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COVID-19 Snapshot Monitoring (COSMO) Study in Canada Phase 2

Methodological report

Prepared for the Privy Council Office (PCO)

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Canada

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This public opinion research report presents the methodology for the conduct of eight online surveys conducted by EKOS Research Associates Inc. on behalf of the Privy Council Office (PCO).

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Under Separate Cover: Questionnaires

Under Separate Cover: Data Tables

SUMMARY

A. Background and Methodology

The Privy Council Office (PCO) is the hub of non-partisan, public service support to the Prime Minister and Cabinet and its decision-making structures. Led by the Clerk of the Privy Council, PCO helps the Government implement its vision and respond effectively and quickly to issues facing the government and the country.

Between March 2020 and September 2021, PCO led the implementation of the COVID-19 Snapshot Monitoring (COSMO) Study Phase 1, which longitudinally captured respondents' perceptions, knowledge, and behaviours in response to the pandemic. The COSMO Study Phase 1 was founded on a comprehensive survey developed by the World Health Organization (WHO), released to assist countries in quickly establishing a data collection mechanism to track the evolving response context related to COVID-19 at the citizen-level. It enabled PCO to contribute evidence-based, behaviourally-informed insights and recommendations to public communication materials, policy and programmatic considerations, and whole-of-government decision-making related to the Government of Canada's broader response effort.

This report outlines the methodology used in the COSMO Study's second Phase, which continued to monitor the evolving pandemic response context with a refreshed sample of Canadians (including a flexible oversample of diverse sub-segments of the population), and a restructured survey body exploring new thematic areas related to re-integration and recovery. More specifically, as the country gradually re-opened, this study monitored Canadians' beliefs and behaviours on the road to re-integrating to workplaces, social circles, and the day-to-day activities they engaged in before the pandemic, and further explored the factors posing threats to collective recovery emerging from Phase 1 evidence (e.g., vaccine hesitancy, exposure to and spread of mis/disinformation).

Through a partnership with HC and PHAC, the implementation of the COSMO Study Phase 2 allowed PCO to monitor progress and explore challenges related to pandemic recovery, identify specific segments of Canadians with greater need for support, and then tailor efforts to those specific contexts with a deeper understanding of these priority populations.

The target audience for this study was adults living in Canada 18 years of age and older, aiming for appropriate representation of gender, age, education, and regional split (Canadian citizens as well as permanent residents).

The study consisted of eight survey waves of 2,000 respondents each. The sample included general population respondents in all survey waves, as well as an oversample of selected underrepresented populations in one of the waves (sixth wave only).

B. Expenditure

The contract amount for this project was **\$249,509.48** (including HST).

C. Political Neutrality Certification

I hereby certify as Senior Officer of EKOS Research Associates Inc. that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research.

Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

Signed by:



Derek Jansen (Vice President)

APPENDICES

A. Detailed Methodology

Data was collected through online surveys with adult Canadians 18 years of age and older, randomly recruited from EKOS' probability-based online panel.

Data was collected through a rolling poll. For 8 waves, EKOS conducted an approximately 20 minute online survey with 2,000 general population respondents each wave, with the exception of the sixth wave, where we also included Canadians from underrepresented populations identified by the client (those who had a pregnancy within the last year, and respondents with 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine).

For the most part, the same 2,000 general population panelists were interviewed each wave; a new panelist was only added to the sampling frame when an original panelist stopped participating. However, for Wave 8 an entirely fresh (new) sample was included, at the request of the client.

The general population sample frame for each survey wave consisted of roughly 50% women and 50% men for each age group (18 to 34; 35 to 54; 55+), and for each region:

- Atlantic Canada (Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick);
- Quebec;
- Ontario;
- Manitoba/Saskatchewan/Nunavut;
- Alberta/Northwest Territories;
- British Columbia/Yukon.

The survey results for each wave (n=2,000) are valid within a margin of error of ± 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

B. Survey Programming and Pre-Test

PCO provided EKOS with the final English questionnaire for each survey wave. EKOS translated, programmed and pre-tested the questionnaire for each survey wave with at least 20 respondents (a minimum of 10 English and 10 French pre-test completions each wave).

Appended to the pre-test questionnaire was a diagnostic battery of questions which allowed respondents to provide an assessment of the clarity and flow of the questionnaire, and provide any final comments about the survey. The questionnaire for each survey wave was finalized in consultation with PCO.

C. Survey Administration/Quality Control

The final questionnaire in each survey wave was administered to the full sample using a bilingual e-mail invitation and a bilingual questionnaire, installed on a web-server controlled by EKOS. The e-mail invitation included a description of the survey (in both languages) along with a link to the survey website. When respondents clicked on the survey link, they were taken to a website containing the survey instrument. Once inside the survey, the respondent had the choice of completing the questionnaire in French or English (and they could change the survey language between French and English at any time). The survey database was mounted using a Personalized Identification Number (PIN), so only individuals with a PIN were allowed access to the survey (the PIN was included in the e-mail invitation). The PIN also allowed respondents to exit and re-enter the survey at any time to complete or change information before the questionnaire was completed/submitted.

