

For Public Release

## **OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COUNTER FOREIGN INTERFERENCE COORDINATOR**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

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#### **Background**

In its 2019 Annual Report, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians noted that interdepartmental coordination and collaboration on FI is often issue-specific and ad-hoc. It further recommended that the GoC: 1) “develop practical, whole-of-government operational and policy mechanisms to identify and respond to” FI and that this strategy be supported through central leadership and coordination; and 2) that engagement with non-federal stakeholders be more consistent.

There is no single department or entity within the Government of Canada (GoC) responsible for countering foreign interference (FI). Federal departments and agencies each have their own specific roles, mandates and legislative responsibilities that guide their responses to FI.

In recognition and response to these challenges, in March 2023, the Government announced the creation of a National Counter-Foreign Interference Coordinator (NCFIC) position within Public Safety Canada. Budget 2023 provided \$13.5M over 5 years (2023-24 to 2027-28), and \$3.1M ongoing, in support of this initiative.

#### **Mandate of the National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator**

The NCFIC was established to coordinate Government of Canada efforts to combat foreign interference by providing leadership to advance a unified federal response to FI actions, and increasing situational awareness and transparency through community engagement with domestic and international stakeholders and partners.

The NCFIC will:

- provide strategic leadership and serve as the focal point within the GoC for FI-related issues;
- coordinate and deconflict responses to emerging and novel FI-related issues;
- convene relevant intra-/inter-departmental partners in response to cross-cutting FI-related issues, while respecting current national security coordination bodies, and the primacy of existing agency mandates;
- enhance awareness within GoC on FI-related issues, as well as transparency around GoC actions to counter FI;
- coordinate and undertake engagement activities with international partners to identify and share best practices; and,
- coordinate and undertake engagement activities with non-federal stakeholders, including culturally and linguistically diverse communities, to strengthen societal resilience.

The NCFIC will not undertake activities residing under the mandates of other federal departments and agencies, including:

- direct any department or agency to undertake operational activities or investigative actions related to FI;
- retain or action threat information reported directly to the NCFIC (the individual reporting a threat will be connected to the relevant law enforcement agency or police of jurisdiction); or,
- produce threat reporting or assessments related to FI.

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## Desired outcomes

- Enhanced ability to **Detect** FI-related issues through sustained coordination that identifies gaps and promotes adaptation to the ever-evolving threat of FI;
- **Strengthen** resilience against FI through raising public awareness of the issue and building trust, including by increasing communication and outreach activities with non-federal stakeholders (notably international allies, subnational jurisdictions, and community groups); and,
- Coordinate whole-of-government response to FI-related issues (**Act**), including by enhancing calibration and deconfliction of existing GoC counter-FI efforts at the federal level.

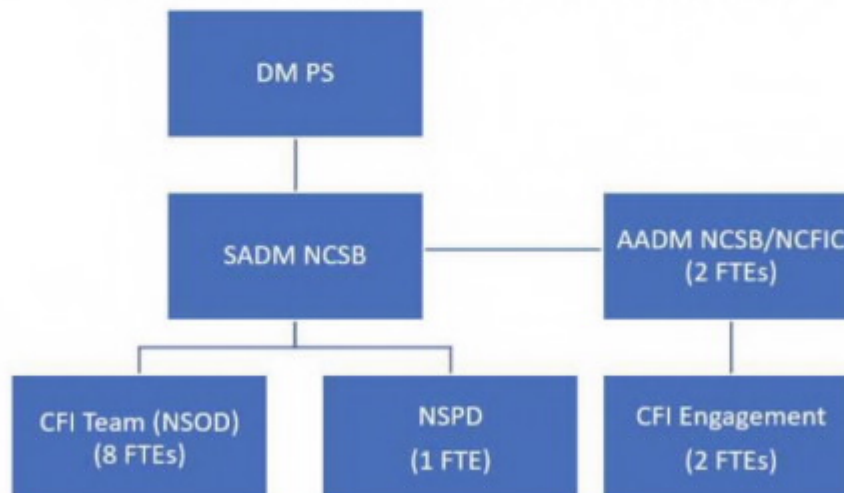
## Structure

The NCFIC will be supported by a small team in the Office of the Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, National and Cyber Security Branch (NCSB), and will oversee a team charged with executing the mandate of the NCFIC. The NCFIC will also leverage existing teams within the National Cyber and Security Branch of Public Safety Canada (e.g., the National Security Operations Directorate and the National Security Policy Directorate) to support desired outcomes.

