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Policy on Communications and Federal Identity

Note to reader

Requirement 4.1.13 (misinformation and disinformation strategy) takes effect on March 27, 2026, as identified in Section 1.

1. Effective date

- 1.1 This policy takes effect on March 27, 2025.
- 1.2 This policy replaces the following Treasury Board policy instrument:
 - 1.2.1 *Policy on Communications and Federal Identity*, May 11, 2016.
- 1.3 Transitional considerations:
 - 1.3.1 Requirement 4.1.13 of this policy takes effect on March 27, 2026.

2. Authorities

- 2.1 This policy is issued pursuant to section 7 of the *Financial Administration Act*.
- 2.2 The President of the Treasury Board has the delegated authority to approve the use of the arms of Canada instead of the flag symbol in corporate signatures for institutions whose heads report directly to Parliament, as well as for institutions that have quasi-judicial functions.
- 2.3 The Treasury Board has delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury Board the authority to issue, amend and rescind the standards and mandatory procedures related to this policy.

3. Objectives and expected results

- 3.1 The objectives of this policy are as follows:
 - 3.1.1 Government of Canada communications are non-partisan, effectively managed, well coordinated, clear and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public and Government of Canada employees;
 - 3.1.2 The Government of Canada considers the views and interests of the public when developing policies, programs, services and initiatives;
 - 3.1.3 The Government of Canada is visible and recognizable in Canada and abroad, and is projected equally in both official languages; and

3.1.4 Government of Canada communications are cost-effective, and the administration of its corporate identity achieves savings through standardization.

3.2 The expected results of this policy are as follows:

3.2.1 Communications within and across departments are well coordinated and integrated into all government operations;

3.2.2 Government communications products and activities are timely, accurate, clear, objective, non-partisan, cost-effective, in both official languages, and meet the diverse information needs of the public and Government of Canada employees;

3.2.3 The government engages with the public when developing policies, programs, services and initiatives;

3.2.4 Communications products and activities, programs, services, initiatives and assets are clearly identified using the corporate identity of the Government of Canada in Canada and abroad; and

3.2.5 The corporate identity of the Government of Canada is applied consistently to internal and external products, projected equally in both official languages, and is not overshadowed by additional corporate identifiers or specialized symbols.

4. Requirements

4.1 Deputy heads are responsible for the following:

- 4.1.1 Providing impartial advice and support to their minister, who is the principal spokesperson for the department, in communicating government policies, programs, priorities and decisions to the public.
- 4.1.2 Designating a senior official as head of communications to manage all:
 - 4.1.2.1 external communications;
 - 4.1.2.2 department-wide internal communications; and
 - 4.1.2.3 corporate identity.
- 4.1.3 Enabling communications about policies, programs, services and initiatives by ensuring that the department:
 - 4.1.3.1 provides information that is:
 - 4.1.3.1.1 accurate;
 - 4.1.3.1.2 non-partisan;
 - 4.1.3.1.3 objective;
 - 4.1.3.1.4 timely;
 - 4.1.3.1.5 accessible;
 - 4.1.3.1.6 written in a manner that is inclusive and in plain language; and
 - 4.1.3.1.7 in both official languages in accordance with the *Official Languages*

Act;

- 4.1.3.2 considers the information needs of:
 - 4.1.3.2.1 English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada;
 - 4.1.3.2.2 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis; and
 - 4.1.3.2.3 regional and rural populations, and multicultural communities;
- 4.1.3.3 uses the most appropriate communications tools and channels to effectively reach audiences and achieve objectives;
- 4.1.3.4 provides published information on request in a format that is equitable for persons with disabilities; and
- 4.1.3.5 responds to information requests or inquiries from the public promptly without undue recourse to the *Access to Information Act*.
- 4.1.4 Integrating communications into departmental planning and decision-making processes including:
 - 4.1.4.1 departmental priorities;
 - 4.1.4.2 policy and program development;
 - 4.1.4.3 facility signage;
 - 4.1.4.4 partnering and sponsorship arrangements;

