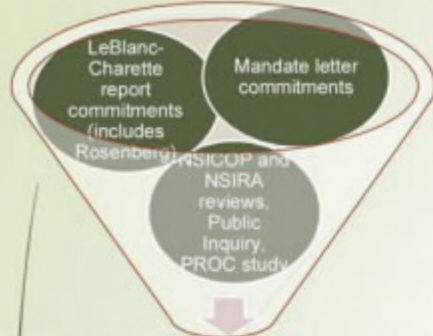


Protecting Democracy: Fall 2023 Priorities



Risks and Challenges

Sequencing: multiple recommendations/reports coming forward

Minister's time: broader portfolio, urgent issues requiring attention

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Mitigation

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PD Unit Fall 2023 Priorities	September	October	November	December
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to parliamentary studies, NSICOP/NSIRA reviews, public inquiry 	Ongoing: briefing books, speeches, Q&A			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop GC-wide MIDI research strategy and increase academic engagement 	OGD consultations on research priorities	Strategy drafted Launch online library for OGD info sharing	Finalize research strategy	Ongoing work with OGDs to advance identified priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interdepartmental engagement on PD policy 	Ongoing OGD engagement	Second Directors' Committee mtg	Potential ADM/DM engagement	Ideas translated into early policy proposals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with civil society organizations and PTs 	Final contracted report from Sherbrooke U delivered	Develop strategy for PT engagement on PD	Contracts for DemX workshops in place Engage with PTs on PD elements/threat briefings (S&I)	S&I organizations engage with PTs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International engagement with like-minded partners, OECD: trust, MIDI 	Global Forum Steering Committee mtg	OECD DIS/MIS Resource Hub Steering Committee Trust Survey launched	OECD DIS/MIS Resource Hub experts group mtg	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefings to Panel 	Finalize briefing material	Briefings for individuals	First full Panel briefing	Potential ongoing Panel briefings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement tools for public servants, Canadians (guidebook, toolkits, CSPS training) 	Ongoing consultation and development	Public toolkits online	Guidebook launch	Final planning for CSPS training (January 2024)

GC-wide MIDI research strategy to support policy development:

- **impact of MIDI on elections** and perceived legitimacy
- **emerging technologies** such as AI
- **effectiveness of government interventions**
- Monthly meetings with CDMRN
- Engage academic, thinktank partners to **address research gaps**

- **DemX** workshops (Spring 2024)
- **Community advisory roundtable** – Spring 2024 (TBC)
- Strategy to regularize **engagement with PTs** (Spring 2024)

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Objective: Enable a real-time understanding of the information environment, including foreign information manipulation and interference in Canada, while respecting Canadians' privacy

Current situation					Systemic challenges		Expert recommendations	
Agency/ Dept	Monitoring for what?	Why?	Foreign or domestic?	General monitoring				
GAC - RRM	Foreign information manipulation and interference	Monitoring elections and by-elections; support foreign policy priorities	Foreign	Yes	Ability to attribute Determining what is foreign origin and what is not		Rouleau (2023) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore whether a dept./agency should have the authority and responsibility to monitor and report on information contained in social media for appropriate purposes and with appropriate safeguards. 	
CSE	Foreign cyber interference	Intelligence collection to inform decision making; disrupt per CSE Act	Foreign	Yes	Evolution of platforms Multiplicity of platforms and evolution of platforms from open to closed		Carvin & Juneau (2022) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore possibility of establishing a stand-alone unit that monitors and analyzes open-source intelligence 	
CSIS	Intelligence on activities suspected to constitute threat to the security of Canada	Intelligence collection to inform decision making; threat reduction measures	Foreign and Domestic	No	Access to data No reasonable way to get access to large quantities of data		Rosenberg (2023) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider growing problem of "domestic interference" 	
RCMP	Evidence/ investigation	Potential for criminal activities	Foreign and Domestic	Yes	Opportunities		Many players in space	
GC's program shops	Publicly available info about individuals online	To aid in program delivery	Domestic	No	Building capacity and guidance Comms officers doing monitoring on corner of the desk with little guidance		PCO-DI – Coordination function for GC GAC-RRM – Current lead in general monitoring PCO-IAS – Recent interdepartmental expert group on OSINT	
GC's policy/ comms shops	Situational awareness; stakeholder views/media pundits; trending topics	Enhance comms response; responsive policy and programs	Domestic	Yes	Enhancing transparency Optics of GC monitoring information environment		TBS – Recent non-binding Privacy Implementation Notice on personal information that is publicly available JUS – Ongoing privacy regime review, including public consultation in 2021 ISED – Lead department on PIPEDA and relations with industry	
					Respecting privacy Existing legislative framework outdated		All of GC has an interest	
					Enabling a bird's eye view No visibility into the information environment as a whole		s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence	
					International examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK - Counter Disinformation Unit; Rapid Response Unit (<i>coordination and contracted monitoring</i>); RESIST (<i>guidance</i>) Sweden – Psychological Defence Agency (<i>enhanced RRM</i>) France – VIGINUM (<i>enhanced RRM</i>) 			

