

April 10, 2020

The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

Re: Support for the research, insights and analytics industry during the COVID-19 global pandemic

We are writing to congratulate you on your swift and nonstop efforts to help Canadians and to reduce the impact of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis we are currently living. The global pandemic is a detrimental blow to all in terms of health, social and financial wellness.

The Canadian Research and Insights Council (CRIC) is Canada's voice of the research, insights and analytics industry both domestically and globally. Our members include research agencies, companies that rely on insights, and other industry partners. Our agency members are playing a critical role in helping public and private sector clients navigate through these challenging times as COVID-19 and the measures to reduce its spread have dramatically impacted the behaviours and attitudes of Canadians. Several of our members are also conducting and publishing public opinion research at their own costs to keep the public sector, other stakeholders, and Canadians informed.

As is the case with many business sectors, the pandemic has had a major negative effect on the research, insights and analytics industry. On March 16, we advised all members to stop doing research requiring face-to-face interaction. While some of this research could be transitioned to virtual methodologies, the impact on member companies who specialize in face-to-face research has been significant. We wish to highlight that our industry is unique from many others in that it will take ours a longer time to recover. While some sectors are more likely to have revenues return rapidly, our member companies will require a longer time to design, operationalize and collect revenue from new projects after it is confirmed it is safe to move forward with them.

As such, we are seeking targeted relief for the research, insights and analytics industry so that research companies can continue to support key decisions that will help Canada navigate its way through this difficult period, and quickly steer us in a positive course of recovery as soon as the situation permits. Specifically, we are seeking immediate and longer-term measures from the federal government and all provincial governments to allow businesses in our sector who are impacted by COVID-19 to meet their liquidity needs, continue to pay their bills, and retain their employees during this time of uncertainty.

The measures we are requesting include:

- Ensuring access to the 75 per cent wage subsidy takes into account the fact that the bigger impact of revenue for our sector may not begin until April or later and may persist longer than for other industries;
- Extending the 75 per cent wage subsidy beyond the proposed three months to a minimum of six months for those research companies who experience an extended impact of COVID-19 on their revenues; and

- Providing support for training, particularly for field workers. If we lose qualified staff, the sector's ability to deliver large scale social research so frequently needed by the government will be compromised.

Research, insights and analytics play a pivotal role in our society, in improving public policy and giving voice to the opinions of Canadians. It is vital that leaders from all sectors – business, public policy, education, and not for profit landscape – continue to have access to insights supported by data to plan and make evidence-based decisions.

In an environment such as the one we face – and the need for Canada to recover as quickly as possible – the research, insights and analytics industry must continue to play this invaluable role. There is no better way to assess and measure the effectiveness of the pandemic-related actions than asking those most directly affected – the Canadian people.

While we have seen businesses across Canada and across sectors begin to lay-off their employees, it is our hope that we can avoid this in our industry.

The research, insights and analytics industry accounts for more than \$1.1 billion dollars in annual economic activity and employs over 5,000 Canadians in the knowledge sector. Our members do not wish to shift their financial burdens onto the Employment Insurance system, nor do they want to lose the employee knowledge and capacity they built-up over years of investment.

We appreciate that we are not the only industry that is seeking financial support from government. Yet we believe that our sector has an important role to play in how Canadians, the Government of Canada and all sectors navigate this unprecedented crisis. For this reason, targeted measures are required to help those research companies affected improve cash flow and keep thousands of Canadians employed, thereby enabling them to continue to provide important data and insights that can help with Canada's recovery.

Thank you in advance for considering our request. Do not hesitate to contact me should you require additional informational or wish to discuss in greater detail the specific needs of our industry. For more information on CRIC, our industry and our members, please visit www.canadianresearchinsightscouncil.ca.

Most respectfully,

John Tabone
Chief Administrative Officer
Canadian Research Insights Council
john.tabone@canadianresearchinsightscouncil.ca
647-740-9790

Cc.: The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
The Hon. Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance