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Federal Brand System

One brand for the federal government — brandbook
v0.1.0



FOD Kanselarij van de Eerste Minister · Algemene directie Externe
Communicatie

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Brand-as-code PoC · DTCC
2025.10

Inhoud

IDENTITY

01	Identity
02	Mission
03	Values

GOVERNANCE

01	Roles and responsibilities
02	Validation flow

STANDARDS

01	Colour
02	Typography
03	Logo usage
04	Accessibility
05	Co-branding

INSTITUTIONS

01	Ministry of Defence
02	FPS Justice

03

FPS Chancellery of the Prime Minister

04

FPS Public Health

05

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Identity

One federal brand, many faces

The federal brand architecture starts from a single principle: **whenever a citizen interacts with a federal institution — through a letter, a website, a recruitment page, or an event — it should be immediately clear that this is the federal government.**

This brand does not replace the institution. It is a shared signature that strengthens it. The FPS Justice remains the FPS Justice. Defence remains Defence. But both speak through a shared, recognisable visual language that expresses the coherence of the federal administration.

Three integration levels

Not every institution integrates in the same way. The specifications provide for three levels:

1. **Brand ambassadors** — institutions that fully adopt the identity and serve as an example for others.
2. **Flexible integration** — institutions with already established brand characteristics, integrated in a hybrid manner.
3. **Affiliation kit** — institutions that retain their own identity, with only a federal signature signalling the affiliation.

In this system, this is not just a policy choice: each level has its own technical implementation as an overlay on the tokens source. An institution overrides only what it needs and automatically inherits all common rules.

One source, many outputs

Every rule you read in this charter — a hex code, a typographic scale, a logo clear-space — lives as data in a Git repository. The same data generates this site, the PDF brandbook, the Word and PowerPoint templates, and the CSS tokens of the digital design system. A single change automatically propagates to all media.

This approach has three benefits at federal scale:

- **Traceability** — each change is a commit, each release a tag. For auditable government communication, this is a fundamental governance advantage.

- **Speed** — onboarding a new institution does not require a full rebranding exercise, just a brief overlay configuration.
- **Consistency** — drift between channels becomes structurally impossible; the system is the truth.

IDENTITY

Mission

Mission

The federal brand architecture pursues five strategic goals that flow directly from the government's commitments to a better citizen experience with the administration.

A recognisable federal identity

Citizens do not always distinguish federal from regional or local. A shared visual identity makes the federal government immediately recognisable — on a letter, on a website, in a campaign. This strengthens both legibility and credibility.

Visibility in an era of disinformation

A coherent federal signature is a **trust anchor**. In a digital landscape where disinformation spreads quickly, a shared and verified visual identity helps distinguish official communication from imitations.

Better user experience

Accessible typography, sufficient contrast (WCAG 2.1 AA), clear hierarchy. The brand system is designed for inclusivity from the ground up — not as an afterthought, but as a technical constraint enforced at the token level itself.

Efficiency through collaboration

One source of templates, one source of guidelines, one source of assets. Communication teams in small and large institutions save time, which can be invested in content rather than layout.

Sustainability and adaptability

The system is built on open standards (DTCG 2025.10, EUPL where possible) and is therefore future-proof. A new institution, a new channel, a new language — the system can grow without rebuilding the foundation.

IDENTITY

Values

Three values, four media

Sober

Federal communication is not loud. White is an active choice. Hierarchy emerges from typography, not from colour accents. The Belgian tricolour accent is rarely used — and when it is, it is used with intent.

Accessible

Accessible in the strict sense — WCAG 2.1 AA as a minimum, AAA where feasible. Accessible also in a broader sense — plain language, predictable layout, recognisable patterns.

Open

The source code of the brand system is public. The tokens are machine-readable. AI assistants can read and apply the rules. Vendor lock-in is explicitly avoided by choosing open formats wherever they suffice technically.

Roles and responsibilities

Who decides what

The brand system only works if decisions land at the right level. The diagram below (three-layer token model) governs ownership.

Federal level (Chancellery)

- **Common tokens** (semantic roles, spacing scales, contrast minima)
- **Component tokens** (digital design system)
- **Governance procedures** (validation, exceptions, conflict resolution)
- **Versioning** of the federal core (semantic versioning)

Changes to this layer require review by at least two people from the Chancellery team (CODEOWNERS).

Institution level

- **Brand tokens** (own primary palette, fonts within the allowed scale)
- Own `_brand.yml` for Quarto output
- Own communication kit and applications

An institution may modify its Brand layer without federal review, as long as the WCAG CI stays green and no Common tokens are overridden.

