

Plan to Protect Canada's Democracy:

Status update for initiatives introduced ahead of the 2019 & 2021 general elections

Initiative		Status as of March 2024	Notes
2019 Protecting Democracy initiatives			
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1	Increase capacity of Privy Council Office Democratic Institutions (PCO-DI)	√	Budget 2022 granted \$10 million over 5 years to the Privy Council Office, from which the Protecting Democracy Unit, housed at PCO-DI, was created. The Protecting Democracy Unit consists of a Director and three teams, one each focusing on policy development, engagement, and research.
2	PCO-DI to engage with digital platforms	√	Completed in 2019 and 2021 through the Canada Declaration on Electoral Integrity Online.
3	Create the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol	√	Created in 2019 and renewed in 2021 following an independent assessment after the 2019 general election.
4	Sponsor clearances for political party representatives	√	Political parties have been able to nominate key personnel to receive security clearances sponsored by PCO since the 2019 general election enabling them to attend classified briefings during the election period.
5	Civic literacy programming (Youth take charge program; Canada history fund; Canada periodical fund)	√	The Digital Citizen Initiative (DCI), administered by the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH), has been in place since 2019.
6	Expanded GetCyberSafe campaign	√	Communications Security Establishment's (CSE) GetCyberSafe campaign continues to put out messaging for Canadians to inform them of threats and how to best protect themselves online.
7	Advice to political parties and election administrators	√	CSE's Cyber Centre provides cyber security advice and guidance to all major political parties, in part through publications such as the Cyber Security Guide for Campaign Teams and Cyber Security Advice for Political

			Candidates. CSE also advises Elections Canada on threats through the Election Security Coordination Committee.
8	Establish Cyber Centre Hotline for Ministers	√	CSE's Hotline for Ministers has been in place since the 2019 general election and it continues to be in place both during and outside of election periods.
9	2019 CSE Update to Cyber Threat's to Canada's democratic process	√	The report was published in 2019.
10	Advice to political parties and election administrators by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS)	√	CSIS provides parliamentarians with as many details as possible to mitigate the threat of foreign interference. In 2021, CSIS provided 45 briefings to two Senators and 43 Members of Parliament. In 2022, CSIS provided 49 briefings to federal elected officials. CSIS has also attended the Advisory Committee of Political Parties, of which every registered and eligible political party is a member, to advise on threats. CSIS advises Elections Canada on threats through the Election Security Coordination Committee.
11	Create a Foreign Actor Interference team at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)	√	Budget 2023 provided \$48.9 million over three years to the RCMP to protect Canadians from harassment and intimidation, increase its investigative capacity, and more proactively engage with communities at greater risk of being targeted.
12	Creation of the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections task force (SITE)	√	SITE Task Force was created ahead of the 2019 general election and in place for the 2021 general election. Since Summer 2023, it has been active for by-elections, reporting to the Deputy Minister Committee on Intelligence Response.
2021 Protecting Democracy initiatives			
13	Announce a renewed Plan to Protect Canada's Democracy	√	Information about the renewed Plan to Protect Canada's Democracy was updated on the government web site when the writ dropped.
14	Amend the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol as per	√	An updated Cabinet Directive, reflecting five out of six of Judd's recommendations was in place for the 2021 general election. The one outstanding recommendation – to extend the operation of the CEIPP into

	Independent Evaluation by Jim Judd		pre-election period - was not accepted by the Government due to it running counter to the concept of Ministerial Responsibility. Mr. Judd did recommend to maintain the Panel with similar responsibilities and the same composition; therefore, those elements were not amended.
15	Renew the Canada Declaration of Electoral Integrity Online	√	A renewed Canada Declaration of Electoral Integrity with three additional signatories (TikTok, LinkedIn, and YouTube) and additional transparency commitments for the platforms was in place for the 2021 general election.
16	Draft first public-facing CSIS report on foreign interference threat	√	CSIS's first- ever Foreign Interference Threats to Canada's Democratic Process report was published in July 2021.
17	Restore access to Cyber Security Hotline to political parties during election period (currently available to Ministers outside election period)	√	The Hotline was made available to political parties involved in the 2021 general election, from the writ drop until thirty days after election day. During the 2021 general election period, five political parties were registered with the Hotline (LPC, CPC, GPC, Libertarian Party, Christian Heritage Party).
18	Renew and resource the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM)	√	Budget 2022 provided \$13.4 million over five years, starting in 2022-23, with \$2.8 million ongoing to Global Affairs Canada to renew and expand the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism.
19	2021 CSE Update to Cyber Threat's to Canada's democratic process	√	The report was published in 2021. There has also been a more recent update to the report published in 2023.
20	PCO to lead on early outreach to political parties during election period, continue security clearances	√	Key personnel from political parties recognized in the House of Commons continue to be able to take advantage of PCO-sponsored security clearances. Most recently, PCO established lines of communication with political parties during by-elections when SITE Task Force was activated and offered those with security clearance the opportunity to read the SITE Task Force's classified report on the by-elections.
21	CSE and CSIS to continue to provide cybersecurity guidance to democratic institutions,	√	CSE and CSIS continue to provide guidance to political parties and Elections Canada through established channels such as online materials, briefings, and in the case of Elections Canada, the Election Security Coordination Committee.

