) The sample bases for each question (i.e., the number of respondents who have actually answered the question).
 - e) The number or proportion of respondents who replied “don’t know” or gave no answer.
 - f) Both weighted and unweighted bases.
 - g) A definition and explanation of all variables used in the analysis of the data, such as any significance testing, indexing, scoring, scaling and calculations of means, medians, modes, and standard deviations.
 - h) The types of statistical tests being used and their level of precision.
 - i) Information on cell suppression and other measures to assure confidentiality.
 - j) Warnings on results that may be unreliable because of very small sample sizes.

11.2. Electronic Data Delivery

- 1) Researchers must provide the client with a data file containing individual records, which has been checked for the following:
 - a) Completeness (i.e., the correct number of files and records are in each file).
 - b) Inclusion of all appropriate documentation to allow for replication of the data analysis and additional analyses, including, where applicable:
 - i. Labelling of the contents of the file, i.e., fully labelled variables and value labels.
 - ii. Identification and description of any computed or recoded variables, and instructions on limitations of use.
 - iii. Labelled weighting variables and a description of how these were applied.
 - iv. All personal identifiers per the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* have been removed from the files (e.g., any information that could identify specific individuals).

11.3. Respondent Confidentiality

- 1) To ensure respondent confidentiality, tabulated data must not show demographic or respondent characteristic categories with a column or row total of fewer than 10 respondents.

- 2) Particular care must be taken when respondent verbatim statements are included in data tables. Protection of confidentiality may require that larger minimum row and column totals be applied.

12. DATA SECURITY AND STORAGE

12.1. Retention of Technical Data

- 1) Researchers must, for a period of three years, maintain the technical data that are not already included in the final report, and provide them to the client, if requested. Technical data to be maintained include:
 - a) The information pertaining to data processing and analysis, such as:
 - i. Raw data files.
 - ii. Other electronic files.
 - iii. Code frames.
 - iv. Project files including project management information and survey programming files.
 - v. Emails and other correspondence.
 - b) Documentation of all changes must be kept when the format, content or layout of the raw data has been changed in any way, for example through editing, cleaning, or recoding the data.

12.2. Retention of Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

After their contract ends, researchers should retain personally identifiable information or data (whether it was provided by the client for sampling or data collection, or collected during the research) for no longer than one year, without a strong rationale agreed to by the client.

12.3. Protection of Data/Servers

- 1) Researchers must use up-to-date technologies to protect survey data collected or stored on servers or on portable devices (e.g., laptops, USB keys) against illegal or unsanctioned access by third parties (i.e., “hacking”). The researcher must also control access to all databases on which any data relating to the survey are stored, so that only individuals with the appropriate security clearance are able to access the database, either by using a password or other form of access control (such as biometric controls).
- 2) Because some jurisdictions allow their authorities, under certain circumstances, to access all data stored on servers located in that jurisdiction (e.g., in the United States under provisions of the *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act*, known as the USA PATRIOT Act: see the [Treasury Board Secretariat's overview](#)), the researcher must protect data against legally sanctioned access by ensuring that all the databases containing any information related to the survey be stored on **servers and back-up servers** located solely in Canada.
 - a) If the client has first consented in writing, these servers may be located in another country where:

- i. Equivalent protections are given to personal information as in Canada under legislation such as the *Privacy Act*, R.S. 1985, c. P-21, and the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, S.C. 2000, c. 5, and under any applicable policies of the Government of Canada.
 - ii. The laws do not allow the government of that country or any other entity or person to seek or obtain the right to view or copy any information relating to the survey without first obtaining the client's written consent.
 - b) In connection with giving consent to locating a database in another country, the client may, at the client's option, require the researcher to provide a legal opinion (from a lawyer qualified in the foreign country) that the laws in that country meet the requirements of paragraph 2) a), above, or may require the researcher to pay for the Government of Canada to obtain such a legal opinion. The Government of Canada has the right to reject any request to store survey data in a country other than Canada if there is any reason to be concerned about the security, privacy, or integrity of the data. The Government of Canada may also require that any data sent or processed outside of Canada be encrypted with Government-of-Canada-approved cryptography, and that the private key required to decrypt the data be kept in Canada, in accordance with key management and storage processes approved by the Government of Canada.
 - c) The researcher must ensure that all servers, including back-up servers, on which any data relating to the survey are stored, be physically and logically independent (meaning there is no direct or indirect connection of any kind) from all other databases, unless those databases are located in Canada (or in another country approved by the client under paragraph 2) a)) and otherwise meet the requirements of this section.
 - d) The researcher must ensure that all data relating to the survey be processed only in Canada or in another country approved by the client under paragraph 2) a).
 - e) The researcher must ensure that all domestic network traffic (meaning traffic or transmissions initiated in one part of Canada to a destination or individual located in another part of Canada) be routed exclusively through Canada, unless the client has first consented in writing to an alternative route. The client will consider only requests to route domestic traffic through another country that meets the requirements of paragraph 2) a).
- 3) The researcher must not subcontract (including to an affiliate) any function that involves providing a subcontractor with access to any data relating to the survey unless the client first consents in writing.
 - 4) Protection of data from international surveys: When the target population for a survey comprises individuals residing in a jurisdiction outside Canada, researchers must ensure that data be stored in a manner consistent with the relevant laws of that jurisdiction.
 - 5) Protection against physical damage to servers: Researchers must also put in place measures to ensure the "physical" security of data and servers.

