



Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

**2012–2013
Estimates**

Report on Plans and Priorities

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Chief Electoral Officer of Canada

The Honourable Peter Van Loan, PC, MP
Leader of the Government in the
House of Commons

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Message from the Chief Electoral Officer

Elections Canada successfully delivered the 41st general election in May 2011, the fourth within a seven-year period. Although the agency implemented some administrative and infrastructure improvements over that time, our efforts and resources were primarily dedicated to maintaining a high level of election readiness.

The current majority government and a fixed date of October 2015 for the next general election have brought about a new operating environment: with a return to readiness scheduled for the spring of 2015, the agency now has a window of opportunity to pursue longer-term efforts to modernize the electoral process.

In the spring of 2012, I will present my report on the evaluations of the 41st general election. While electors and political entities were generally satisfied with the conduct of the 40th and 41st general elections, the issue of alleged fraudulent telephone calls has recently attracted much attention. The Commissioner of Canada Elections continues to review and investigate alleged fraudulent telephone calls. Parliament can also expect to receive a report on this matter during the coming fiscal year.

Looking to the next general election, it is critical to modernize the electoral framework so that it can better respond to the evolving needs and expectations of Canadians. Electors are looking for services that are available wherever they happen to be, when they want them and on their own terms. Increasingly, electors and political entities alike expect to be able to conduct their business electronically, including when and how they engage in the electoral process.

To respond to this changing environment, Elections Canada's long-term vision, in keeping with its enduring goals of trust, engagement and accessibility, is to provide electors with more varied and modern ways to register and vote. With the current window of opportunity and the advanced services already introduced by provincial and municipal electoral management bodies, there is a pressing need to align the federal electoral process with Canadians' expectations and begin delivering the next generation of services, while continuing to maintain the integrity and security of the electoral process.

On February 27, 2012, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs tabled its report on the recommendations for legislative change that I had submitted to Parliament in 2010 to modernize the electoral process. The Committee endorsed the vast majority of my recommendations. Elections Canada awaits the Government's response to the Committee's report as well as the subsequent House motion to strengthen the agency's investigation capabilities.

Elections Canada is also adopting a comprehensive plan to guide its efforts over the 2012–2015 period as a step toward its long-term vision. Developed in the context of fiscal restraint, this three-year plan will see Elections Canada introduce several enhancements for the 2015 general election and pilot a number of other transformative initiatives.

For 2015, our focus is on improving convenience and accessibility to Canadians, including groups who face various barriers to participation. We will be considering options for expanding the use of the voter information card as proof of identity and address, offering an

online voter registration service and establishing new locations to vote by special ballot, such as university and college campuses and community centres serving electors with disabilities. We are also planning to conduct pilot projects to test Internet voting as well as more efficient voting processes at ordinary and advance polls.

Political entities will also benefit from our efforts to reduce the administrative burden and improve services, such as e-filing capabilities for certain financial transactions, easier maintenance of registration information and improved access to demographic data by polling division.

Although Elections Canada has the authority under the current legislative framework to implement many of these improvements, pilot projects for Internet voting and re-engineered voting services require parliamentary approval. We look forward to working with parliamentarians as we prepare for the 42nd general election.

Canadian society does not stand still, and Elections Canada needs to continue to pursue its efforts to research and adapt to the evolving needs of Canadians. By applying recent lessons learned, the coming fiscal year will see Elections Canada continue to make progress towards its strategic outcome of providing an accessible electoral framework that Canadians trust and use.

As we work toward achieving our priorities, Elections Canada remains sensitive to the current climate of fiscal restraint. In keeping with the spirit of Canada's deficit-reduction action plan, the agency has taken steps to reduce its annual operating budget beginning in 2012–2013, as outlined in my January 2012 letter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. We will provide further information regarding the implementation of our reduction plan in the agency's 2012–2013 Departmental Performance Report.

Marc Mayrand
Chief Electoral Officer of Canada

Section I: Organizational Overview

Raison d'être

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, commonly known as Elections Canada, is an independent, non-partisan agency that reports directly to Parliament. Its mandate is to:

- be prepared to conduct a federal general election, by-election or referendum;
- administer the political financing provisions of the Canada Elections Act;
- monitor compliance with and enforce electoral legislation;
- carry out investigations into allegations that would amount to offences under the Act;
- conduct voter education and information programs;
- provide support to the independent commissions in charge of adjusting the boundaries of federal electoral districts following each decennial census; and
- carry out studies on alternative voting methods and, with the approval of parliamentarians, test online voting processes for future use during electoral events.

Responsibilities

In fulfilling its mandate, Elections Canada appoints, trains and supports returning officers and retains the services of 30 field liaison officers across Canada. It also maintains the National Register of Electors, which is used to prepare preliminary lists of electors at the start of electoral events, as well as electoral geography information, which provides the basis for maps and other geographic products used during electoral events.

