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SEP 10 2023

Sous-ministre
Gatineau (Québec)
K1A 0M5

Deputy Minister
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0M5

DECISION REQUIRED BY SEPTEMBER 20, 2023MEMORANDUM TO THE HONOURABLE PASCALE ST-ONGE**DIGITAL CITIZEN CONTRIBUTION PROGRAM CALL #5 PRIORITIES**

(Decision Sought)

SUMMARY

- o The Digital Citizen Contribution Program supports third-party organizations undertaking research and carrying out learning activities, such as public awareness tools and workshops, to help Canadians become more resilient to online disinformation and other forms of harmful content.
- o The Digital Citizen Contribution Program is preparing to launch its fifth regular call for proposals this Fall. This note recommends seven priorities for this upcoming call. These recommendations and options stem in part from input from other Government Departments that sit on the Digital Citizen Initiative's Consultative Body and its Steering Committee made up of academic and civil society leaders.
- o The Digital Citizen Contribution Program is administering a significantly increased budget this year as a result of the 2022 Fall Economic Statement. In order to successfully deliver its funding and demonstrate the continued impact and relevance of the program, the Department aims to launch the call for proposals by early October.

Background

- o Each year, the Digital Citizen Contribution Program launches a regular call for proposals seeking applications from researchers and civil society organizations. Each call for proposals sets out a list of priorities describing the types of projects that the program intends to support.
- o The priorities for each call for proposals change from year to year. Priorities are developed by Departmental officials before undergoing consultation with the Digital Citizen Initiative's Consultative Body and Steering Committee. The Consultative Body is made up of representatives from 23 other Government departments and agencies, and the Steering Committee is made up of seven leaders in academia and civil society with relevant expertise. A list of Consultative Body and Steering Committee members are attached as Annexes A and B, respectively.

.../2



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- 2 -

- o The Department is seeking your approval of seven priorities for its next regular call for proposals, which will launch this Fall. With your approval, the Digital Citizen Contribution Program will seek to fund projects that:
 1. Develop and publish tools to support digital media and civic literacy skills among people in Canada outside of educational institutions and/or among seniors in Canada;
 2. Develop and publish tools to help people in Canada identify content created and spread by bots and/or artificial intelligence;
 3. Develop and publish tools to prevent and address online violence against women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ communities, and other forms of technology-facilitated violence;
 4. Create resources to support children and parents in Canada to address and prevent cyberbullying;
 5. Build technical capacity and expertise among small and medium sized civil society organizations seeking to address mis-/disinformation, hate speech, and cyberbullying;
 6. Conduct research, testing and/or evaluation of tools or interventions related to any of the above priorities; and
 7. Develop and publish tools to build resilience to mis-/disinformation stemming from foreign governments, such as the People's Republic of China, targeting diaspora communities in Canada.
- o The explicit reference to the People's Republic of China in the seventh priority is supported by Global Affairs Canada, as it will solicit applications that actively address this issue. The seventh priority also addresses a recommendation by the Special Committee on the Canada-People's Republic of China Relationship, which recommended that the Department "take measures to counter the prevalence of People's Republic of China-influenced media in Canadian diaspora communities." The reference to the People's Republic of China is nonetheless expected to draw stakeholder and media attention. The Department will support you and your office in proactively managing communications related to this priority.



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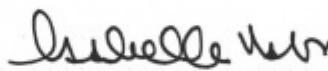
- 3 -

Funding

- This call for proposals will have up to \$10.7 million in total funding available s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence The Digital Citizen Contribution Program plans to set two tiers of funding for applications. A first tier would set a funding limit of \$1 million per project, and a second tier would set a funding limit of \$380 000. This tiered system would allow the Digital Citizen Contribution Program to support large- and small-scale projects.

Recommendation

- It is recommended that you approve the seven priorities listed above. The Department will subsequently launch the call for proposals.


Isabelle Mondou

- I concur
- I do not concur
- I would like to discuss further

Pascale St-Onge

Attachments

Prepared by: BCCM,



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