

# IR-4 Project Visual Strategy Guidelines

The following guidelines regarding **color scheme**, **logo usage** and **typeface** should be followed by staff when creating public facing print materials or digital content on behalf of the IR-4 Project. For assistance, please contact National Information and Communications Officer Hannah Ross at [hross2@ncsu.edu](mailto:hross2@ncsu.edu).

## Why do we need a visual strategy?

The IR-4 Project is a national organization with representatives, labs and offices spread throughout the United States, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Northern Marianas, and Puerto Rico. Our headquarters team is based at NC State University, while our regional staff and state liaisons are all based at land-grant universities throughout the country. We also work in close partnership with federal representatives at the USDA and EPA. A strong visual strategy helps keep us aligned, so that we present to the public, our funders, stakeholders and partners as a unified whole.

## What is a brand vs. a visual strategy?

A **brand** is the way an organization or company is perceived, while a **visual strategy** is the intentional collection of components that shape those perceptions.

Visual and written elements come together in a visual strategy to help the public identify and understand an organization. These elements include: logo, color scheme, typeface, a clear mission statement / tagline, writing style and more. By using these elements consistently to communicate with our audience, we elevate our established brand as an innovative, professional and responsive organization that our audience values.

# Colors

The following color scheme—updated in January 2024—is to be used on print and digital content produced by the IR-4 Project. The color scheme is separated into primary and secondary colors, all of which are visually accessible to members of our audience who are color blind.

## Primary colors

In any IR-4 material—digital or print, where color is appropriate—these primary brand colors should be predominant.

Greens, in addition to being common in the field, represent new beginnings and growth. Gray is a neutral color that has versatility in modern, professional contexts. The shades of green and gray in this updated color palette have been adjusted for greater readability when used in combination with other colors and with our logo.

Off-white has been added for when a softer, light neutral is needed (white can sometimes look blinding). Black and white are always viable options for background and text, in combination or rotation with the other colors.

PRIMARY COLORS – UPDATED FOR 2024			
<b>DEEP GREEN</b> RGB: 83 118 61 HEX: #53763D CMYK: 69 34 92 19	<b>LIGHT GREEN</b> RGB: 152 171 75 HEX: #98AB4B CMYK: 46 20 90 1	<b>OFF WHITE</b> RGB: 248 241 231 HEX: #F8F1E7 CMYK: 2 4 8 0	<b>CHARCOAL</b> RGB: 57 57 50 HEX: #393932 CMYK: 66 59 67 46
<b>MID GRAY</b> RGB: 190 190 185 HEX: #BEBEB9 CMYK: 26 20 24 0	<b>LIGHT GRAY</b> RGB: 220 220 215 HEX: #DCDCD7 CMYK: 13 9 13 0	<b>WHITE</b> RGB: 255 255 255 HEX: #FFFFFF CMYK: 0 0 0 0	<b>BLACK</b> RGB: 0 0 0 HEX: #000000 CMYK: 75 68 67 90

## Secondary/accent colors

There may be times when more colors are needed for a design. The following colors complement our primary colors and are accessible to those with visual impairments. Inspiration for these colors came from the specialty crops we serve; as such, they visually represent our mission and work harmoniously with the kinds of images we often share.

These colors should be used to accent or highlight supporting information, playing a supporting role to the primary colors. For example, these can be used to represent various data in charts or bar graphs, or used for subheaders in presentations. These colors should be used in even rotation to round out the palette. The communications team can provide guidance on using secondary colors judiciously.

SECONDARY COLORS—UPDATED FOR 2024		
<b>PURPLE</b> RGB: 168 76 119 HEX: #A84C77 CMYK: 34 83 31 3	<b>BLUE</b> RGB: 54 117 140 HEX: #36758C CMYK: 81 44 34 7	<b>BROWN</b> RGB: 122 81 31 HEX: #7A511F CMYK: 39 62 100 33
<b>ORANGE</b> RGB: 221 135 45 HEX: #DD872D CMYK: 11 54 97 1	<b>RED</b> RGB: 183 28 8 HEX: #B71C08 CMYK: 19 100 100 11	<b>WARM GRAY</b> RGB: 127 127 19 HEX: #7F7F77 CMYK: 51 42 49 10

## Brand color accessibility

It's very important to have a color palette that has enough contrast between certain colors to be considered Web Accessibility compliant. These primary palette color combinations have been tested and pass the [WebAIM Accessibility Tests](#):

EXAMPLES OF VISUALLY ACCESSIBLE COLOR COMBINATIONS		
LIGHT GREEN ON OFF-WHITE	CHARCOAL ON LIGHT GREEN	CHARCOAL ON MID GRAY
CHARCOAL ON OFF-WHITE	BLACK ON LIGHT GREEN	OFF-WHITE ON CHARCOAL
BLACK ON OFF-WHITE	WHITE ON DEEP GREEN	LIGHT GREEN ON CHARCOAL
CHARCOAL ON LIGHT GRAY	OFF-WHITE ON DEEP GREEN	LIGHT GRAY ON CHARCOAL