The agency also:

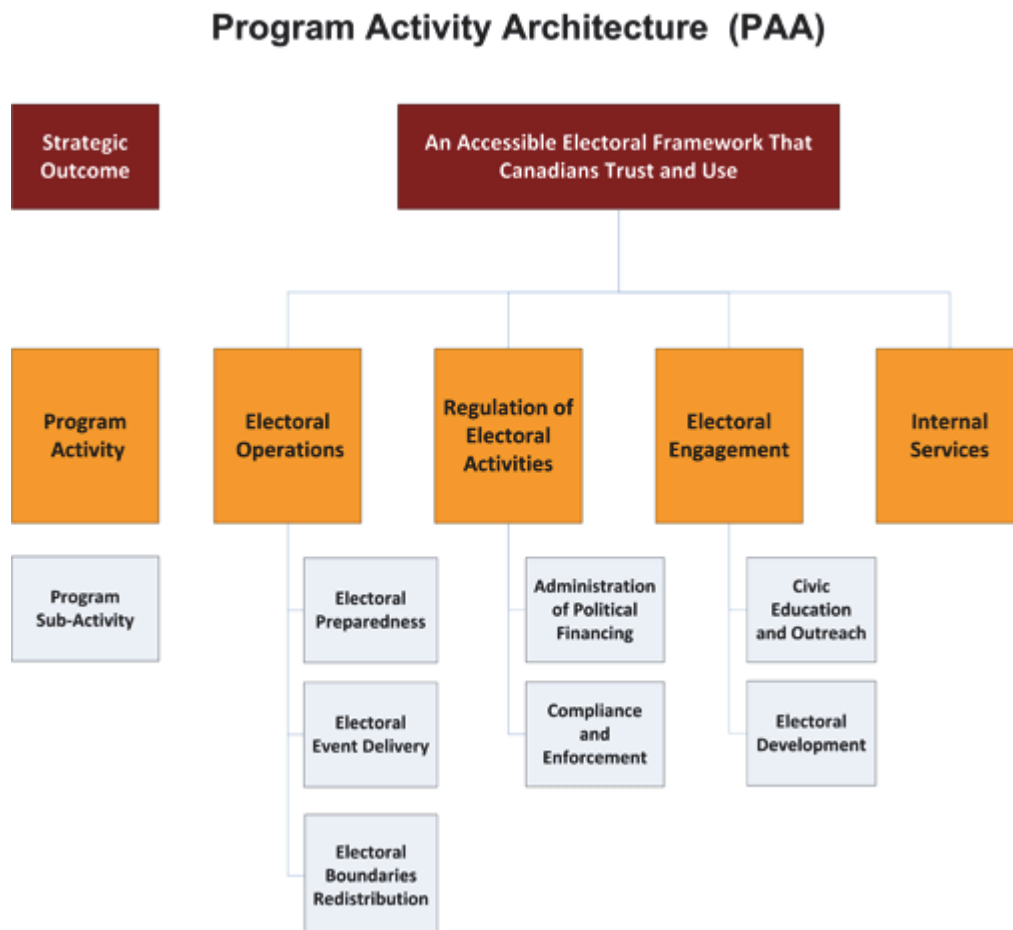
- registers political entities, including political parties, electoral district associations, candidates, leadership contestants, third parties that engage in election advertising and referendum committees;
- administers the allowances, reimbursements and subsidies paid to eligible candidates, registered political parties and auditors;
- monitors compliance with the *Canada Elections Act*, including compliance with political financing rules, during and between elections;
- discloses information on registered parties and electoral district associations, registered parties' nomination and leadership contestants, candidates, third parties and referendum committees, including their financial returns; and
- recommends to Parliament amendments for the better administration of the Canada Elections Act. It does this by submitting a recommendations report after each general election, as well as by providing expert advice when Parliament studies electoral reform.

In addition, the Chief Electoral Officer appoints the Commissioner of Canada Elections. The role of the Commissioner is to protect the integrity of the electoral process by ensuring that the *Canada Elections Act* and the *Referendum Act* are complied with and enforced. The Commissioner carries out his or her duties independently of any political or government interference and is assisted by investigators, lawyers and administrative personnel. In carrying out the Office's mandate, the Commissioner is guided by the principles of independence, impartiality, good faith and fairness.

The Chief Electoral Officer also appoints the Broadcasting Arbitrator. The Broadcasting Arbitrator is responsible for allocating free and paid broadcasting time among political parties and for arbitrating disputes that may arise between parties and broadcasters.

Strategic Outcome and Program Activity Architecture

Elections Canada has a single strategic outcome supported by the following Program Activity Architecture (PAA):



Organizational Priorities

The following tables summarize the contribution of Elections Canada's priorities to its strategic outcome.

Priority 1	Type	Program Activities
Enable the electoral boundaries readjustment process	Previously committed to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electoral Operations Internal Services
<p>Why is this a priority?</p> <p>Federal electoral districts and the distribution of seats in the House of Commons are reviewed and adjusted after each decennial (10-year) census to ensure that constituencies reflect population changes and movement among and within regions. This electoral boundaries readjustment process is mandated by the <i>Constitution Act, 1867</i>, the <i>Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act</i> and the <i>Fair Representation Act</i>. The <i>Fair Representation Act</i>, which received royal assent in December 2011, amends the representation formula found in the <i>Constitution Act, 1867</i>, by creating 30 additional electoral districts. This Act also shortens the time frame for both the readjustment process and the implementation of new boundaries. The process is led by independent commissions in each province,¹ which began their deliberations in early 2012 following receipt of the 2011 Census population counts from the Chief Statistician of Canada. Elections Canada is responsible for providing support to these commissions. Elections Canada concluded preparatory work in 2011–2012.</p> <p>Plans for meeting the priority</p> <p>Elections Canada will continue to enable the 10 independent commissions to carry out their obligations in 2012–2013 by providing administrative and technical support. Elections Canada will also begin the planning and preparatory work required to integrate the new boundaries following the completion of the readjustment process, expected in the fall of 2013.</p>		