12.4. Temporary Storage of Data on Servers

If the temporary storage of data collected takes place on a server that is operated by another provider, the researcher must place the provider under the obligation to take the necessary steps to ensure that the requirements described in [subsection 12.3](#) be met. Temporary storage of the collected data on the server must be terminated at the earliest possible time.

12.5. Transmission of Data Internationally

Before data are sent over the Internet to another country, researchers must check with competent authorities that the data transfer is permissible. The recipient may need to provide safeguards necessary for the protection of the data and ensure compliance with the requirements described in [subsection 12.3](#).

12.6. Disclosure of Respondents' Emails in Batch Transfers

Researchers must have adequate safeguards in place to ensure that when emails are sent in batches, the addresses of the respondents are not revealed.

12.7. In the Event of any Data Breach

In the event of any data breach, the client must be informed immediately, and provided with details about both the nature and the extent of the data breach.

13. SURVEY REPORT REQUIREMENTS

This section describes the survey report requirements that are **mandatory** under the *Public Opinion Research Contract Regulations* for all public opinion research conducted by an external research firm for the Government of Canada.

13.1. Regulatory and Administrative Mandatory Requirements

It is a legal requirement for federal institutions to send written reports to Library and Archives Canada (LAC) within six months of the completion of the data collection for all contracted public opinion research.

- 1) Pursuant to the *Public Opinion Research Contract Regulations*, the *Directive on the Management of Communications (Appendix C: Mandatory Procedures for Public Opinion Research)*, LAC deposit instructions, and PSPC instructions, final reports must include the following at a minimum:
 - a) On the covering page:
 - i. The title of the project.
 - ii. The name of the research firm that entered into the contract.
 - iii. The contract number, the contract value, and the award date.
 - iv. The POR Registration Number.
 - v. The delivery date (the date the final version of the report was received by the project authority).
 - vi. The name of the client department or agency sponsoring the research.

- vii.* The departmental contact information in the form of a generic email address.
 - viii.* The departmental signature and the Canada wordmark.
 - ix.* For the English report, the statement “Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.”
 - x.* For the French report, the statement “This report is also available in English.”
 - xi.* Copyright information, including the Government of Canada catalogue number, the International Standard Book Number (ISBN), copyright notice and year of publication, and departmental notice on the rights to reproduce the report.
- b) A narrative executive summary, in English and French, submitted separately and consisting of, at a minimum:
- i.* A statement of the research purpose and objectives.
 - ii.* A summary of key findings, except where the person who entered into the contract is not responsible for the design, development of the methodology and analysis of the research.
 - iii.* A brief description of the methodology used.
 - iv.* A statement as to the extent to which the findings can be extrapolated to a broader audience.
 - v.* An outline of how the results were used, if possible, and if not
 - vi.* How the information is expected to be used.
 - vii.* A political neutrality certification signed by the research firm.
 - viii.* The contract value of the POR study.
- c) Appendices containing:
- i.* A full set of tabulated data, which, to ensure respondent confidentiality, must in no case show demographic or respondent characteristic categories with a column or row total of fewer than 10 respondents.
 - ii.* Sample size, sampling procedures and dates of research fieldwork.
 - iii.* A discussion of the potential for bias in the research findings due to sampling errors or non-sampling errors (e.g., coverage, non-response).
 - iv.* If applicable, weighting procedures, the confidence interval, and the margin of error.
 - v.* If applicable, the response rate/participation rate and method of calculation.
 - vi.* The research instruments in all languages and, if applicable, the test material in all languages in which they were used and tested.
 - vii.* All other information about the execution of the fieldwork that would be needed to replicate the research initiative.

13.2. Additional Reporting Requirements

The following minimum details must be documented in the project report. These allow the reader to understand how the research project was conducted and the implications of its results.

13.2.1. Background

- 1) Detailed description of the project background including, at minimum:
 - a) Research purpose.
 - b) How the research will be used.
- 2) Specific research objectives, research questions.

