

The Rethinking Energy and Sustainable Development 2006 Study

Context

In 2004, EKOS Research Associates conducted a unique study examining public perspectives on the inter-related issues of energy, the environment and sustainable development (*Rethinking Energy and Sustainable Development*). Findings revealed that Canadians hold somewhat conflicted and inconsistent views on the environment and sustainable development. They clearly indicate that energy conservation should trump expanded energy production, and see protection of the environment as dominant over low prices. At the same time, however, the survey revealed clear limitations to Canadians' willingness to personally pay more to reduce their impact on the environment.

Recent developments such as soaring energy prices and renewed debate about how to best protect the environment have resulted in increased attention being given to the issue of sustainable development. Views on sustainable development may now be reaching a "tipping point" — when attitudes cross a critical threshold and a general consensus and desire for action occurs (as happened in the mid-1990s with deficit reduction). We propose to revisit public views on energy, the environment, and sustainable development in order to gauge any shifts in perceptions that may have occurred over the past two years. The study will provide practical intelligence for public, private and third sector decision-makers in developing strategies to address Canada's energy and environmental needs of the future.

Rethinking Energy and Sustainable Development offers clients the opportunity to be part of a unique partnership. By pooling the resources of a number of different organizations with overlapping areas of interest, we can conduct a cost-effective, in-depth examination of perceptions of energy/sustainable development in Canada.

Study Issues

The study will examine a wide range of inter-related issues associated with energy, the environment and sustainable development. Based on a review of last year's study, we will select a number of tracking questions for inclusion in this year's study. The study issues/questions will be developed in close consultation with clients, however below we outline some proposed areas of examination for the study:

- General understanding and knowledge of energy and energy sources (existing and emerging)
- Changing perceptions of sources of energy
- Views on "green" energy sources and alternative fuels: willingness to use, and support for government involvement to encourage use
- Views on climate change/the Kyoto Protocol
- Preferred role of government, business and citizens/consumers in energy sector/sustainable development
- Perceived link between energy and national security
- Support for North American environmental/energy harmonization
- Views on corporate social responsibility and the environment (do environmental policies influence buyer behaviour?)
- Views on environmental technologies and link to economic prosperity
- Concerns about air and water quality
- Perceived link between a clean environment and public health

Methodology

Given the interdependence of Canada and the United States with respect to energy and sustainable development, the methodology for this study will involve large, national surveys in both Canada and the United States. We will conduct a nationally representative telephone survey of 1,000 Canadian adults. Survey results will be statistically reliable in all major regions of Canada. The questionnaire will be developed in close consultation with participating subscribers, and will be designed to gain insight into the public perspective regarding the study issues outlined above.

We will also conduct a nationally representative survey of 1,000 American adults. This survey will include items replicated from the survey of Canadians. This data will be analysed to compare the views of both the Canadian and American public, highlighting key similarities and differences.

In addition, the study will include an on-line survey of 300 Canadian public and private sector decision-makers to examine their views on energy and sustainable development. The decision-maker survey will include items replicated from the general public survey. This data will be analysed to compare the views of Canadian decision-makers with those of the Canadian public.

We will cross-tabulate general public survey results by a range of demographic and socio-economic variables (e.g., gender, region age, education) to get a clearer understanding of the results obtained. In addition, we will conduct a segmentation of Canadian general public respondents using cluster analysis. Cluster analysis is a multivariate statistical procedure aimed at identifying relatively homogeneous groups or clusters. Forming clusters of individuals and studying the characteristics that they share, as well as those in which they differ, provides valuable insights into the data collected.

Once analysis of the data is complete, we will submit a report containing detailed analysis of the survey results, as well as an executive summary of key findings and implications from the study.

Costs

The study is available to clients at two subscription levels: limited and privileged.

Limited subscriptions are available for \$15,000 (GST not included) and include the following deliverables:

- A full set of detailed cross-tabular tables (close-ended questions only) 3 days after fieldwork completion
- A full set of detailed cross-tabular tables (with open-ended data) 5 days after fieldwork completion
- A data diskette in SPSS for individual client use
- A full-length final report

Privileged subscriptions are available for \$25,000 (GST not included) and include all the deliverables listed above, plus the following:

- Input into the design of the core questionnaire
- Five client-specific closed questions designed in partnership with EKOS
- An oral presentation, in either official language, from senior research staff, in Ottawa

Additional (client-specific) questions will be charged at \$2,000 for each close-ended question, and \$3,000 for each open-ended question. Please note that a minimum of five partners will be needed to provide the "critical mass" to undertake the study. As well, we will limit the number of privileged subscriptions to seven.

For further information, please contact:

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