Priority 2	Type	Program Activities
Improve services to electors and political entities (a multi-year priority)	New	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electoral Operations Regulation of Electoral Activities Electoral Engagement Internal Services
<p>Why is this a priority?</p> <p>While the 40th and 41st general elections were general successes, post-event reports indicate that it is time to modernize the current electoral framework. The needs of electors are evolving: they expect to exercise their democratic right to vote through a modern electoral process that incorporates technological advances and provides more convenient and accessible services. Political entities often face an administrative and regulatory burden when meeting their obligations under electoral legislation as the current system is outdated and often paper-based. With a fixed election date of October 2015, Elections Canada has a window of opportunity, before returning to election readiness, to focus on selected improvements.</p>		

¹ Commissions are not needed for Nunavut, the Yukon or the Northwest Territories as each territory constitutes a single electoral district.

Plans for meeting the priority

Elections Canada's business cycle spans the period between two general elections. As such, the agency's efforts under this priority will proceed on a multi-year basis. In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will begin to implement its three-year plan to improve services to electors and political entities. The agency will identify specific initiatives to improve the coherence of the voter identification regime, increase registration of target groups, enhance voting options and convenience for electors and reduce the administrative burden on political entities. To support such improved services, the plan will include specific initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the electoral process, such as improving voting operations and strengthening information management and technology infrastructure. Elections Canada will focus on initiatives that are feasible under the current legislative framework. Some pilot projects will require parliamentary approval. The agency will also continue to engage key stakeholders as initiatives evolve.

Risk Analysis

Elections Canada's operating environment sets the context for fiscal year 2012–2013:

- The three successive minority governments over the last seven years required Elections Canada to focus its resources on maintaining a state of constant election readiness. This limited our capacity to undertake new initiatives to enhance operations. With a majority government elected in 2011 and the date of the next general election fixed for October 2015, Elections Canada now has the opportunity to focus on enhancing the agency's services and modernizing the electoral framework.
- In the current climate of fiscal restraint, Elections Canada plans to undertake limited improvements over the next three years, guided by the results of its post-event evaluations.
- Fiscal restraint and current priorities mean that Elections Canada will not invest resources in referendum readiness and remains unprepared to conduct a referendum.

In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will focus on managing the risks resulting from the cost-containment measures flowing from the March 2010 federal budget. Beginning in the 2010–2011 fiscal year, Elections Canada, like other federal departments and agencies, absorbed the costs associated with increases in collective agreements. These cost-containment measures are impacting Elections Canada's annual appropriation, which covers the salaries of our personnel who perform ongoing functions. Elections Canada will not be able to manage its indeterminate salary expenses within its annual appropriation by 2014 without additional funding. We are currently examining strategies to address this critical situation, including the application of provisions related to workforce adjustment.

Planning Summary

This section summarizes the agency's plans, priorities and expected budgets for the next three fiscal years. The instructions for the preparation of this report were not to include information pertaining to deficit-reduction action plan measures. However, as noted earlier in this report, Elections Canada has already outlined its approach in its January 2012 letter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. We will provide further

information regarding the implementation of our full reduction plan in the agency's 2012–2013 Departmental Performance Report.

Financial Resources (\$ thousands)

2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
136,223	110,499	94,825

Human Resources (Full-time Equivalents – FTEs)

2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
497	476	447

Planning Summary Table

Program Activity	Forecast Spending ¹ 2011–2012 (\$ thousands)	Planned Spending (\$ thousands)		
		2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
Electoral Operations²	201,278	41,528	34,840	32,526
Regulation of Electoral Activities³	104,913	38,675	28,296	19,988
Electoral Engagement	8,351	10,310	9,524	9,458
Subtotal	314,542	90,513	72,660	61,972
Internal Services⁴	37,828	45,710	37,839	32,853
Total Planned Spending	352,370	136,223	110,499	94,825

¹ In 2011–2012, the 41st general election was held; some post-event activities are planned for 2012–2013 and 2013–2014.

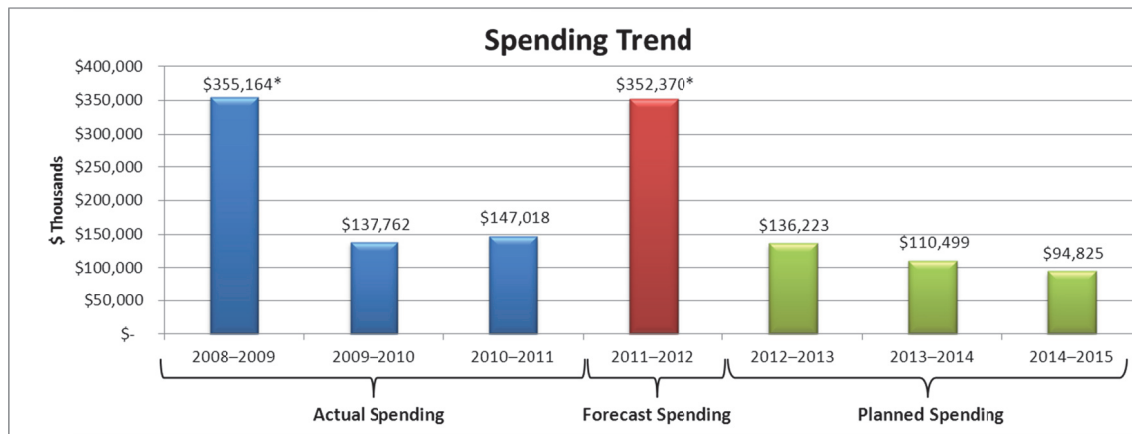
² The gradual reduction in planned spending on the Electoral Operations program activity over these three fiscal years is primarily a result of winding down and finalizing, in 2014–2015, the activities related to the readjustment of electoral boundaries; 2012–2013 will be the most significant year in terms of planned spending.