13.2.2. Sample

- 1) Whether a sample survey or a census was conducted.
- 2) Detailed description of the following:
 - a) The target population for the research project and its geographic location (*where applicable*), as well as any key sub-groups.
 - b) The sample source(s), and if the sampling frame and/or the sample itself was provided by a third party, the name of the sample supplier.
 - c) The sampling frame(s) (e.g., lists, email addresses), and the extent to which the sampling frame covers the target population, identifying under-coverage by describing any segments of the target population that are not covered by the frame (e.g., excluded provinces/territories or rural areas, households without Internet, or excluded non-panel members in the case of panel surveys), and the estimated size of non-covered segments or an explanation why a size estimate cannot be provided.
 - d) If applicable, over-coverage and/or overlapping sampling frames must be described in the same manner as under-coverage. If no sampling frame or list was utilized, this must be indicated.
 - e) The sampling method, including probability or non-probability, and the sampling design (e.g., stratification, clustering) or procedure for selecting respondents.
 - f) The rationale for the chosen sampling method, including how it supported the achievement of the research objectives. In the case of non-probability samples, the rationale must take into account the limitations in generalizing the results to the target population, and acknowledge that statistics must not be applied when reporting on the collected data.
 - g) Screening procedures, including eligibility/screening criteria and any variables used, and targets set for strata sample sizes or for quota controls (e.g., gender), including the rationale for each target or quota control (e.g., underlying benchmarks or parameters from census data or another high-quality data source).
 - h) If the sample was drawn from a pre-recruited panel or pool, the methods used to recruit the panellists or participants and the procedures for managing the membership, participation, maintenance, and refreshment of the panel or pool.
 - i) The achieved sample size compared with the projected sample size, both for the overall sample and for any key sub-groups, as well as reasons for not obtaining the projected sample size, strata size targets, or quota controls, if applicable.
 - j) The weighting procedures, if applicable, including any underlying parameters or benchmarks used to establish the weights, and their source.

13.2.3. Data Collection

- 1) Detailed description of the methodology including:
 - a) The data collection method(s), mode(s), and their rationale.
 - b) Accessibility provisions for respondents using adaptive technologies, if applicable.
 - c) The dates of fieldwork (for each phase/wave, if applicable).
 - d) The average interview duration and the range.
 - e) The type and amount of incentives, if applicable.
- 2) Any relevant stimuli (e.g., radio advertisement).
- 3) Details of any strategies used to help gain cooperation (e.g., advance contact, incentives/honoraria), whether for participation in a panel or for participation in a particular survey.

13.2.4. Quality Controls

- 1) A description of questionnaire pre-testing and any key resulting modifications to improve data quality or respondent experience, if applicable.
- 2) The estimating and imputation procedures, and any editing of the data, if applicable.
- 3) A brief summary of other quality controls and procedures used. Where applicable, this includes re-contacts to confirm that the interview occurred and/or to verify the respondent's identity, measures taken to prevent respondents from completing the same survey more than once, and other quality control procedures (e.g., logic checks and tests for speeding and patterning). If no such efforts were undertaken, this will be disclosed.
- 4) For multi-mode surveys, detailed description of any data quality issues arising from combining data collected via different modes/instruments. The description must also include:
 - a) Rationale for decisions about combining or not combining data from different modes in reporting the results.
 - b) Description of any steps taken to detect and mitigate mode effects and mode biases in the survey results.

13.2.5. Results

The detailed results in reports must include:

- 1) An executive summary of key results and conclusions, linked to the survey objectives and research questions.
- 2) Specifications for any indices constructed or statistical modeling in sufficient detail to allow replication.
- 3) For probability samples, state the level of precision, including the margin of sampling error and confidence interval for an observed percentage of

50% for yes-no (two option) type questions asked of the total sample and any key subgroups.

Clearly indicate that the results for subgroups have a larger margin of sampling error than for the overall sample, because of their smaller sample sizes. Also, the margin of sampling error is highest for questions where 50% of the respondents gave one answer and the other 50% gave another answer. The margin of sampling error decreases for questions where the observed percentage for a particular response approaches 0% or 100%.

Results for subgroups must not be reported as significant differences in instances where differences between the groups are within the margin of sampling error for the survey as a whole.