- 4.1.4.5 emergency preparedness; and
- 4.1.4.6 crisis management.
- 4.1.5 Ensuring that communications resources are used only for non-partisan and official Government of Canada communications about priorities, policies, programs, services and initiatives.
- 4.1.6 Ensuring officials collaborate with other departments on all communications activities that require joint participation.
- 4.1.7 Instructing departmental officials to engage with communications when planning external consultations.
- 4.1.8 Ensuring departmental officials post information about external consultations on Consulting with Canadians.
- 4.1.9 Approving annual advertising and public opinion research plans.
- 4.1.10 Approving advertising activities during a general federal election:
 - 4.1.10.1 that are required by statute or regulation for legal purposes;
 - 4.1.10.2 to inform the public of a danger to health, safety or the environment;
 - 4.1.10.3 to post an employment or staffing notice; or
 - 4.1.10.4 to undertake specific advertising that is deemed urgent.

- 4.1.11 Approving public opinion research during a general federal election:
 - 4.1.11.1 that is required for legal purposes;
 - 4.1.11.2 related to a danger to health, safety, or the environment; or
 - 4.1.11.3 related to specific advertising that is deemed urgent.
- 4.1.12 Championing open communications within the department to foster employee knowledge and awareness of departmental priorities and initiatives.
- 4.1.13 Ensuring a strategy is developed to manage misinformation and disinformation related to the mandate of the department.
- 4.1.14 Ensuring that the department does not participate in, or lend support to, activities organized for partisan purposes.

Federal identity

- 4.1.15 Overseeing the administration of the Federal Identity Program across the department.
- 4.1.16 Ensuring the department applies the *Design Standard for the Federal Identity Program* and the *Federal Identity Program Manual* to the following in Canada and abroad:
 - 4.1.16.1 communications products and activities;
 - 4.1.16.2 signage;

- 4.1.16.3 stationery;
 - 4.1.16.4 personnel identification;
 - 4.1.16.5 uniforms and apparel;
 - 4.1.16.6 vehicles; and
 - 4.1.16.7 equipment and assets.
- 4.1.17 Ensuring that the official symbols of the Government of Canada are not applied where there may be a risk to:
- 4.1.17.1 national security;
 - 4.1.17.2 surveillance operations; or
 - 4.1.17.3 workplace safety.
- 4.1.18 Ensuring the department adopts an applied title and abbreviation in both official languages that are:
- 4.1.18.1 developed in accordance with the *Design Standard for the Federal Identity Program*; and
 - 4.1.18.2 approved by the minister responsible and the President of the Treasury Board.
- 4.1.19 Ensuring federal identity requirements are included in:
- 4.1.19.1 agreements for owned and leased buildings and facilities; and
 - 4.1.19.2 property management contracts.

Other identifiers and symbols

- 4.1.20 Ensuring departmental officials consult with the head of communications when considering:
 - 4.1.20.1 an additional corporate identifier; or
 - 4.1.20.2 a specialized symbol.
- 4.1.21 Seeking Treasury Board approval to add an additional corporate identifier for the department including branches, programs, or initiatives.

Monitoring and oversight

- 4.1.22 Monitoring compliance with this policy and its supporting instruments within the department.
- 4.1.23 Ensuring that corrective action is taken to address non-compliance within the department.

5. Roles of other government organizations

- 5.1 This section identifies other key government organizations in relation to this policy. In and of itself, this section does not confer any authority.
- 5.2 The Privy Council Office is responsible for the following:
 - 5.2.1 Setting broad government communications themes in accordance with government priorities, as determined by the Prime Minister, Cabinet, Cabinet committees and the Clerk of the Privy Council;

- 5.2.2 Providing leadership, challenge, strategic direction, and coordination of departmental and horizontal communications activities, including government announcements, crisis communications, public opinion research, advertising, social media, web and digital initiatives; and
 - 5.2.3 Advising departments on government priorities, themes and messages.
- 5.3 Public Services and Procurement Canada is responsible for the following:
- 5.3.1 Providing advisory services and technical advice with respect to legislative and policy requirements for advertising, public opinion research, publications and contracting;
 - 5.3.2 Providing advice on public opinion research projects, including research objectives, methodologies and research instruments, as well as government-wide and industry standards;
 - 5.3.3 Developing and updating public opinion research standards for the Government of Canada;
 - 5.3.4 Developing government-wide procurement tools for public opinion research and advertising activities;
 - 5.3.5 Publishing annual reports on contracted public opinion research projects and advertising activities;