³ The gradual reduction in planned spending on the Regulation of Electoral Activities program activity over these three fiscal years is primarily a result of phasing out the quarterly allowances to political parties, as set out in Bill C-13, *An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures*.

⁴ The gradual reduction in planned spending on Internal Services over these three fiscal years is primarily a result of the Office Consolidation and Relocation project, with 2012–2013 being the most significant year in terms of planned spending. The project will end in 2013–2014.

Expenditure Profile

Departmental Spending Trend



*The significant variances in spending between the 2008-2009 and 2011-2012 fiscal years and the remaining years are a result of the 40th and 41st general elections, held in 2008-2009 and 2011-2012, respectively.

Elections Canada's financial framework

While Elections Canada performs a number of ongoing functions, a key component of its mandate is to be prepared to conduct general elections and by-elections. Under our parliamentary system, by-elections can happen at any time. While a fixed date for the 42nd general election of October 19, 2015, facilitates Elections Canada's long-term planning, six provincial and territorial elections are also scheduled to be held in the fall of 2015. These overlapping electoral events will pose challenges to electors, political entities and Elections Canada. Under these circumstances, should a federal election be called earlier than expected, Elections Canada will need to be ready. The agency is therefore planning to return to full general election readiness by April 1, 2015.

The agency's dual funding mechanism and planning practices reflect the unique characteristic of its mandate. Elections Canada is funded in part by an annual appropriation that covers the salaries of the agency's permanent staff and is not affected by the electoral cycle. Given the unpredictability of electoral events, the agency also has a statutory authority that allows it to draw directly from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Elections Canada's statutory authority covers all of its other expenses, including the additional expenses related to conducting elections, reimbursing election expenses to eligible candidates and parties, and enforcing the *Canada Elections Act*. These election expenses are not included in the agency's planned spending.

In keeping with the spirit of Canada's deficit-reduction action plan, the agency has taken steps to reduce its annual operating budget beginning in 2012-2013, as outlined in the Chief Electoral Officer's January 2012 letter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. These measures exclude non-discretionary expenses related to transfer payments

required by statute (e.g. quarterly allowances to political parties), costs related to the delivery of electoral events, costs related to the readjustment of electoral boundaries and costs associated with the consolidation of Elections Canada's offices and its relocation to Gatineau in 2013. We will provide further information regarding the implementation of our deficit-reduction plan in the agency's 2012–2013 Departmental Performance Report.

Estimates by Vote

For information on our organizational appropriations, see the 2012–2013 Main Estimates, available in the [2012–13 Main Estimates publication](#).

Section II: Analysis of Program Activities by Strategic Outcome

Strategic Outcome

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer operates toward one strategic outcome:

An Accessible Electoral Framework That Canadians Trust and Use

Achievement of the strategic outcome is facilitated by a Program Activity Architecture (PAA) consisting of three program activities that are directly beneficial to Canadians.

Program Activity	Expected Results
1. Electoral Operations	The electoral process is accessible and administered fairly and efficiently.
2. Regulation of Electoral Activities	Canadians have confidence in the fairness of the administration and enforcement of the electoral legislation.
3. Electoral Engagement	Canadians make informed decisions about their engagement in the electoral process.

A fourth program activity, Internal Services, exists to support Elections Canada in achieving the expected results of its other three program activities.

Program Activity: Electoral Operations

Description

This program activity allows Elections Canada to deliver fair and efficient electoral events, whenever they may be required, so that Canadians are able to exercise their democratic right to vote during a federal general election, by-election or referendum, by providing an electoral process that is accessible and constantly improved in response to the needs of electors.

Financial Resources (\$ thousands)

2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
41,528	34,840	32,526

Human Resources (Full-time Equivalents – FTEs)

2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
215	206	195

Program Activity Expected Results	Performance Indicators
The electoral process is administrated fairly and efficiently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of Canadians who believe that Elections Canada administers elections in a fair manner Cost of elections per elector
Elections Canada is prepared to hold electoral events whenever they are called.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of electoral offices that are fully functional within seven days of the start of an electoral event
Canadians have opportunities to exercise their democratic right to vote.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of non-voters who report not voting for administrative reasons Percentage of polls that open on time Percentage of electors who are satisfied with their experience of casting a ballot
Canadians have the information and support they need to participate in elections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of Canadians who are aware of the variety of voting methods available Percentage of Canadians who know how and where to vote
Canadians are provided with timely electoral results that accurately reflect the choices they have made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of polls reporting preliminary results after they close Variance between preliminary results and validated results Variance between reported results and results after judicial recounts
Independent electoral commissions have the capacity to carry out their obligations under the <i>Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of commissioners who are satisfied with the services and support they have received from Elections Canada

Planning Highlights

In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will continue to manage electoral events by delivering by-elections, should they be called. Between elections, the agency is responsible for maintaining the National Register of Electors as well as geographic databases to reflect population movement and growth. From the Register, Elections Canada prepares annual lists of electors for all electoral districts and associated polling division maps. These are distributed to members of Parliament and, on request, to registered political parties by November 15 of each year, as prescribed by the *Canada Elections Act*. Lists of electors and maps are also kept current in the event of a by-election and for provision to provincial and territorial electoral agencies where agreements are in place to support their electoral events.

