

The Government of Nova Scotia

Partner Brand Guide

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Intro

The Government of Nova Scotia has a brand policy that applies to all government departments and offices. This partner brand guide summarizes brand features and standards for designers working on government projects.

1.0 Philosophy

- 1.1 Mandate page 1
- 1.2 Brand page 1

2.0 Nova Scotia Logo

- 2.1 The Logo page 2
- 2.2 Application of Logo page 3

3.0 Visual Elements

- 3.1 Saltire Grid page 4
- 3.2 Colour page 5
- 3.3 Fonts page 6
- 3.4 Photos page 7

4.0 Appendices

- 4.1 Inclusivity and Accessibility page 8
- 4.2 Standards for Inclusive Design page 8
- 4.3 Writing alt text for images page 9

1.0

Philosophy

1.1 Mandate

Communications Nova Scotia manages and delivers communication services to ensure that issues are thoroughly reviewed, communication goals are met, and the policies and priorities of government are clearly communicated to Nova Scotians.

1.2 Brand

The Nova Scotia government brand presents the spirit of the province and its government as a meeting place, or ignition point, that sparks innovation and prosperity. Branded communications present a strong image of a diverse and resilient people, poised to take on the challenges of the time we live in.

Brand Voice

The characteristics of government's brand voice:

Credible · Clear · Inclusive · Helpful

These characteristics should be evident in all forms of communication, in all mediums.

Credible (*trustworthy*)

Trust depends on being able to identify government's messages and know who is speaking. Consistent credible communications builds confidence in government.

Clear (*easy to understand*)

Plain language combined with effective visual communications increases the reach of government messages.

Inclusive (*removing barriers*)

By maintaining high standards for accessibility and cultural competence, this brand supports inclusivity in Nova Scotia (see Appendix 4.1).

Helpful (*welcoming*)

A friendly and supportive tone increases engagement with our audiences.



2.0

Nova Scotia Logo




2.1 The Logo

The Nova Scotia logo is the focal point of the brand for the Government of Nova Scotia. It is used as the stamp of approval for all communication materials provided by the Government. Consistently including this logo promotes credibility and clarity in our communications. When possible, text to let audiences know that the Nova Scotia government is the source of a message is recommended, in addition to the logo.

The logo is a registered trademark, protected by the Trademarks Act of Canada, for use by government departments and offices.

The logo incorporates the Coat of Arms and the Saint Andrew's Cross* that appear on the flag of Nova Scotia. The logo colour scheme is based on the flag and should not be adjusted or altered without written consent from Communications Nova Scotia.



	PMS: 300C C: 100 M: 56 Y: 0 K: 0 R: 0 G: 94 B: 184 HEX: 005EB8
	PMS: 485C C: 0 M: 95 Y: 100 K: 0 R: 218 G: 41 B: 28 HEX: DA291C
	PMS: 109C C: 0 M: 9 Y: 100 K: 0 R: 255 G: 209 B: 0 HEX: FFD100

* Saint Andrew's Cross is a heraldic symbol in the form of a diagonal cross. This X shape is also called a saltire. Nova Scotia's blue saltire on a white field is the reverse of Scotland's flag.

2.2 Application of the Logo

Audience/Language

The most frequently used version of the provincial logo is the English-only, full-colour logo. Variations on this logo are required in a few situations:

- bilingual communications: applied to communications with French or Gaelic.
- LGBTQ Pride: applied to communication related to content featuring activities in this community
- international communications: applied to communications intended to reach an international audiences unfamiliar with Nova Scotia

In addition to the application of the logo as a visual communication, there should also be a written communication identifying the provincial government as the source of the communication. Where possible, this message should be imbedded in the text.



logo for **ENGLISH ONLY** communications



logos for **BILINGUAL** communications



logo for **LGBTQ PRIDE** communications



logo for **INTERNATIONAL** communications

Legibility

Effective use of the logo depends on it being clear enough to be read. Size, distortions, or inappropriate backgrounds can render the logo difficult to recognize. To avoid legibility issues, the following standards should be applied:



Minimum width = 0.75"



Avoid changing logo colours from standard colours.