- 5.3.6 Delivering information sessions and promoting training opportunities to departments about advertising, public opinion research, and publications;
- 5.3.7 Managing the procurement process, including awarding contracts, for all contracted public opinion research and advertising activities, and chairing bid evaluation processes;
- 5.3.8 Advising departments on the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards;
- 5.3.9 Assigning ADV numbers for media placements and project registration numbers for contracted public opinion research and advertising services;
- 5.3.10 Issuing work authorizations and managing the contract with the government's agency of record;
- 5.3.11 Maintaining the Research Information Management System (RIMS) and the Advertising Management Information System (AdMIS);
- 5.3.12 Developing best practices and tools, including media planning tools, to reach audiences, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis, ethnocultural and English and French linguistic minority communities;
- 5.3.13 Managing the National Master Standing Offer for Government Signage Goods and Related Services and providing technical advice on Government of Canada signage and vehicle markings;

- 5.3.14 Managing a central electronic media monitoring service;
 - 5.3.15 Developing and maintaining an online collection of publications for the Government of Canada;
 - 5.3.16 Cataloguing all submitted and collected publications and maintaining related metadata in a centralized repository;
 - 5.3.17 Publishing a weekly online report of new publications;
 - 5.3.18 Issuing International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs) and Government of Canada catalogue numbers for publications to departments;
 - 5.3.19 Providing Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat with an annual compliance report of publications produced by departments;
 - 5.3.20 Managing the acquisition process, including issuing contracts for audio-visual services; and
 - 5.3.21 Issuing all relevant contracts, standing offers, and supply arrangements; managing contract amendments, dispute resolutions, contract terminations and contract close-outs; and reviewing supplier performance.
- 5.4 Library and Archives Canada is responsible for the following:
- 5.4.1 Posting separate English and French final reports for contracted public opinion research on its website;
 - 5.4.2 Managing the Legal Deposit Program for Government of Canada publications;

- 5.4.3 Maintaining a permanent record of Government of Canada publications;
 - 5.4.4 Issuing International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSNs) for publications to departments; and
 - 5.4.5 Issuing blocks of International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs) to the Government of Canada Publications Directorate at Public Services and Procurement Canada.
- 5.5 Service Canada is responsible for the following:
- 5.5.1 Providing advisory services to departments about:
 - 5.5.1.1 the Canada.ca Specifications; and
 - 5.5.1.2 optimizing websites;
 - 5.5.2 Establishing and maintaining the Canada.ca Specifications;
 - 5.5.3 Providing the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat with an annual inventory of departments that have implemented the mandatory elements of the Canada.ca Specifications;
 - 5.5.4 Administering government-wide web analytics;
 - 5.5.5 Informing heads of communications and senior departmental officials on overall progress and performance of the Government of Canada's external-facing websites;
 - 5.5.6 Administering and managing the web and social media management tools of the Government of Canada;

- 5.5.7 Administering and maintaining the prescribed processes for official social media accounts and mobile applications;
 - 5.5.8 Keeping an inventory of official social media accounts and mobile applications; and
 - 5.5.9 Publishing and maintaining the Government of Canada's social media and mobile application gallery.
- 5.6 Global Affairs Canada is responsible for the following:
- 5.6.1 Providing advice to departments when they plan to advertise in foreign markets.

6. Application

- 6.1 This policy and its supporting instruments apply to departments and other portions of the federal public administration as set out in Schedules I, I.1 and II of the *Financial Administration Act*, unless excluded by specific acts, regulations or orders in council.
- 6.2 The organizations listed below are not required to use the Canada wordmark and are not subject to requirements 4.1.1, 4.1.6 and 4.1.8 of this policy:
- Office of the Auditor General of Canada
 - Office of the Chief Electoral Officer
 - Office of the Registrar of the Supreme Court of Canada
 - Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada
 - Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
 - Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada

- Offices of the Information and Privacy Commissioners of Canada

The heads of these organizations are solely responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with this policy within their organizations.