	political parties and Elections Canada		
22	Fill need for a robust privacy framework for online information monitoring to ensure compliance with legal obligations, including <i>Charter and Privacy Act</i>	√	Under the direction of the NSIA, the Canadian intelligence community has launched an internal review of open-source intelligence activities, and is seeking to update related policies and develop clear frameworks regarding online monitoring, including of social media and other complex online platforms. To bolster Canada's intelligence collection and identification efforts, the NSIA is also revitalizing the governance of the Canadian national security and intelligence community through Deputy Head committees that will focus on enhancing coordination, dissemination, storage, and tracking of intelligence.
23	PCH to make DCI permanent		s. 39 - Cabin et Confid ence
24	PCO to convene government policy and comms experts to share practices, exchange info, and support broader government coordination to counter-disinformation.	√	<p>The Disinformation Guidebook for Public Servants and the Toolkit to Resist Disinformation and Foreign Interference, developed in partnership with PCO-Communications and the GoC-wide Communications Community Office, were published in January 2024. Work is ongoing to promote these resources across the GC. PCO-DI hosted a Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) event on "Disinformation, Foreign Interference and Trust in Democratic Institutions", accessible to all public servants, and work is ongoing to develop a CSPS course specific to combating disinformation.</p> <p>PCO-DI has additionally convened external experts by organizing a workshops for academics, policy leaders, and GC officials, including at the 2023 DemocracyXChange in Toronto. Work is ongoing to hold a similar session at the 2024 DemocracyXChange. Other examples include inviting the Canadian Digital Media Research Network, established in 2023, to brief senior GoC leadership and supporting CDMRN efforts to convene GC officials, academics, and policy practitioners at their inaugural "launch" conference in November 2023.</p>

			PCO-DI regularly convenes a Director-level group from 16 Government of Canada (GC) departments and agencies to discuss opportunities, linkages, and gaps in the wider protecting democracy space. At the Director General-level, PCO-DI holds biweekly within PCO discussions to ensure efforts are aligned and has resumed interdepartmental meetings on an enhanced PD Plan. PCO-DI is also in the final stages of launching a GC-wide disinformation research strategy bringing together 13 departments and agencies and chairs an interdepartmental research working group on disinformation, and has commissioned research on disinformation from Canadian experts.
25	Strengthen interdepartmental coordination and collaboration in countering disinformation, led by PCO-DI	√	PCO-DI regularly convenes a Director-level group from 16 Government of Canada (GC) departments and agencies to discuss opportunities, linkages, and gaps in the wider protecting democracy space. At the Director General-level, PCO-DI holds biweekly within PCO discussions to ensure efforts are aligned and has resumed interdepartmental meetings on an enhanced PD Plan. PCO-DI is also working on a GC-wide disinformation research strategy bringing together 13 GC departments and agencies.
26	Ensure broad understanding of disinformation and foreign interference across GC	√	<p>The Disinformation Guidebook for Public Servants and the Toolkit to Resist Disinformation and Foreign Interference were published in January 2024. Work is ongoing to promote these resources across the GC. PCO-DI hosted a Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) event on "Disinformation, Foreign Interference and Trust in Democratic Institutions", accessible to all public servants, and work is ongoing to develop a CSPS course specific to combating disinformation.</p> <p>PCO-DI has also created a GCExchange Platform to share information, including research products, with the broader government community working in this space.</p>
27	Consider expanding the client base for Cyber Security Hotline to		Not yet implemented. The LeBlanc-Charette report included a commitment to expand work with P/Ts and work is ongoing by PDU to share resources with P/Ts.

	provinces/territories during their elections	
28	<p>Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) and Public Safety (PS) to explore enhanced transparency of foreign financing of research; PCH the ownership of Canadian media (PCH), and the Department of Finance the lobbying activities by foreign agents</p>	<p>Not yet implemented. ISED has tabled legislation to amend the <i>Investment Canada Act</i> to address national security risks in foreign investment.</p> <p>PS has stood up a Research Security team tasked with providing advice and guidance directly to Canadian researchers and universities, processing security reviews under the National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships, and developing research security policy.</p> <div data-bbox="861 638 1766 797" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: right;"> <p>s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence</p> </div> <p>No measures have yet been implemented on enhancing transparency for ownership of media.</p>