

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This executive summary provides an overview of the findings from ten (10) focus groups conducted between July 11<sup>th</sup> and July 16<sup>th</sup> 2015. The focus groups were carried out to test initial public reactions and perceptions on design concepts for a new, commemorative bank note that will be issued to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation in 2017.*

Two design options for the **front** of the commemorative bank note were tested. The concepts were similar, the major differences being in the presentation of the portrait of Sir John A. Macdonald (full body vs. head only) and the design of the border around the large window on the right-hand side.

- Participants recognise both design options for the front of the bank note as a Canadian bill.
- Most participants either identify the portrait as the first Prime Minister or the Prime Minister at the time of Confederation. Many also specifically recognise Sir John A. Macdonald.
- Participants tend to recognise the image in the background (vignette), in general terms, as a group of people involved in the creation of Confederation (e.g. “historical figures” or “parliamentarians from the time”). A few specifically name the *Fathers of Confederation*.
- Reaction to both window borders is neutral. Participants do not have strong positive or negative feelings.
- The anniversary dates (1867 to 2017), shown at the top of the border on the Full Body Portrait design concept, are perceived to be meaningful and appropriate.
- Both concepts for the front are perceived as suitable options. When asked, participants indicate a preference for the Full Body Portrait. Showing the Prime Minister standing is viewed as innovative and new, a suitable option to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Confederation.

Two design concepts for the **back** of the commemorative bank note were tested. The concepts illustrate two different themes: *Canadian Landscapes* and *United from Sea to Sea to Sea*.

- In general terms, participants can identify the different images included on the *Canadian Landscapes* design concept (e.g. mountains of the West Coast, Prairie wheat field, forests of Ontario or Quebec, Atlantic Ocean, Northern Lights).
- The *Canadian Landscapes* design concept is perceived as showcasing the natural beauty and vastness of Canada, as well as its natural resources.
- In the *United from Sea to Sea to Sea* design concept, most participants can generally identify a bridge, the building of a railroad and an Aboriginal sculpture. More specific identification of the three elements by name is much less common and varies by region.
- The *United from Sea to Sea to Sea* design concept is perceived as showcasing important historical events and achievements that have united Canada and its people from one end of the country to the other. However, participants perceive a lack of connection or

continuity between the three images. Participants have difficulty understanding and verbalising the intended theme.

- Participants tend to prefer the window border on the *United from Sea to Sea to Sea* concept. Although most do not recognise that the border is inspired by the Northern Lights, participants appreciate the inclusion of the maple leaf in the border, a recognizable Canadian symbol.
- The owl included at the bottom of the border on the *Canadian Landscapes* concept is often misinterpreted as a peacock. This confusion raises questions as to its significance and relevance. It would need to be explained, if retained.
- Both design concepts for the back are generally perceived to be suitable for the commemorative bank note. The *Canadian Landscapes* concept is more often described as a better representation of Canada and perhaps more easily understood as a concept. However, its link to Confederation may not be as strong as the historically-focused *United from Sea to Sea to Sea* design concept.

Two **foil** design concepts were also shown to participants.

- Participants do not have a strong preference between the two foil options.
- The initial reaction is often that the transparent window is crowded with graphic elements that are not clearly related to each other.
- Although many recognise the owl as an Aboriginal symbol, participants have difficulty understanding the meaning of the owl and its connection to the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This would require explanation if retained.