As part of its fiscal restraint plan, Elections Canada will not implement service improvements for by-elections held before 2014 or invest resources in referendum readiness.

The following planned initiatives within the Electoral Operations program activity will also contribute to the agency's strategic outcome and priorities in 2012–2013.

Enable the electoral boundaries readjustment process

Elections Canada's primary role is to support the 10 independent commissions in each province by preparing and planning for the readjustment process. This phase was completed in 2011–2012. The commissions began their work in February 2012 after receipt of the 2011 Census population counts.

In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will support the commissions by providing a variety of professional, financial and administrative services, including assisting with mapping and communications, and maintaining a website. The agency is also responsible for acting as a conduit between Parliament and the electoral boundaries commissions and preparing a draft representation order. Following the completion of the readjustment process, expected in fall 2013, Elections Canada will integrate the results into its readiness activities for the next general election by appointing and training returning officers in new electoral districts, adjusting polling divisions and lists of electors, and producing official maps of federal electoral districts.

In preparation for this activity, Elections Canada is exploring the feasibility of aligning polling division boundaries with census geography to gain efficiencies and ease access to census demographic data by polling division; this will facilitate better analysis for internal and external purposes. This initiative will leverage our well-established partnership with Statistics Canada, whereby we jointly manage and maintain the underlying National Geographic Database.

Improve services to electors and political entities

Elections Canada will continue to make progress on its vision of providing electors with more varied, convenient and modern ways to register and vote. In the long term, we expect to enable electors to register and vote at a time and place, and through a service channel, of their choice; this includes the Internet. Our three-year plan represents a significant step toward this long-term goal.

Elections Canada will launch the first phase of an online voter registration service (e-registration) in spring 2012 to provide Canadians with an additional channel for managing their voter registration information online, initially between elections. This service will allow electors to check whether they are on the voters list, update their address and, in some cases, be added to the Register.

The current voter registration application used in the 308 returning offices has proven to be effective and reliable for several elections. However, it has limitations. For example, it does not support connectivity among returning offices, nor can it be deployed to satellite offices or other locations. Thus, registration services to electors are limited.

For the 2015 general election, Elections Canada intends to modernize the field voter registration application to provide access to a secure, centralized, national voters list. This would allow us to extend the e-registration service so that it is available during the election. Additionally, we would be able to offer complete voter registration services at more than 120 satellite offices and potentially at other targeted locations, such as college and university campuses and shopping malls. Legislative change is required to enable full e-registration

functionality for all electors, including new registrations and inter-riding address updates during an election.

In the longer term, the voter registration application could be deployed at polling stations. Access to the centralized voters list would permit electors to vote at any voting location in their electoral district and have their names struck off the list in real time. Candidates could also access the strike-off list online instead of collecting this information on paper at each polling station, as is the current practice.

The Special Voting Rules provide voting opportunities to electors who cannot or choose not to vote at advance polls or on election day. Under these provisions, voters can vote by special ballot by mail or at their local Elections Canada office. The report of the Chief Electoral Officer following the 41st general election provides an in-depth assessment of the Special Voting Rules and outlines a number of issues with the current outdated process.

We believe that the best long-term solution lies with Internet voting (I-voting), which would enable electors to vote where and when they want. In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will continue to work on an I-voting pilot project through ongoing research, analysis of business and security requirements, and collaboration with other electoral management bodies. With the approval of parliamentarians, as required under the *Canada Elections Act*, we plan to pilot I-voting for the next general election in selected locations serving specific groups of electors, such as students, voters with disabilities, military voters and those living abroad.

In the short term, Elections Canada cannot ignore the significant opportunity provided by the existing Special Voting Rules to offer electors more convenient and flexible voting options. This is why, for the next general election, Elections Canada will explore the feasibility of extending special ballot voting to new locations such as campuses for the convenience of students and other voters.

Under the current legislation, voting operations at polling stations are complex, paper-driven and labour-intensive. Elections Canada will develop a pilot project to re-engineer the voting process at advance and ordinary polls, leveraging technology to offer more consistent, efficient and streamlined service to voters, while also improving working conditions and simplifying training for election workers. This has been achieved successfully in other jurisdictions, most notably New Brunswick, which serves as a model for our approach. The approval of parliamentarians will be required for the pilot project, and legislative change will be required to go beyond the pilot phase.

During the 41st general election, Elections Canada implemented an administrative change to allow the use of the voter information card, in combination with another authorized piece of identification, to facilitate proof of identity and address for specific categories of voters, including students on campus, Aboriginal voters on reserves and voters in seniors' residences. Based on the results of this initiative, Elections Canada intends to examine options for expanding this feature to all voters to simplify the administration of the voter identification regime and make it more consistent and coherent.