The NCFIC will also leverage the Counter-Foreign Interference Strategy to convene the broader security and intelligence community to act as a force multiplier.

## Governance

1. **Internal Reporting:** The NCFIC will report operationally to the Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, National and Cyber Security Branch (NCSB), Public Safety Canada.
  - a. **Approvals:** Taskings related to FI will be routed through NCSB SADMO, which will then determine whether taskings require involvement and/or approval from the NCFIC office.



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2. Governance and engagement – federal stakeholders*ADM-level Committees*

- ADM NS Pol: Serves as a strategic-level table for senior-level members of departments and agencies in Canada's security & intelligence community to prioritize, coordinate, and collaborate on the development and implementation of policy issues related to national security. SADM NCSB co-chairs this committee. The NCFIC will be invited to all meetings.
- ADM NS Ops: Meets weekly or more frequently as required. SADM NCSB co-chairs this committee with PCO to track and manage responses to operational events. The NCFIC will be invited to all meetings.
- ADM NS Ops Tactical: Meets on an ad-hoc basis, and is made up of a smaller network of the larger ADM NS Ops forum. The NCFIC will be invited to meetings as required.

*DG-level Committee – ADM NS OPS will set the direction and track progress related to these committees*

- DG FI Operational Coordination: the Director General of the National Security Operations Directorate will chair – co-chaired by RCMP or CSIS (TBC) – this committee to coordinate tactical responses and support policy development by identifying policy gaps. This committee will feed into and inform ADM NS Ops and ADM FI, and inform ADM NS Policy of policy gaps in Canada's FI response.

3. Engagement – non-federal stakeholders

- The NCFIC's office will leverage existing fora (e.g., National Security Transparency Advisory Group, ) and centers of engagement both within PS (e.g., Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence) and other government departments (e.g., CSIS' Academic Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement) to undertake limited engagement activities with non-federal stakeholders, including PTs, industry, academia, community groups, etc.
- The NCFIC's role in engaging with non-federal stakeholders neither precludes NCSB nor any other department/agency from engaging in similar outreach activities where appropriate.
- The NCFIC will leverage existing Justice and Public Safety FPT engagement tables to discuss FI-related developments and inform engagement efforts on FI more broadly.

**Priority setting/program of work (FY2023-2025)**

1. Counter-Foreign Interference Strategy: the NCFIC office, with the support of NSOD, will work in collaboration to publish, administer, and update the *Counter-Foreign Interference Strategy* every four years, or as required. The Strategy will be reviewed by DG FI Policy, and by other committees as required.

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2. Yearly Inter-departmental Program of Work: the NCFIC office (with the support of ADM FI, NSOD and NSPD), will work inter-departmentally to establish an agreed upon annual Program of Work. This will be informed by the Intelligence Priorities and the pillars and priority sectors of the *Counter-Foreign Interference Strategy*. In turn, the Program of Work will help drive progress on FI initiatives, and will help inform an Annual Letter from the Minister of Public Safety to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP). The Program of Work will be representative of the operational threat landscape and be supported/reviewed by ADM FI, and by other committees as required. It will contain tangible commitments from the security and intelligence community to counter FI.
  - a. Operational plan: As part of the Program of Work, ADM FI will set operational objectives for the following year to determine which FI threats that will be prioritized while allowing flexibility for unforeseen threats.
  - b. Policy plan framework: As part of the Program of Work, ADM FI will set policy objectives for the following year. This could include, for example, the development of an attribution framework (in keeping with our allies, namely, Australia and the U.K.).
  - c. Engagement plan: The NCFIC office, with the support of ADM FI, will develop, operationalize and maintain:
    - i. A strategic community outreach and engagement plan to enhance outreach with non-federal stakeholders including international partners (such as FVEYs and other G7 partners), PTs, indigenous partners, industry, academia, vulnerable and targeted community groups. ADM FI will also jointly identify potential opportunities for collaboration related to engagement with non-federal stakeholders; and,
    - ii. A plan to deepen understanding of FI-related issues, internal and external to Government, to enhance transparency and awareness.
3. Annual Letter from the Minister of Public Safety to the NSICOP: the NCFIC office will work in collaboration with federal partners to produce an annual letter on behalf of the Minister of Public Safety to the NSICOP outlining the NCFIC's achievements, progress and results for the previous year, and setting priorities for the coming year.

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