7. Consequences of non-compliance

- 7.1 For an outline of the consequences of non-compliance, refer to the Framework for the Management of Compliance (Appendix C: Consequences for Institutions and Appendix D: Consequences for Individuals).

8. References

Legislation

- *Access to Information Act*
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- *Canadian Human Rights Act*
- *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*
- *Copyright Act*
- *Department of Public Works and Government Services Act*
- *Department of Employment and Social Development Act*
- *Emergency Management Act*
- *Financial Administration Act*
- *Government Contracts Regulations*
- *Legal Deposit of Publications Regulations*
- *Library and Archives of Canada Act*
- *Official Languages Act*

- *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations*
- *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*
- *Privacy Act*
- *Public Opinion Research Contract Regulations*
- *Public Service Employment Act*
- *Surplus Crown Assets Act*
- *Trademarks Act*

Related policy instruments

- *Design Standard for the Federal Identity Program*
- *Directive on Official Languages for Communications and Services*
- *Directive on Official Languages for People Management*
- *Directive on Open Government*
- *Directive on Service and Digital*
- *Directive on the Management of Communications and Federal Identity*
- *Directive on the Management of Procurement*
- *Directive on Privacy Practices*
- *Federal Identity Program Manual*
- *Framework for the Management of Compliance*
- *Framework for the Management of Risk*
- *Policy on Access to Information*
- *Policy on Financial Management*
- *Policy on Internal Audit*
- *Policy on Official Languages*
- *Policy on Privacy Protection*
- *Policy on Results*
- *Policy on Service and Digital*
- *Policy on the Planning and Management of Investments*

- *Policy on Title to Intellectual Property Arising Under Crown Procurement Contracts*
- *Standard on Optimizing Websites and Applications for Mobile Devices*
- *Standard on Web Accessibility*
- *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector*

9. Enquiries

9.1 For interpretation of any aspect of this policy, contact Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Public Enquiries.

Appendix A: Definitions

advertising (publicité)

Government of Canada advertising is defined as any message conveyed in Canada or abroad and paid for by the government for placement in media, including but not limited to newspapers, television, radio, cinema, billboards and other out-of-home media, mobile devices, the Internet, and any other digital medium.

advertising activities (activités de publicité)

Activities related to producing and placing advertising, including campaign planning, creative development, creative testing, creative production, media planning, media placement and campaign evaluation.

Advertising Management Information System (AdMIS) (Système d'information sur la gestion de la publicité (GES PUB))

A database managed by Public Services and Procurement Canada that contains project information and expenditures on government advertising activities.

ADV number (numéro PUB)

A media placement authorization number issued by the Advertising Services Directorate of Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) to a department as confirmation that its advertising creative and media plan comply with government legislation, policies and standards. The ADV number authorizes the Communications and Advertising Procurement Directorate of PSPC to issue a work authorization to the agency of record to implement the media plan. The ADV number is also referred to as an authorization number.

agency of record (agence de coordination)

A private sector supplier, selected through a competitive process and under contract with the Government of Canada, that negotiates, consolidates, purchases and verifies advertising media time and space for the Government of Canada.

applied title (titre d'usage)

The official name of a department that is used in all communications and in its corporate signature.

arms of Canada (armoiries du Canada)

Also known as the Arms of His Majesty The King in Right of Canada or the Arms of His Majesty in Right of Canada, and also referred to as the Canadian coat of arms and the royal arms of Canada. A stylized one-colour rendering of the arms of Canada is used to identify departments whose heads report directly to Parliament, institutions that have a quasi-judicial function, ambassadors, heads of consulates or missions, and the Clerk of the Privy Council.