Work will also begin in 2012–2013 to review the public inquiries services that Elections Canada provides during an election to take advantage of new technological advancements. The objective is to ensure that electors, political entities, election workers and the media are

able to find the answers to their questions about the electoral process in a timely and efficient manner. The current business model for public inquiries has been in place for several elections and is in need of investment in new technology. Elections Canada will also develop a more efficient e-mail response capacity to take advantage of this rapidly growing communication channel of choice for many stakeholders. To improve efficiency, we will also explore possible outsourcing of some components and more effective governance across the agency.

Program Activity: Regulation of Electoral Activities

Description

This program activity provides Canadians with an electoral process that is fair, transparent and in compliance with the *Canada Elections Act*. Within this program activity, Elections Canada is responsible for administering the political financing provisions of the Act. This includes monitoring compliance, disclosure and reporting of financial activities and enforcing electoral legislation. Thus, this program activity includes activities pertaining to the Commissioner of Canada Elections and the Broadcasting Arbitrator.

Financial Resources (\$ thousands)

2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
38,675	28,296	19,988

Human Resources (Full-time Equivalents – FTEs)

2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
67	63	56

Program Activity Expected Results	Performance Indicators
Canadians have confidence in the fairness of the administration and enforcement of electoral legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of Canadians reporting confidence in the fairness of Elections Canada's regulatory activities
Candidates have confidence in the fairness of the administration and enforcement of electoral legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of candidates reporting confidence in the fairness of Elections Canada's regulatory activities
Political entities are transparent in the use of their financial resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of financial returns that are submitted within four months of election day • Number of substantive corrections and amendments required to returns
Political entities understand and comply with their obligations and responsibilities under Canada's electoral legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of candidates who understand their obligations and responsibilities regarding contribution limits, as established by the <i>Canada Elections Act</i> • Number of cases that are subject to compliance measures

Planning Highlights

In 2012–2013, the Regulation of Electoral Activities program activity will continue to administer the provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* and related legislation, and work with political entities. This involves auditing financial returns of political entities, including candidates' returns from the 41st general election; determining reimbursement and subsidy amounts to be paid to political entities; monitoring compliance with the contribution limits; maintaining registration of political entities; publishing registration information and financial returns on the Elections Canada website; and helping political entities meet their obligations under the Act through training and ongoing support. As part of its fiscal restraint plan, Elections Canada will reduce the training in political financing that it offers to political entities.

The Chief Electoral Officer recently reappointed the Broadcasting Arbitrator, who is responsible for allocating paid and free broadcasting time to political parties and resolving disputes about the purchase of advertising time during an election. Elections Canada is in the process of appointing a new Commissioner of Canada Elections, whose role is to ensure that the *Canada Elections Act* and the *Referendum Act* are complied with and enforced.

The following planned initiatives within the Regulation of Electoral Activities program activity will also contribute to the agency's strategic outcome and priorities in 2012–2013.

Improve services to political entities

All political parties, electoral district associations, candidates, nomination contestants, leadership contestants and related third parties must periodically file financial returns with Elections Canada. Currently, these filings require a signature and, in some cases, supporting documentation such as invoices or bank statements. Elections Canada provides software to assist political entities in preparing and filing their financial returns. However, even forms prepared electronically must still be printed or scanned, then submitted by fax or e-mail in order to meet the signature requirement.

Recognizing the complexity and demands of complying with electoral legislation, Elections Canada will find ways to reduce the administrative burden placed on political entities by exploring options for e-filing of financial returns.

Maintaining election readiness over the past seven years has limited investment in program infrastructure and technology. Modernizing its systems will improve Elections Canada's efficiency and enhance its services to political entities. A key component of this infrastructure is a repository to consolidate information relevant to the administration of the political financing provisions of the *Canada Elections Act*. A central repository will help to strengthen consistency in administering the regime and enable Elections Canada to provide more timely advice to political entities. In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will assess the requirements and develop a strategy for developing and implementing a political financing information repository.

Enforcement

The current Commissioner of Canada Elections has indicated his intention to retire. Thus, Elections Canada is in the process of appointing a new commissioner, whose role is to ensure that the *Canada Elections Act* and the *Referendum Act* are complied with and enforced. The Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections will continue to investigate complaints arising from the 41st general election, including allegations of fraudulent telephone calls. Parliament can expect to receive a report on this matter during the coming fiscal year. The Office will also look at ways to improve its ability to report on its activities as well as compliance issues, while at the same time preserving the integrity of its investigations and ensuring fairness to participants in the electoral process.

In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will begin to examine alternative enforcement models that make greater use of adapted civil and administrative sanctions. The outcome of this examination will be shared with stakeholders through a report to be submitted before the next general election. The current legislation relies to a great extent on traditional enforcement tools, such as the imposition of fines or terms of imprisonment. This penal model is not particularly well adapted to the realities of our democracy – considering, in particular, the important role played by volunteers in all aspects of political life.

Program Activity: Electoral Engagement

Description

This program activity promotes and sustains the Canadian electoral process. It provides Canadians with electoral education and information programs so that they can make informed decisions about their engagement in the electoral process. It also aims to improve the electoral framework by consulting and sharing electoral practices with other stakeholders.

