

# **EIGHTY-TWO PERCENT OF CANADIANS SUPPORT PLAN TO DEVELOP A CENTRE FOR CANADIAN OLYMPIC EXCELLENCE**



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## **EIGHTY-TWO PERCENT OF CANADIANS SUPPORT PLAN TO DEVELOP A CENTRE FOR CANADIAN OLYMPIC EXCELLENCE**

**Calgary, Alberta** —A significant majority of Canadians support a proposal to create Canada's first Centre for Canadian Olympic Excellence where the nation's top athletes could train to become the world's best, a new Canada-wide poll shows.

According to a new Ipsos-Reid poll, the plan to develop a Centre for Canadian Olympic Excellence enjoys the support of 82 per cent of Canadians on a national basis, with solid support across all regions of the country. The Centre would, at minimum, offer Canada's summer and winter athletes, resources and facilities similar to what athletes in countries like Australia, the United States, Germany and Norway now can access.

When asked to explain their support, or opposition, to the development of the Centre, the most frequent response offered by supporters, (82 per cent), was that Canadian athletes need greater financial support for training, coaching and facilities. Those opposed to the initiative, (16 per cent), most frequently replied that there are more important things to spend money on.

The research, sponsored by CODA, was conducted to measure support for the development of the proposed Centre and views on the proposed funding for the initiative. The research additionally explored Canadians views on amateur sports and the role of private sector corporate sponsorship.

The plan, developed by CODA in association with Canadian athletes, coaches, national sports governing bodies, and sport professionals, is intended to make Canada a leading Olympic sports nation. The Centre, to be developed in the Calgary region using the legacy facilities of the 1988 Olympic Winter Games as a foundation, is intended to support athletes in both summer and winter sports. The Centre would offer specialized

training for athletes, conduct sports research, provide a wide range of education, food and accommodation facilities, and bring together world-leading professional expertise.

Canadians expressed strong agreement with statements about the potential benefits of the Centre. A total of 94 per cent agree that Canadian athletes who succeed at international sports events serve as positive role models for children, 91 per cent agree that Canadian success on the international sporting stage makes Canadians proud and unites the country, 90 per cent believe the success of athletes reinforces the values of dedication and hard work, while 87 per cent feel perceptions of citizenship are positively affected when Canadians succeed at international sporting events.

According to the poll, six-in-ten (60 per cent) of Canadians consider Canada to be a leader in the amateur sports world when it comes to winter sports, and a majority of Canadians say it is important to them that Canada be a world leader in amateur sports. Nearly eight-in-ten (77 per cent) say it is important to them that Canada be a world leader in winter sports. Seven-in-ten (70 per cent) say it is important to them that Canada be a world leader in summer sports.

The one-time cost of the proposed first Centre for Canadian Olympic Excellence is approximately \$260 million dollars, with CODA assuming full responsibility of on-going operations for facilities that will allow Canadian athletes to compete on a level playing field with athletes from other countries.

The CODA plan calls for one-third of this total cost (approximately \$87 million) to be funded by the Government of Canada with the remaining two-thirds to be paid for by the Government of Alberta, CODA and the private sector.

A total of 89 per cent of those questioned said private sector companies should provide financial support to help develop the Centre for Canadian Olympic Excellence. When asked how much private sector companies should pay in relation to the federal government, nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) of those asked said more, four-in-ten (39 per cent) said the same amount, and three-in-ten (30 per cent) said less.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the financial priority of this initiative considering the range of issues facing Canada today. When asked about how much of a financial priority the Government of Canada should place on this specific initiative, most

Canadians (68 per cent) say it should be a moderate priority, with 15 per cent describing it as a high priority. Conversely, a further 16 per cent say funding the initiative should not be a financial priority at all. Despite the moderate financial priority given to the initiative by most Canadians, three quarters (75 per cent) when asked directly said they would support the federal government in providing the proposed one-third or \$87 million in funding for the initiative.

Canadian athletes and CODA presented the request for one-time funding to the federal government during the launch of a National Call to Action in Toronto in September. Since then, Alpine Canada Alpin and the Canada Paralympic Committee have already publicly announced their support. CODA has already begun building two new major high-performance facilities at Canada Olympic Park, which will serve as the hub of the proposed Centre– a Superpipe for Canada's snowboarding athletes and a gymnastics facility that will provide cross-training opportunities for summer and winter athletes.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between October 8<sup>th</sup> and October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2002. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1009 adult Canadians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2001 Census data.*

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