## Logo usage

The refreshed IR-4 Project logo is to be used on all official documentation, letterhead, and digital and print marketing materials as appropriate:

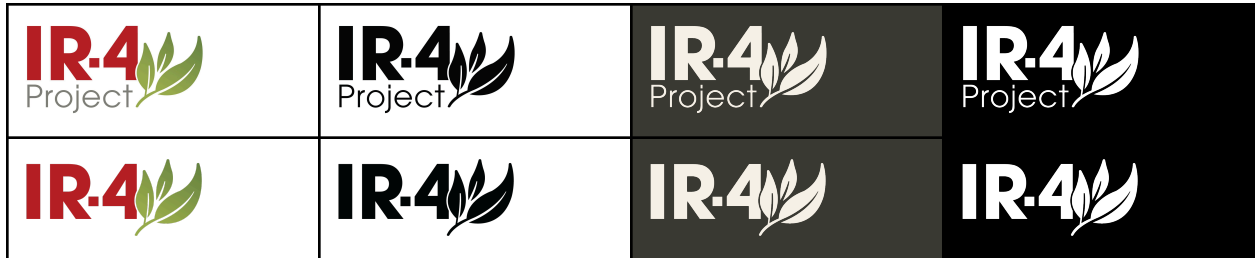


Logo files can be accessed via the IR-4 Google Drive HQ Resources folder. A high-res version of our logo with a white background can also be downloaded from our website's Outreach Page. Please download the logo files and add them to your own Drive for ease of use/ avoiding any inadvertent changes to the shared files.

There are several versions of the logo available for team use:

- Full color, white background (.jpg file; you'll likely use this most often)
- Full color, no background (.png file)
- All black, no background (.png file; to be used on a light background)
- All white, no background (.png file; to be used on a dark background)

- Off-white, no background (.png file; to be used on a dark background)
- These color & file type variations are also available in a version that strikes the word “Project” (for when a smaller, more confined shape is needed). **The version including “Project” is typically preferred.**



## Logo file types

It can get confusing to remember which file type to use: .jpg (pronounced “j-peg”) or .png (pronounced “ping”). Follow this guide to decide which logo file type (.jpg vs .png) is right for your project (or ask the Comms team):

File Type	Logo background	Logo File Size	Best for...
.jpg	White background	smaller	Useful in things like (white background) PowerPoints, email signature, websites, Microsoft programs
.png	No background	larger*	Great for designing assets like: graphics, handouts, brochures; anytime the logo needs to sit on a color/photo.

*\*If you are making something large like a banner, please reach out to the Comms team for a vector file, which can be blown up as large as you need it; either a .jpg or .png file could become blurry in these kinds of applications.*

## Resizing the logo

When expanding or shrinking the logo to fit the desired spacing, maintain height and width proportions by **holding down the shift key** as you drag on the corner handle of the image. Let go of the image before you let go of the shift key. This will prevent the logo from getting squished or narrowed.

## Typeface and font

For marketing materials and digital content, the “Roboto” typeface should be used. While typeface and font are often used interchangeably, a **typeface** refers to a family of fonts, while a **font** refers to each variation within a typeface (such as Roboto Bold or Roboto Light).

Roboto is a sans serif typeface, created by Google and available within Adobe design software and Google Fonts. This is the font used on all our print and digital materials. If Roboto is not available, use Arial (or basic sans serif font).

The typeface features weight variations that can be used to establish hierarchy in a print material, including: Thin, Light, Regular, Medium, **Bold** and **Black**. It also has italic options for each weight.

## Font usage

Always use consistent font formatting across a piece (print or digital) so content is easy to understand and follow at a glance.

The following are examples of how the typeface should be used within materials. Font weight sizing will vary in digital vs. print materials. Please have the Communications team review any branded IR-4 material prior to printing or publishing. We are happy to help provide guidance to ensure our materials are consistent, sharp, readable and accurate.

**Title - Roboto Black (26-30 pt)**

**Section Header - Roboto Bold (20-24 pt)**

**Section Subheadings - Roboto Medium (18 pt)**

Paragraph text - Roboto Regular (12 to 14 pt)

Captions - Roboto Light or Roboto Regular (10 to 12 pt)

### **Using color to establish hierarchy**

Along with font, color can help guide a reader through a document, showing which information is key and which is supporting. Keep color schemes neutral in professional print documents. The darkest primary brand colors should be used for headings and subheadings: charcoal, deep green or black. For body text color, black or charcoal can be used.

Refer back to the Brand Color Accessibility section for guidance on readable color combinations, keeping in mind that more colorful combinations are best for promotional designs, while neutral combinations are appropriate for professional/technical publications and papers.

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## **QUESTIONS?**

Contact Hannah Ross, National Information and Communications Officer:  
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