


Lunch & Learn: Democratic Institutions Secretariat

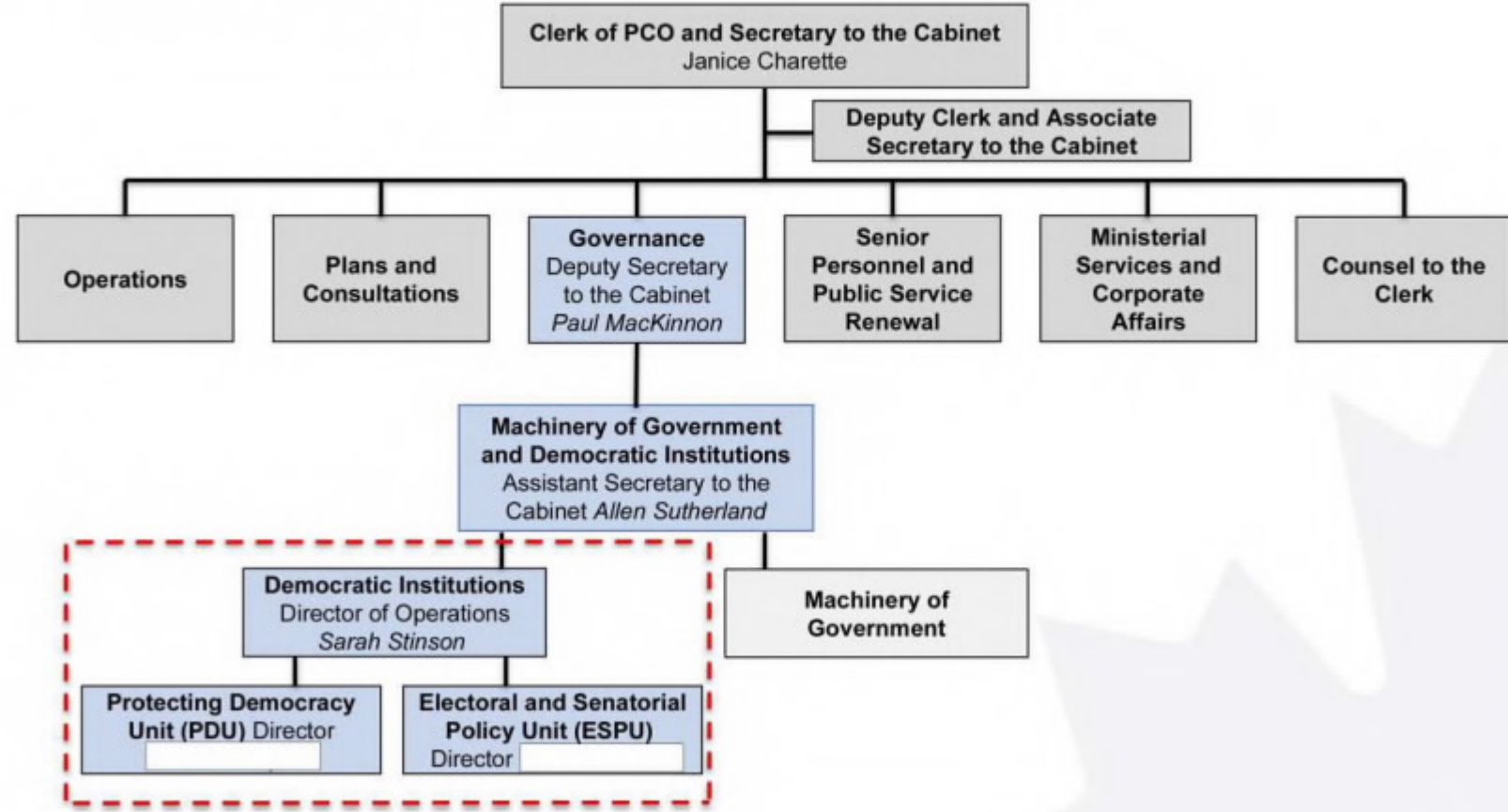
PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE – JANUARY 25, 2023

Canada 

Outline

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- What DI does
- Structure of the Secretariat
- Electoral and Senatorial Policy Unit (ESPU)
- Protecting Democracy Unit (PDU)
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Where DI Fits Within PCO