Avoid backgrounds that do not provide enough consistent contrast to maintain good legibility.



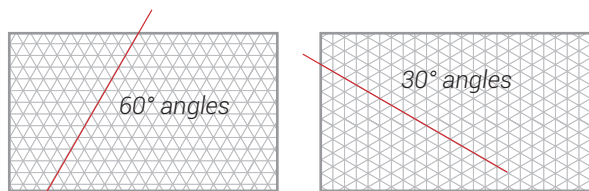
Avoid distortion.

3.0

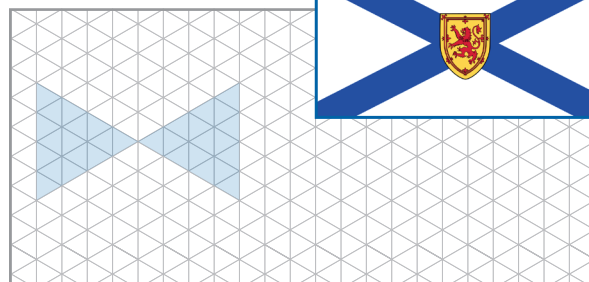
Visual Elements

3.1 Saltire Grid

The grid is derived from the saltire found in our provincial flag (St. Andrew's Cross). It represents the meeting point between land and sea, a foundational concept behind this brand. The grid can be rotated, if required. When rotating the grid, use one grid only (30° or 60° angles) in one single design.

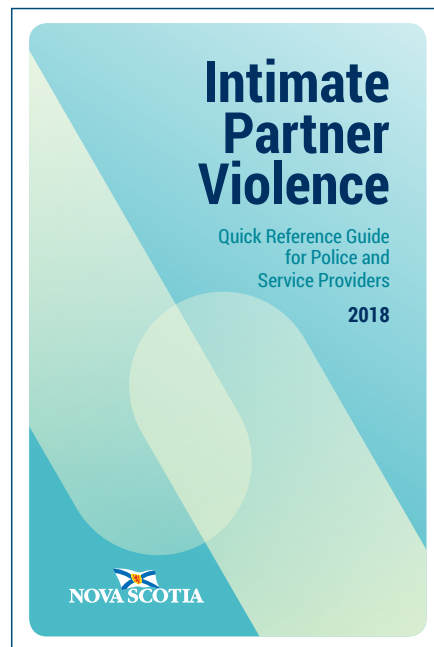


Flag of Nova Scotia



Saltire grid

Examples of branded documents



3.2 Colour

The primary colour palette reflects water and earth tones and should be used in most applications. This palette should be the dominant palette for most designs under this brand.

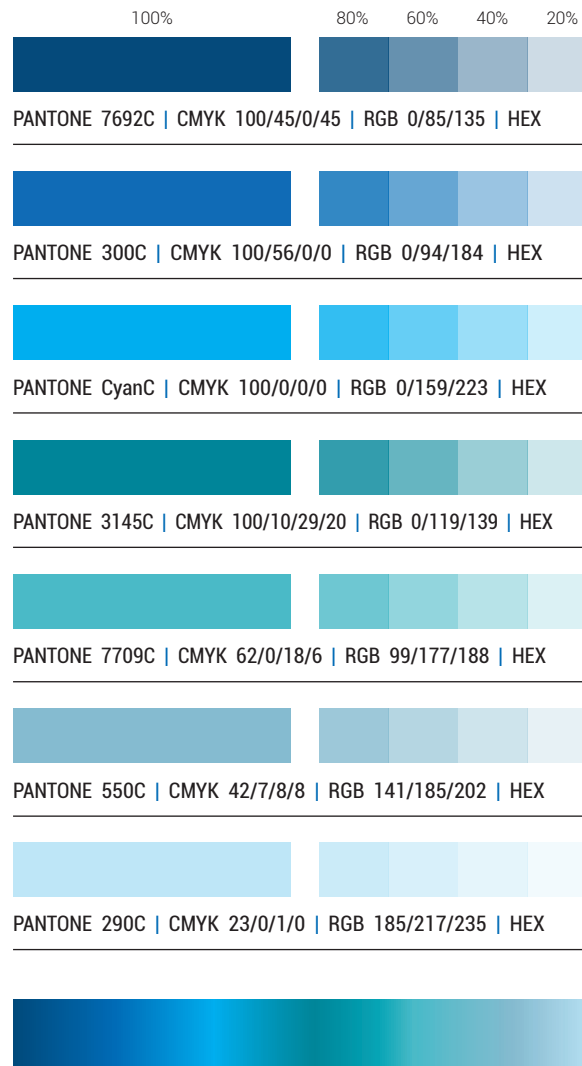
When required, a secondary colour may be introduced to enhance the design or message. Secondary colour selections are informed by the requirements of specific communications and are usually less dominant than the primary brand colours.