Financial Resources (\$ thousands)

2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
10,310	9,524	9,458

Human Resources (Full-time Equivalents – FTEs)

2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
68	63	60

Program Activity Expected Results	Performance Indicators
Canadians make informed decisions about their engagement in the electoral process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Percentage of Canadians who believe that they can make an informed decision about their engagement
Canadians understand the importance of voting and the value of participation in the electoral process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Percentage of Canadians who understand the importance of voting• Percentage of Canadians who understand the value of participating in the electoral process
Elections Canada and international electoral stakeholders improve their capacity to better administer the electoral process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Percentage of international and domestic stakeholders who intend to incorporate shared best practices
Parliamentarians have access to evidence-based information to make informed decisions about existing and emerging electoral issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Percentage of parliamentarians who are satisfied with the quality of the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations report

Planning Highlights

In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will continue to take actions to reduce barriers to voting experienced by certain groups of electors, with a particular focus on youth.

Elections Canada will conduct and use research to inform its activities. It will place an added focus on sharing knowledge with key stakeholders to raise the level of awareness about the issue of declining voter turnout and the value of ongoing civic education, to build understanding among youth of the importance of voting.

As part of its fiscal restraint plan, Elections Canada will limit its international role in 2012–2013 to that of contributing to the work of multilateral organizations, such as the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Organization of American States. As part of our work with the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Chief Electoral Officer will host the Pan-Commonwealth Conference in June 2012 and will begin a two-year term to lead a steering committee of the Network of Election Management Bodies. The agency will not be in a position to provide bilateral assistance for elections held in developing democracies in the coming year.

The following planned initiatives within the Electoral Engagement program activity will also contribute to the agency's strategic outcome and priorities in 2012–2013.

Improve services to electors and political entities

Currently, local outreach begins immediately before an electoral event. However, consultations with field staff and local stakeholders reveal that it often takes several months to establish and build relationships. Elections Canada's objective is to ensure that field staff and key local stakeholders are ready when an election is called to deliver activities that support registration, voting and communication about the electoral process to electors who typically experience barriers to the process.

In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will engage national and regional organizations, including those representing youth, Aboriginal people and persons with disabilities, to gather feedback on the changes to the electoral process being considered, such as conducting the I-voting pilot project, expanding special ballot voting on university and college campuses and conducting pre-election registration drives on campuses and Aboriginal reserves.

These changes will be complemented by community-based outreach with key stakeholder groups in advance of the 2015 general election. In the next year, Elections Canada will begin to develop the tools required by local field staff to effectively complete pre-event outreach work and maximize its current investment in the Community Relations Officer Program during elections.

Elections Canada will also engage parliamentarians and political parties in 2012–2013 as we advance plans for proposed service enhancements for electors and political entities; we will eventually seek approval for these initiatives from parliamentarians, as required. We will place particular emphasis on supporting parliamentarians in making policy decisions about I-voting based on research from social, legal and technical perspectives.

Internal Services

Program Activity Description

In addition to carrying out program activities that directly benefit Canadians, Elections Canada requires internal services to support the agency in fulfilling its mandate. These groups focus on performance management, legal services, internal audits, financial and human resources management and information technology.

Financial Resources (\$ thousands)

2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
45,710	37,839	32,852

Human Resources (Full-time Equivalents – FTEs)

2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
147	144	136

Planning Highlights

In 2012–2013, a key area of focus for all internal services will be enabling Elections Canada's programs to meet the agency's priorities and obligations.

Elections Canada's Information Technology Sector will design and provide the required technology and support to the 10 electoral boundaries commissions. This sector will play a pivotal role in delivering our three-year plan to improve services to electors and political entities as many of the initiatives have significant technology components. Efforts will also continue to modernize Elections Canada's information technology infrastructure, maintain over 120 agency-specific systems and ensure efficient telecommunications services.

Elections Canada's Human Resources sector provides the agency with strategic advice, corporate programs and services, and operational support, such as occupational health and safety and employee assistance programs. In 2012–2013, the Human Resources sector will continue its efforts to retain and align Elections Canada's personnel with the evolving needs of the agency, including developing the skills and competencies required to deliver on our long-term vision.

Elections Canada's corporate planning unit will be responsible for bringing coherence and alignment to our three-year plan and projects as well as reporting on our progress to external audiences. The unit will also develop an integrated plan in 2012–2013 to return the agency to election readiness. In the context of fiscal restraint, we will publish the evaluation of the last general election, but we will not be in a position to evaluate upcoming by-elections.

Elections Canada's Finance, Internal Audit and Administration sector will continue to ensure sound financial management and provide corporate advice and guidance to Elections Canada and the 10 electoral boundaries commissions. The sector will also support a

multi-year procurement plan linked to the information technology investment plan, sector operational plans, the three-year plan to improve services to electors and political entities, and event-readiness activities. The sector will continue to provide expertise in the areas of procurement and contracting, internal audit and management of real property, and it will meet obligations in the areas of building services and physical and personnel security.

The following additional planned initiatives within the Internal Services program activity will contribute to the agency's strategic outcome and priorities in 2012–2013.

Office consolidation and relocation

In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will continue planning the consolidation of its offices into a new facility, which is scheduled for completion in 2013. This is a result of the announcement by Public Works and Government Services Canada to decommission Elections Canada's largest existing office space in downtown Ottawa by 2016. The consolidation will allow Elections Canada to reduce the number of its office locations from nine during the last general election to two and realize organizational efficiencies in the administration of our business in the long term. Elections Canada will also continue to work with other tenants in the new facility to find cost-savings opportunities by exploring strategies for sharing common space.