Canada wordmark (mot-symbole « Canada »)

The global identifier of the Government of Canada, composed of the word Canada in a graphically modified typeface with the flag symbol positioned over the final 'a'.

communications product (produit de communication)

Any product produced by or on behalf of the Government of Canada that informs the public or Government of Canada employees about policies, programs, services and initiatives, as well as dangers or risks to health, safety or the environment. Communications products can also aim to explain the rights, entitlements and obligations of individuals. Communications products can be developed for a variety of media.

consultations (consultations)

A type of engagement that seeks input from informed, interested or impacted groups or individuals on a range of topics to help shape or influence decisions about policies, guidance, programs, services, and legislative and regulatory initiatives.

Consultations can involve broad outreach and communications efforts to solicit participation. In consultations, participants have direct interaction with the Government of Canada, which can include, but is not limited to, in person or virtual sessions, online/mail submissions, or through a mix of approaches. Findings from consultations are not considered representative of specific populations, but rather present the diverse views of participants. A narrative report is usually published and can include comments that are attributed to participants.

Examples of consultations include (but are not limited to) round table discussions, dialogue sessions, stakeholder meetings, or town hall meetings.

corporate identifier (identificateur de l'organisation)

A symbol, logo or graphic mark that is part of the corporate identity of the department. It is used to help identify a department, branch, program, or initiative. The official symbols of the Government of Canada are examples of corporate identifiers.

corporate identity (image de marque)

The standardized way an organization, company, or public sector entity identifies itself, including its names, logos, colours, typography, and graphic

design. The corporate identity of the Government of Canada is prescribed by the Federal Identity Program.

corporate signature (signature visuelle)

The combination of the:

- approved English and French applied title of the department or “Government of Canada” and
- flag symbol or arms of Canada

creative approach (approche créative)

A look and feel or visual style applied consistently using a variety of visual elements such as graphics, colours, typography, imagery or photography. It contains elements that may be replaced or eliminated when applied to different products without losing the overall sense of cohesion.

deputy head (administrateurs généraux ou administratrices générales)

For the purpose of this policy, deputy heads include all deputy ministers appointed to departments and other portions of the federal public administration as set out in Schedules I, I.1 and II of the *Financial Administration Act*.

disinformation (désinformation)

False, manipulated, or misleading content deliberately created and disseminated to deceive, mislead or cause harm.

external-facing websites (sites Web externes)

Web pages or web applications that are available to the public and managed by or on behalf of the Government of Canada. This also includes those that are secured, password protected or have restricted access.

Federal Identity Program (FIP) (Programme fédéral de l’image de marque (PFIM))

The corporate identity program of the Government of Canada, which provides direction on the use of the official symbols, applied titles of departments, and rules on corporate signatures. It also includes design

requirements for fields of applications, such as stationery, signage, and vehicle markings.

field of application (domaine d'application)

The range of items, intended for internal and external use, that include the Government of Canada signature or corporate signature and the Canada wordmark, such as stationery, forms, signage, websites, communications products, personnel identification, motor vehicles.

flag symbol (symbole du drapeau)

A graphically modified version of the National Flag of Canada.

functional specialist (spécialiste fonctionnel ou fonctionnelle)

An employee who carries out roles and responsibilities that require function-specific knowledge, skills and attributes.

head of communications (chef des communications)

The senior executive who is responsible for the management of communications and corporate identity of the department.

International Standard Book Number (ISBN) (Numéro international normalisé du livre)

Unique code to identify monographic publications in any format.

International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) (Numéro international normalisé des publications en série)

Unique code to identify serial publications, in any format, such as periodicals, newspapers, annuals, journals and monographic series.

media buy or placement (achat ou placement dans les médias)

The purchase of advertising time or space, for example, for television, radio, newspapers, magazines, social media, websites, web applications, mobile applications, cinemas or out-of-home media.

metadata (métadonnées)

Structured data used to help identify, describe, locate or use information resources.

misinformation (mésinformation)

False or inaccurate information that is shared without the intention to deceive or mislead.

mobile application (application mobile)

An application that is installed locally on a mobile device, such as a smartphone or a tablet.

mobile application gallery (répertoire d'applications mobiles)

