

For Public Release

**Briefing Note****To:** Minister LeBlanc**From:** Chris Rodgers**CC:****Date:** December 20, 2023**Subject:** Counter-Disinformation Guidebook & PD Toolkits Launch

**PURPOSE:** To seek your approval of the Counter-Disinformation Guidebook (ie RESIST) as well as a plan for its roll-out alongside the Protecting Democracy Toolkits.

**BACKGROUND:**

s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence, particularly the Counter-Disinformation Guidebook (ie RESIST) and the Protecting Democracy Toolkits. These following items were also publicly reiterated in the LeBlanc-Charrette Report.

1. A Counter-Disinformation Guidebook for public servants (ie RESIST) and, in particular, communications professionals,
2. Protecting Democracy "PD Toolkits" to build resilience to disinfo and FI among public servants; elected officials; and community leaders (eg diaspora leaders, activists, nomination contestants);
3. Consolidation of an interdepartmental committee on FI & disinfo issues; and
4. A consolidated plan for cooperation and communication with provinces, territories and municipalities on protecting democracy best practices.

The Guidebook and the Toolkits are now complete and, once approved, could be launched on the Protecting Democracy website with the Multistakeholder Compendium that was drafted with Microsoft and the Alliance for Securing Democracy. The site would be presented as a "hub" for transparent and pragmatic tools to counter disinformation and foreign interference. In line with your mandate, the complement of measures will support democratic resilience across jurisdictions, among citizens, and for civil society.

These tools will demonstrate the proactive nature of the Government's approach to protecting democracy. They will also address key gaps with respect to supporting foreign interference and disinformation resilience within subnational jurisdictions and civil society.

s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

**POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

At the moment, PMO has not given the go-ahead to launch the Toolkits. It is expected the Guidebook will end up in the same situation. This delay prevents these products from being noted publicly a counterpoints to criticism of the Government's actions on the file. There are several risks here.

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First, engagement with your ministerial counterparts may be a good idea. However, it will be far more effective once we have demonstrated that we have our own house in order—ie once we have actually implemented the measures we are promoting to other jurisdictions.

Furthermore, we need to demonstrate to the Foreign Interference Inquiry—before their interim report—that we continue to be proactive and are not sitting on past recommendations or mandates (eg from NSICOP, PD 2.0, etc.).

Third, the PD Toolkits support Public Safety Canada's efforts on the Foreign Influence Transparency Registry and the upcoming Canada Elections Act bill by providing a degree of public education to key stakeholders.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that you:

1. Approve the Counter-Disinformation Guidebook with the attached changes to the text;
2. Approve the inclusion of the Guidebook, PD Toolkits and Multistakeholder Compendium to be made available on the PCO Protecting Democracy website;
3. Direct the PDU to continue external outreach and engagement to promote the Guidebook, PD Toolkits and the Multistakeholder Compendium;
4. Direct the PDU continue promoting these materials across the Government of Canada and with other jurisdictions in Canada.

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