Survey data collection adhered to the Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research—Online Surveys, as well as all applicable industry standards. EKOS informed respondents of their rights under the Privacy Act and the Access to Information Act and ensured that those rights were protected throughout the research process. This included: informing respondents of the purpose of the research; identifying both the sponsoring department and the research supplier; informing respondents that their participation in the study is voluntary, and that the information provided would be administered according to the requirements of the Privacy Act.

Both the e-mail invitation and the survey instructions included an e-mail address and a 1-800 number that respondents could use in the event that there were questions about the study or completing the questionnaire.

In order to increase the response rate to the survey, all non-respondents were sent up to three bilingual reminder e-mails, emphasizing the relevance and importance of the survey, and asking them to take the time needed to participate.

D. Sample Source/Data Analysis

The sample for the survey was drawn from EKOS' in-house probability-based panel, *Probit*. *Probit* is a research panel that has been designed by EKOS to provide statistically representative data. Our online panel offers complete coverage of the Canadian population (i.e., Internet, phone, cell phone), random recruitment (in other words, participants are recruited randomly, they do not opt themselves into our panel), and equal probability sampling. All respondents to our panel are recruited by telephone using random digit dialling and are confirmed by live interviewers.

Our panel is considered to be probability based as it is recruited from random digit dial (RDD) sample, both landline and cell phone. The overall panel size is roughly 100,000 Canadian households. Random stratified samples are drawn from the panel database for individual research assignments.

Once the data for each survey wave was collected, the database was reviewed for data quality. Coding of open-ended questions was also completed. Survey results were weighted based on Statistics Canada data according to age, gender, region and education to ensure the sample was representative of the general public aged 18 years and older. Based on an analysis plan provided by PCO, EKOS provided results for each survey wave in the form of Excel data tables and SPSS files. A field summary was also provided at the end of each wave.

E. Overview of Survey Waves

Below we outline the field dates, sample sizes, sample composition (general public and underrepresented populations), and response rates¹ for each of the eight survey waves conducted as part of this study.

Overview of Survey Waves		
Wave 1	Field Dates:	February 3-25, 2022
	Sample Size:	2,000
	<i>New respondents</i>	2,000
	<i>Return respondents</i>	0
	<i>Return respondents who completed all waves to date</i>	0
	Sample Composition:	General Public
	Response Rate:	12.3%
Wave 2	Field Dates:	April 5-25, 2022
	Sample Size:	2,000
	<i>New respondents</i>	466
	<i>Return respondents</i>	1,534
	<i>Return respondents who completed all waves to date</i>	1,534
	Sample Composition:	General Public
	Response Rate:	34.7%
Wave 3	Field Dates:	June 1-24, 2022
	Sample Size:	2,000
	<i>New respondents</i>	373
	<i>Return respondents</i>	1,627
	<i>Return respondents who completed all waves to date</i>	1,267
	Sample Composition:	General Public
	Response Rate:	36.5%

¹ The response rates were calculated using the formula recommended by the Government of Canada:
 Response rate = Responding units/(Unresolved + In-scope non-responding + Responding units).

Overview of Survey Waves

Wave 4	Field Dates:	August 3-26, 2022
	Sample Size:	2,000
	<i>New respondents</i>	240
	<i>Return respondents</i>	1,760
	<i>Return respondents who completed all waves to date</i>	1,170
	Sample Composition:	General Public
Response Rate:	42.7%	
Wave 5	Field Dates:	October 5-26, 2022
	Sample Size:	2,000
	<i>New respondents</i>	237
	<i>Return respondents</i>	1,763
	<i>Return respondents who completed all waves to date</i>	1,065
	Sample Composition:	General Public
Response Rate:	24.2%	
Wave 6	Field Dates:	November 25-December 12, 2022
	Sample Size:	2,000
	<i>New respondents</i>	222
	<i>Return respondents</i>	1,778
	<i>Return respondents who completed all waves to date</i>	1,000
	Sample Composition:	1,886 General Public; 114 underrepresented populations (pregnancy within the last year, respondents with 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine)
Response Rate:	48.6%	
Wave 7	Field Dates:	February 8-24, 2023
	Sample Size:	2,000
	<i>New respondents</i>	321
	<i>Return respondents</i>	1,679
	<i>Return respondents who completed all waves to date</i>	939
	Sample Composition:	General Public
Response Rate:	49.3%	

Overview of Survey Waves

Wave 8	Field Dates:	May 19-June 6, 2023
	Sample Size:	2,000
	New respondents	2,000
	Return respondents	0
	Return respondents who completed all waves to date	0
	Sample Composition:	General Public
	Response Rate:	8.5%