The inventory of the mobile applications of the Government of Canada.

non-partisan communications (communications non partisanes)

In the context of all Government of Canada communications products and activities, non-partisan means:

- objective, factual and explanatory;
- free from political party slogans, images and identifiers; bias; designation; or affiliation;
- that the primary colour associated with the governing party is not used in a dominant way, unless an item is commonly depicted in that colour; and
- that advertising is devoid of any name, voice or image of a minister, member of Parliament or senator.

official social media account (compte de médias sociaux officiel)

An account on a social media platform used for official Government of Canada purposes such as communication, service delivery, collaboration and other purposes within the mandate of the department.

official symbols of the Government of Canada (symboles officiels du gouvernement du Canada)

The Canada wordmark and corporate signature.

on-demand printing (impression sur demande)

Printing communications products, whether using in-house printers or contracted printing firms, when requested by an individual or as the need arises. On-demand printing does not require warehousing.

partnering arrangements (accords de partenariat)

Joint activities or transactions that involve another government, a company, an organization, a group or an individual that has shared or associated objectives, with a written agreement to combine financial or in-kind inputs.

plain language writing (rédaction en langage clair et simple)

A communication is written in plain language if its wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can:

- easily find what they need;
- understand what they find; and
- use that information.

portable format (format portable)

A digital format that allows a publication to be downloaded and viewed with most computers, mobile devices, and operating systems.

promotional items (articles promotionnels)

Novelties, mementos, merchandise, gifts and other giveaways used to promote a program, project, service or initiative.

public (public)

All individuals, residing in or travelling through Canada, as well as Canadians and others situated abroad, who seek or require information about Government of Canada decisions, policies, programs, services and initiatives.

publication (publication)

A stable information product with lasting value created by or for the Government of Canada. It is available to the public or Government of Canada employees through any channel and in any format, including print, digital, audio, and video. Examples: corporate reports, policies, infographics, manuals, maps.

public opinion research (recherche sur l'opinion publique)

The planned gathering, by or for the Government of Canada, of opinion-based information (for example, attitudes, perceptions, judgements,

reactions, or views) of any target audience including Canadians, businesses, Government of Canada employees and stakeholders. The process used for gathering information usually assumes an expectation and guarantee of anonymity for respondents.

significant non-contracted public opinion research projects (projets de recherche sur l'opinion publique d'importance qui ne font pas l'objet d'un marché)

Research projects that:

- support legislation, regulations or litigation
- address new government policies, programs, services or initiatives, and changes to those currently in place, or
- relate to any high-risk issue

social media (médias sociaux)

A website or application that enables users to create and share content or to connect with others.

social media management tool (outil de gestion des médias sociaux)

A mandatory tool for departments to register and manage official social media accounts on various platforms through a single interface.

specialized symbol (symbole spécialisé)

A symbol, mark or emblem that falls into one of the following categories:

- is required under an act or regulation, for example, an inspection stamp;
- is administered by the Government of Canada on behalf of industry, for example, EnergyStar;
- identifies an international body in which the Government of Canada has membership, for example, UNESCO, NATO;
- identifies international events in which Canada is the host country and the Government of Canada is the lead, for example, G7; or
- represents the Royal family, for example, flags, cyphers, commemorative emblems.

sponsorship arrangements (accords de commandite)

Receiving or providing financial or in-kind contributions, often linked to an event or activity, in exchange for a defined set of benefits that typically includes recognition and/or visibility.

tangible format (support tangible)

Physical format, such as printed publications, CDs and DVDs. When publications are produced in tangible formats, it is the tangible format itself that is treated as the publication, catalogued and distributed.

third-party distribution platform (plateforme de distribution par des tiers)

A digital platform that allows users to browse and download applications that are developed by third-party providers.

third-party material (document d'un tiers)

Material, such as text, photographs and videos, whereby ownership does not belong to the Crown.

work authorization (autorisation de travail)

A contractual document, issued by the Communications and Advertising Procurement Directorate of Public Services and Procurement Canada that instructs the agency of record to purchase advertising media space, time or both from media suppliers.

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