- Public communication about the Protocol should provide a clear explanation for the inclusion of domestic actors and of the types of activities that are of concern.
- Preparations for the next election should include an assessment of whether ministerial security, RCMP protective policing, and local policing capabilities are adequate for the level and persistence of threats and whether there is effective coordination among these bodies
- There should be an assessment as to whether any adjustments should be made to the role of the SITE membership in light of the growing problem of domestic interference
- There should be an announcement, within a year of the previous election, about the government's plan to safeguard the integrity of Canada's elections, including an explanation of the reason for the Protocol.
- The government's plan and public communications should acknowledge that the problem of interference occurs both before the election is called and during the caretaker period. It should be clearer on how and by whom pre-election interference will be addressed, beyond saying that it will be handled through normal ministerial channels.
- It is recommended that the government consider options to ensure that the Panel is well-prepared in advance, and as much as possible, continuity of members is maintained between elections.
- Briefings of the Panel should begin much earlier in the mandate and include non-government actors with expertise on interference and disinformation.
- There should be an opportunity for a review body to assess the decisions of ministers with respect to the use of threat reduction measures during the caretaker period.
- There should be an effort made to provide briefings to political party representatives at downtown Ottawa secure locations.
- The government should consider amending section 6.0 to provide that, barring any national security or public interest reasons, an announcement would be made if the threshold is met.
- The government should consider removing the fourth sentence in the final paragraph of section 6.0 and clarifying that actual or potential impact is one of several considerations that the Panel takes into account in exercising its judgement as to whether the threshold has been met.
- There should be further study of the issue of whether the Protocol should be amended to provide for the possibility of announcements below the threshold set out in section 6.0
- There should be an effort made to provide briefings to political party representatives at downtown Ottawa locations.
- The times for briefings of political party representatives should be fixed in advance, with flexibility to address urgent situations.
- The national security agencies should develop a program of unclassified briefings to increase the awareness of Members of Parliament and Senators on foreign interference and on election interference and on measures they can take to safeguard themselves and their online information
- The Protocol should be maintained with the modifications noted in this report.
- Public communications on the Protocol should emphasize the full range of activities that occur during the caretaker period, rather than being focused on the announcement by the Panel.

16 Rosenberg recommendations

Related to PCO-DI mandate, including the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol

Undertake more robust and frequent communications with Canadians on foreign interference and efforts taken to protect Canadian democracy

Adopting emerging communications best practices to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Canada to help combat disinformation based on the RESIST model

Use CSIS' upcoming Annual Report as an opportunity to bolster ongoing communications related to foreign interference with Canadians

Strengthen capacity of civil society partners to counter disinformation

Ensure Panel members (as part of the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol) are in a constant state of readiness to assume their Panel-related responsibilities

Examine whether potential amendments to the Canada Elections Act are required to counter foreign interference.

Continue to update assessments as threat of foreign interference evolves

Undertake a comprehensive analysis of security and tools to align with the threat environment, including foreign interference, threats and protective measures available to Ministers, other Parliamentarians and senior officials

Develop further enhancements to the Plan to Protect Canada's Democracy including:

- An examination of making the SITE Task Force a permanent entity with a mandate to conduct regular reporting on FI activities; and
- Reviewing the Cabinet Directive on the Protocol based on the recommendations suggested by Mr. Morris Rosenberg in his evaluation of the Protocol following the 2021 general election.

Explore expanding briefing mechanisms on foreign interference to provinces, territories, municipalities and Indigenous officials

Strengthen the capacity of civil society partners to provide insight into Canada's information ecosystem, strengthen resilience and digital literacy of the government, industry, civil society and citizens

Establish a process for Ministers and senior officials, including Panel members, to engage with stakeholders and communities to seek views on best practices to mitigate the impact of foreign interference and disinformation on Canada's institutions

Continue working with Canadian partners to further the work accomplished through the Paris Call to ensure broad access to the most current expertise to protect Canada's electoral processes

Develop briefings for political party representatives in secure locations in Ottawa, with flexibility in scheduling that can adapt/react to urgent situations that may arise during election periods

Provide briefings to Members of Parliament and the Senate to increase awareness on the threat of foreign interference. This includes the development of a program for unclassified briefings for Parliamentarians and their staff on foreign interference including ways to protect themselves following their swearing-in and ongoing basis going forward

LeBlanc-Charette commitments