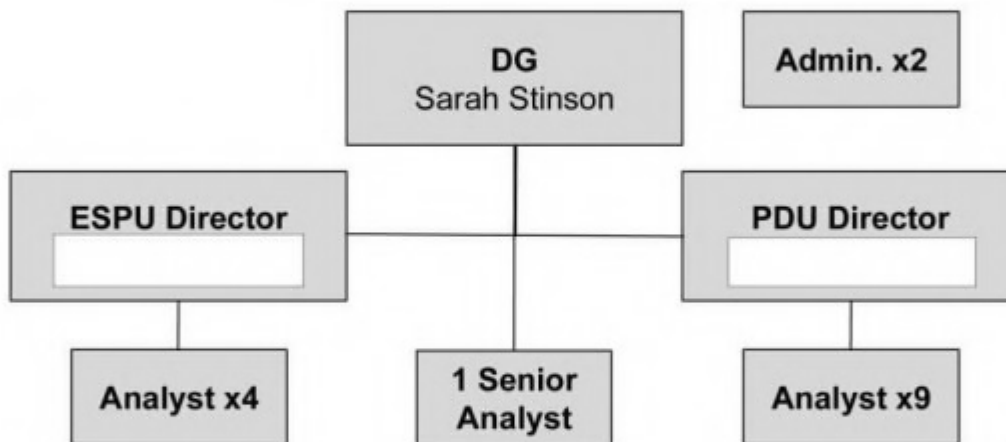
What DI does

- **Similar to a line department**, DI supports the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, the Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, in his **mandate to protect and strengthen Canada's Democratic Institutions**.
 - To meet these responsibilities and bolster trust in Canadian democracy, DI develops legislative and policy initiatives which help keep democracy transparent and fair in the face of changing circumstances (e.g., *Canada Elections Act* amendments) and emerging threats (e.g., misinformation/ disinformation (MIDI) and foreign interference).

Mandate Letter Commitments

- Lead integrated GoC response to protect Canada's democratic institutions, including the federal electoral process, against **foreign interference and disinformation**.
- Consider how the recommendations issued by the Chief Electoral Officer may **further** support **transparency, fairness and participation** in federal electoral process and ensure elections continue to be safe.
- Consider the report of Canada's Leaders' Debates Commissioner on how to **improve leaders' debates** and take steps to ensure that they better serve the public interest.
- Consider the interplay between **democracy and technology**.

Current Structure of the Secretariat



Electoral and Senatorial Policy Unit (ESPU)

<p>Leaders' Debates Commission (LDC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for considering the LDC's post election report on how to improve leaders' debates and taking steps to ensure that they continue to serve the public interest. Led the creation of the Leaders' Debate Commission – a fully independent entity – that has organized leaders' debates during federal elections since 2019.
<p>Electoral Districts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the Minister in his responsibilities under the <i>Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act</i>, following the reallocation of seats in the House of Commons every 10 years. Initiating the process, monitoring decisions of the independent commissions tasked with identifying new electoral boundaries. Led on Bill C-14, which amended the <i>Constitution Act, 1867</i>, so that no province can hold fewer seats in the House of Commons than it did during the 43rd Parliament of Canada.
<p>Canada Elections Act (CEA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing possible amendments to the CEA in light of Elections Canada and the Commissioner of Canada Elections post election reports. Ensuring that federal elections and related processes are responsive to the needs of Canadians, and resilient in light of changing circumstances and emerging threats. Supporting matters regarding litigation related to the CEA. Led on Bill C-19 & Bill C-76 , the latter of which amended the <i>Canada Elections Act</i>.
<p>Other Responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy lead on Independent Advisory Board for Senate Appointments. Supporting the Minister and other PCO staff required to appear before PROC on matters relating to the DI's files. Seek decisions from the Prime Minister on by-elections.

Protecting Democracy Unit (PDU)

- PDU was established through Budget 2022 to coordinate, develop, and implement government-wide measures designed to combat disinformation and protect our democracy.



Coordination

Build an integrated interdepartmental response



Research and Policy Integration

Further government's understanding and use of evidence



Engagement

Learn from others, develop partnerships, and engage civil society



Communications: Monitoring and Response

Develop a framework for communications interventions

Areas of work include:

- Increasing understanding of mis/disinformation in Canada
- Creation of the Canadian Digital Media Research Network (funded through PCH's Digital Citizen Initiative)
- Enhancing the Protecting Democracy Plan, which includes:
 - Critical Election Incident Public Protocol
 - Digital Citizen Initiative
 - Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force
 - Canada Declaration on Electoral Integrity Online
- Interdepartmental coordination and governance
- Engagement with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and other organizations within civil society and the public sector.

Engagement Beyond PCO

Electoral and Senate Policy Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elections Canada - Commissioner of Canada Elections - The Leaders' Debates Commission
Protecting Democracy Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Canadian Heritage - Global Affairs Canada - Public Safety Canada - Provincial, Territorial, and Foreign Government counterparts - Social Media Platforms - Academia - Civil Society

For Public Release

Engaging with DI

- DI's commitment to protect and strengthen Canada's democratic institutions feature across many government departments' work.
- If you or your team at PCO work on initiatives related to democratic institutions, DI would be happy to hear from you and find ways to collaborate.
- Please feel free to contact us – the DI team will be more than happy to work with you!

For Public Release

QUESTIONS?