- 4) When subsets of the sample (e.g., regions, age groups, language groups) have been over or under-sampled, adjust for the design effect [S4N1](#) due to weighting when calculating the margin of sampling error.
- 5) For non-probability samples, the report and executive summary must contain a prominently displayed statement in the methodology description regarding why no margin of sampling error is reported, based on the following template: "The results of this survey are not statistically projectable to the target population because the sampling method used does not ensure that the sample represents the target population with a known margin of sampling error. Reported percentages are not generalizable to any group other than the sample studied, and therefore no formal statistical inferences can be drawn between the sample results and the broader target population it may be intended to reflect. [If weighting was done, include a sentence to describe the weighting, for example:] The sample data have been weighted to reflect the demographic composition of (target population)."
- 6) For non-probability surveys, no alternative measures of precision may be cited and no statements may be made to indicate that the sample has a level of sampling error equivalent to a probability sample of similar size.
- 7) For census surveys, the report must contain a statement on why no margin of sampling error is reported, based on the following template: "Because the entire population of [target population] was invited to participate in this study, there is no margin of sampling error to be estimated or reported. The potential impact of non-sampling error due to non-response is discussed in the results section of the report. [If weighting was done, include the following statement:] The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of [the target population (if known) or the sampling frame (e.g., client-supplied list)] in relation to its key known characteristics."
- 8) For multi-mode surveys, if the data collected via different modes are combined for analysis and reporting purposes, the report must discuss whether this leads to any data quality issues. This could include, for example, discussion of possible impacts of mode on key survey variables, the impact of any differences in response rate/participation rate by mode, and non-response bias analyses by mode.
- 9) The report must provide the final dispositions of cases in sufficient detail to allow secondary analysis of all reported outcome rates. The record of final case dispositions must identify invalid numbers, unresolved cases (U), in-scope non-responding units (IS), and responding units (R).

- 10) For all types of surveys (probability sample, non-probability sample, census) the report must state the response rate/participation rate achieved, which must be calculated according to the formula:

$$\text{Response Rate/Participation Rate} = R/(U+IS+R)$$

- 11) All survey reports must discuss the potential for non-response bias for the survey as a whole and for key survey variables. The report must describe, to the extent possible, the degree to which characteristics of the respondents match or depart from known characteristics (e.g., demographics) of the target population or sampling frame, and discuss the possible influence of any resulting non-response bias on the interpretation of survey results.
- a) When authoritative sources of comparison exist, as is the case when conducting a survey of the general population, the analysis of non-response bias will consist of a comparison of at least three variables in the survey sample with the equivalent parameters of the population, normally available from Statistics Canada. No extra surveys or interviews are required.
 - b) If no authoritative sources of comparison exist, key variables in the sample could alternatively be compared with variables in the sampling frame. If no such variables exist, only then should the non-response bias discussion be based on comparison of early versus late responders, or on observations made during data collection about characteristics of non-responders.
- 12) The results that are based on subgroups, and the number of cases used in subgroup analysis (i.e., unweighted sample sizes for reported subgroup estimates.)

13.2.6. Appendices

The following materials must be provided in appendices attached to the final report:

- 1) Study materials, including, when relevant, the recruiting instruments, questionnaires, descriptions, transcriptions or representations of any visual or auditory aids, and other data collection documents, **in all languages in which the research was conducted.**
- 2) A version of the questionnaires displaying the following:

The exact wording and presentation of questions and response options whose results are reported. This includes preceding respondent instructions and any preceding questions that might reasonably be expected to influence responses to the reported results.
- 3) Any other instructions (skip, terminate, etc.) needed to understand the logic and flow of the questionnaire.
- 4) A full set of tabulated data (see Regulatory and Administrative Mandatory Requirements, [subsection 13.1.](#), paragraph 1) c) *i.*).
- 5) A statement of political neutrality signed by the researcher, as an appendix.

ENDNOTES

Important Notes

S0N1: Survey projects may involve more than one methodology (e.g., on-line and telephone surveys). As such, it may be necessary to consult more than one set of standards.

Section 13.2.5 Results

S4N1: The design effect due to weighting equals one plus the variance of the weights. The 'effective' sample size for which to calculate the margin of sampling error is the actual sample size divided by the design effect. (See: Spencer, B. 2000. An approximate design effect for unequal weighting when measurements may correlate with selection probabilities. *Survey Methodology* Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 137-138.)

ANNEX "C"
ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE

QUESTIONS FOR INDUSTRY

1) Inclusion

Question #1: How does your business consider accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities in all modes of quantitative and qualitative research?

RESPONSE – Question #1:

2) Accessibility Standards

Question #2: Do your research services meet or comply with any accessibility standards? For example: EN 301 549 Harmonised European Standard Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services, US Section 508 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973), or Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1.

If the response is yes, please specify: which standards and to what extent (partially, fully) you are compliant, and the methods you used to assess your level of compliance (for example, internal or external assessments)?

RESPONSE – Question #2:

3) Non-Compliance with Accessibility Standards

Question #3: If your research services are not compliant, is there an intention or plan to be partially or fully compliant with any international standards in the future? If the response is no, please indicate why not.

RESPONSE – Question #3: