**MEDIA FACT SHEET**

**About the Council**
The Council of Canadian Academies is an independent, not-for-profit corporation that supports evidence-based, expert assessments to inform public policy development in Canada. The work done by the Council is similar in nature to the National Research Council in the United States.

Although the Council received an initial endowment in 2005 from the Government of Canada it is not a government organization.

As an independent organization the Council is able to work with governments at all levels, non-governmental organizations, the university sector and the private sector. Those who propose questions to the Council for study receive un-biased, evidence-based information which can be used to further public policy development.

**What is an Assessment?**
The Council generates in-depth, authoritative evidence-based studies authored by panels of independent experts. Final reports meet the highest standards of intellectual rigour and go through a thorough report review process (peer review).

These assessments provide resources to inform the evolution of public policy on matters for which a science perspective is relevant.

The Council’s Board of Governors oversees the integrity of the assessment process. The Board formally approves assessment questions, expert panel membership, assessment budgets and timelines, and report review processes. It is assisted by a Scientific Advisory Committee.

To protect the independence of the assessment process, the sponsor (the organization who submitted the question) of an assessment does not participate in its development, review drafts of the report or propose any changes before its public release.

**Expert Panel Members**
Once the Council has received a question for study, it begins to consider what set of experts should be brought together to address the charge. The Council’s Scientific Advisory Committee provides input on disciplines that must be represented and provides suggestions for membership. Expert Panel members are typically Canadian but often experts from the United States and Europe are also asked to participate on panels. The Council also draws on the intellectual capital that lies within its three member academies (the Royal Society of Canada, the Canadian Academy of Engineering, and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences). All panel members serve on a volunteer basis over an 18 to 24 month period. Panel membership is confirmed by the Council’s Board of Governors. *Neither the Government of Canada nor any political Minister is involved in the panel selection process.*
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