When two brands are involved, two colour palettes may be integrated to support the partnership's message.

Application of Colour

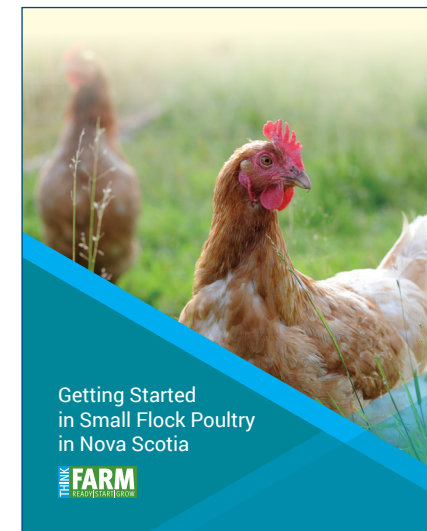
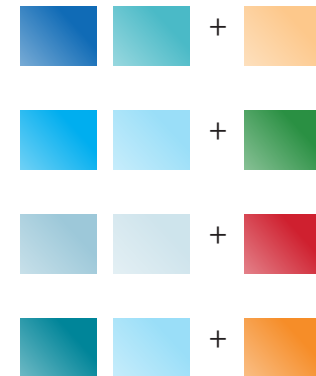
Inclusive design is an important value for this government brand. Colour choices must consider legibility for audiences that are partially sighted or colour blind. For example, reliance on colour alone to convey meaning should be avoided and headings using coloured typography must meet the recommended accessibility standards for contrast (see Appendix 4.2).

Primary colour palette



Primary + secondary colours

Sample combinations



3.3 Typography

Three categories of communications use font families under this brand:

1. **Roboto** for technical communications
2. **Open Sans** for impact-oriented communications and online applications
3. **Formal** fonts for event-oriented communications

1. Roboto

Because Roboto is available in 12 different weights and Roboto Condensed is available in 6, it is good choice for complex communications (forms, technical reports and signage) that have many layers of content that needs typographic differentiation. Condensed fonts should be used sparingly because readers with low vision may struggle to read condensed fonts. Condensed fonts can be used for titles, large headings and complex tables. Roboto is an open-source typeface that can work in both print and digital mediums; online, Open Sans is preferred.

2. Open Sans

Open Sans has a friendlier, more open look that is more appropriate to

communications that are less technical and more impact oriented. This open-source font is also easier to read online than Roboto. When related content appears both online and in print, it is preferable that Open Sans is used in both contexts.

3. Formal

For formal or ceremonial purposes that would benefit from the use of script or serif fonts, the designer may opt to use a font other than the two brand fonts:

Roboto

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Roboto Condensed

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Open Sans

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXY
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Application of Typography

Legibility

To include audiences that are partially sighted, font sizes and contrast levels that maximize legibility should be used. Complex tables and graphs may occasionally require fonts smaller than 12 pt but when possible, use the most legible font sizes. A document intended for seniors could use a font larger than 12 pt. To learn more see Appendix 4.2.

Capitalization

Government messages should be presented in an approachable, friendly tone. All caps should be used sparingly, if at all. All caps is interpreted by many who grew up in the digital era as yelling. Text in all caps is also less legible.