Website accessibility

In response to a Federal Court ruling to make federal government websites fully accessible to electors with disabilities, Elections Canada will continue to implement its three-year plan to make its web applications and static documents fully compliant. The agency has fulfilled the first phase by making the most important information on its site compliant with the court ruling. In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will continue to make website improvements to ensure that all web-based elections applications and new information are compliant with the government-wide accessibility guidelines.

Financial management

In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will continue to strengthen its financial-management functions to assist in decision-making in the context of fiscal restraint, review its business operations to realize cost-savings opportunities through a zero-based budgeting exercise to effectively prioritize investments and reallocations, and identify alternative service-delivery opportunities. Elections Canada will also review and enhance other internal financial management services as required. In 2012–2013, the agency's procurement and contracting framework will be reviewed, with a focus on ensuring a streamlined, risk-based decision-making process within the parameters of government regulations and policies.

Internal audit

Elections Canada is currently in the last year of its three-year audit plan. In 2012–2013, the agency will continue its progress in implementing previous audit recommendations and the internal audits currently underway; it will also evaluate its internal audit function in the context of fiscal restraint. This will drive a new approach in the development of a 2013–2016 Risk-Based Audit Plan.

Human resources

In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will develop a framework to manage its human resources to ensure the retention of a qualified, committed workforce, and it will analyze the potential impacts of and solutions to fiscal restraint measures. The agency will continue its commitments to offer career development opportunities and improve succession planning. Elections Canada also plans to prepare for the transition to a new human resources information system led by Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Information management

In 2012–2013, Elections Canada will continue to develop and implement a number of measures to modernize and strengthen its information management capacity. Elections Canada will update and implement applicable information management policies, directives and guidelines. It will also deliver mandatory training to all staff and specialized training to information management practitioners. In addition, we will identify information resources of business value and capture this information in a central inventory.

Information technology

The Information Technology sector will ensure that the office relocation to Gatineau is seamless from an information technology perspective. Elections Canada will also design and provide modern telecommunications and field services infrastructure by establishing new contract-based services. In addition, the agency will implement new systems to improve internal services, such as a salary-planning tool.

Section III: Supplementary Information

Financial Highlights

Future-oriented Condensed Statement of Operations

For the year (ended March 31)

(\$ thousands)

	\$ Change	Future-oriented 2012–2013	Future-oriented 2011–2012
Total Expenses	(217,857)	150,556	368,413
Total Revenues	(191)	30	221
Net Cost of Operations	(217,666)	150,526	368,192

Elections Canada plans \$150.6 million in expenditures for 2012–2013, a decrease of \$217.9 million from the 2011–2012 estimated results. This decrease is a result of the 41st general election, held on May 2, 2011. The expenditures forecast to be spent in 2012–2013 include the agency's operating expenditures, wrap-up activities from the 41st general election, activities related to the decennial redistribution of electoral boundaries and the office consolidation and relocation project and quarterly allowances to political parties. (Quarterly allowances will be phased out over three fiscal years starting in 2012–2013, as set out in Bill C-13, *An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures*.)

Elections Canada's planned revenues of \$30,000 in 2012–2013 represent a decrease of \$191,000 over the 2011–2012 estimated results. Revenues relate mainly to an electoral event, forfeiture of candidates' election deposits and surplus of election expenses, and refunds of excess contributions and fines.

The condensed financial statements and associated highlights have been prepared on an accrual accounting basis. They differ from the figures presented in previous sections, which are based on authorities voted by Parliament on a modified cash basis.

Future-oriented financial statements can be found on the Elections Canada Web site at: <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rep/est/rpp2012&document=fut&lang=e>

Condensed Statement of Financial Position

For the year (ended March 31)
(\$ thousands)

	\$ Change	Future-oriented 2012–2013	Future-oriented 2011–2012
Total Assets	(6,448)	33,302	39,750
Total Liabilities	(1,056)	25,594	26,650
Equity	(5,392)	7,708	13,100
Total	(6,448)	33,302	39,750

Total planned assets for 2012–2013 are \$33.3 million, a decrease of \$6.4 million compared to the 2011–2012 estimated results. Included in this reduction is approximately \$5.4 million (41 percent) in tangible capital assets, a result of amortization of computer software and leasehold improvements in 2012–2013.

Total planned liabilities for 2012–2013 are \$25.6 million, of which accounts payable and accrued liabilities account for 69 percent. Included in this amount are accounts payable to external parties of \$15.6 million and \$2.0 million of accounts payable to other federal government departments and agencies. The net decrease of \$1.1 million from 2011–2012 is a result of Bill C-13, which reduces quarterly allowances payable to parties at year-end.

Supplementary Information Tables

All electronic supplementary information tables included in this *2012–2013 Report on Plans and Priorities* can be found on the [Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat website](#).

- Details of transfer payment programs
- All upcoming internal audits over the next three fiscal years

Section IV: Other Items of Interest

New Legislation

An analysis of proposed amendments to electoral legislation with a potential impact on our business can be found on the Elections Canada website at

<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rep/est/rpp2012&document=legislation&lang=e>

Judicial Decisions and Proceedings

An analysis of judicial decisions and proceedings that may affect electoral legislation can be found on the Elections Canada website at

<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rep/est/rpp2012&document=legislation&lang=e>

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