Outlining text

Text that has been converted to vectors is identified by most software as an object. Objects will be invisible to audiences relying on text-to-audio technology. Assistive technology used to read text aloud will not read objects without alt text included. In PDFs intended for online use, this must be considered.

3.4 Photos

CNS has an extensive selection of authentically Nova Scotian images that should be used instead of stock photography. Occasionally stock images may be justified, but CNS images are preferred.

For covers, one single “hero image” is recommended. Keep it simple and professional.

Application of Photography

Assistive technology relies on alt text in PDF documents viewed on screen. If a graphic includes a photo, and it is intended for online viewing, alt text should be included.



Access by Design 2030

Achieving an Accessible Nova Scotia



4.0

Appendices

4.1 Inclusive and accessible design

The Nova Scotia Government is working toward making Nova Scotia a more accessible province. Because the government brand is intended to support both accessibility and inclusivity, and because terminology matters, both are defined here.

Accessible design focuses on making spaces, processes, and communications as accessible as possible for as many as possible. Accessible design considers the vision, hearing, mobility, dexterity, and cognition of its audiences.

Inclusive Design is a methodology that includes the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age, and other forms of human difference. It is an approach that considers accessibility as well as other differences.

“Designing inclusively makes better experiences for everyone.”

————— *inclusivedesign.ca*

4.2 Standards for inclusive design

Standards for inclusion may change as technology changes, but basic design rules are less likely to change.

Design for print documents must consider:

1. The **font size** for most running text should be a minimum of 12pt. **Leading** should be generous (12pt/15pt).
2. **Contrast** between typography and the background must meet standards for readers with low vision. The accepted standard is:
 - **3:1** for 18 pt or larger
 - **4.5:1** for text below 18 pt

Contrast checkers are available free online when in doubt.

Text on photos must be designed so the contrast level behind the text is reasonably consistent for legibility. For audiences with less common colour blindness (yellow-blue colour blindness)

designs with blue text on yellow backgrounds should maintain a high level of contrast to compensate for potential legibility issues.

3. Reliance on **colour** alone to convey meaning should be avoided. How colour is perceived is not universal. Colour coding is useful for a large part of any audience but other parts of the audience may also benefit from font changes (bold, italics etc), and shapes (stars on maps for example). Audiences with visual disabilities rely on designers to consider different ways of seeing. Photoshop and other free online software can simulate the ways colours are perceived by some types of colour blindness.

Design for PDF documents viewed online must consider:

1. Style sheets should be used in documents created in Word and InDesign so types of content can be identified by assistive technologies used for reading.

2. The order in which assistive technologies read content must be considered.
3. Text should be searchable. Outlined text (converted to vectorized outlines) should be avoided or used with an alt text that will read the text on assistive technologies.
4. All photos and illustrations should have concise descriptive alt text added to them.
5. Contrast between typography and the background must meet standards for readers with low vision and colour blindness (see standards for print).
6. Reliance on colour alone to convey meaning should be avoided (see standards for print).

4.3 Writing alt text for images

Alternative text (alt text) is a way to label images and is especially important for people who can't see the images. Alt text should describe the image in a brief sentence or two. Alt text should reveal the point that the image is making and not necessarily a literal description.

Examples

Yes: Julia Kuhn of Halifax receives the Youth Volunteer Award from Lt.-Gov. J.J. Grant and Premier Stephen McNeil.

No: Two men and a girl stand with a framed volunteer award

No: Lt.-Gov. J.J. Grant (left) and Premier Stephen McNeil (right) at awards ceremony.

Most images must have "alt text" describing the image. Additionally, any text that appears in the image must also be included in the alt text. For example, avoid telling users there's a picture of a document cover on a document overview page.

If an image is decorative only, it should be identified as such in the alt text.

Limit alt text to 150 characters. Anything longer should be placed in the content of the page.

An alt text description must also include a period at the end. This character will cause text to audio technology to pause before it begins reading the next piece of text.