Conflict resolution

When an institution wants an exception that falls outside the rules (e.g. keeping its own typography, deviating lockup position), it follows the **exception procedure**:

1. Submit a request via the governance portal with motivation.
2. Chancellery advice within 15 working days.
3. On approval: documentation of the exception in `institutions/{name}/exceptions.md`, with end date.
4. Semi-annual review of whether the exception remains justified.

The aim is *not* to avoid exceptions, but to **make exceptions traceable**. An undocumented exception is a future drift source.

Validation flow

From change to publication

Every change to the brand system follows the flow below. Nothing reaches production without validation.

1. Proposal

A communication officer or designer submits a change via:

- **Pull request** in the Git repo (for technical users)
- **Theme Wizard** for non-technical users (automatically generates a PR)
- **Frontify portal** (for broad catalogue content)

2. Automated checks

On every PR, CI runs:

- WCAG 2.1 AA contrast check on all changed tokens
- Schema validation against DTCG 2025.10
- Lint rules (no hardcoded colours, no unauthorised font names)
- Build test (all outputs render without errors)

A failing check blocks the merge.

3. Human review

A reviewer from the Chancellery team assesses:

- Strategic coherence with the system
- Application boundaries (does this change touch multiple institutions?)
- Documentation quality

4. Publication

On merge, all outputs are automatically rebuilt and published:

- npm packages tagged and published
- Brand portal refreshed
- Email notification to subscribers (“new templates available”)
- Change logged in the public changelog

5. Semi-annual audit

Twice a year, the Chancellery team conducts an audit:

- Are tokens actually used? (telemetry via Brand portal)
- Which exceptions are still in force and remain justified?
- Which institutions are lagging in adoption and need additional support?


The audit is published as a public annual report.

STANDARDS

Colour

Het federale palet leeft als DTCG-tokens. Hieronder de gegenereerde swatches en hun WCAG-contrast t.o.v. wit.

Primair palet

 <p>color.federal-blue.50 #EBF2FA</p> <p>vs wit · 1.13:1 · fail</p>	 <p>color.federal-blue.100 #D9E8F7</p> <p>vs wit · 1.25:1 · fail</p>	 <p>color.federal-blue.200 #B0CCEB</p> <p>vs wit · 1.66:1 · fail</p>	 <p>color.federal-blue.300 #739ED4</p> <p>vs wit · 2.77:1 · fail</p>
 <p>color.federal-blue.400 #3669B0</p> <p>vs wit · 5.52:1 · AA</p>	 <p>color.federal-blue.500 #0F458F</p> <p>vs wit · 9.26:1 · AAA</p>	 <p>color.federal-blue.600 #0A3878</p> <p>vs wit · 11.35:1 · AAA</p>	 <p>color.federal-blue.700 #052B5E</p> <p>vs wit · 13.87:1 · AAA</p>
			

**color.federal-
blue.800**

#031F45

vs wit · 16.33:1 ·
AAA

**color.federal-
blue.900**

#03122E

vs wit · 18.59:1 ·
AAA

Semantische rollen



color.feedback.

500

#1A8C52



color.feedback.

500

#DB9C12



color.feedback.

500

#C70F2E



color.feedback.

500

#0F458F



color.feedback.

#1A8C52



color.feedback.

#DB9C12



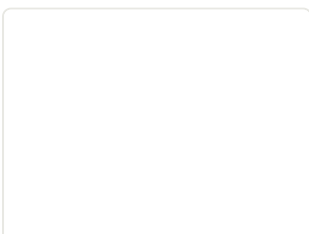
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#C70F2E



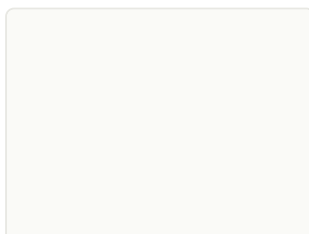
color.feedback.

#0F458F



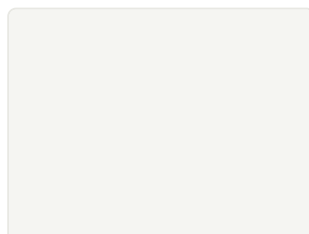
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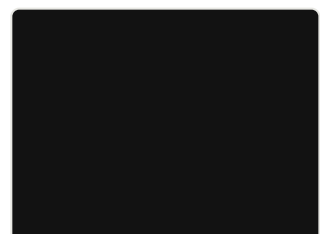
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color.backgrou

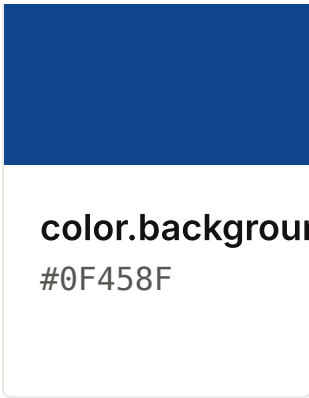
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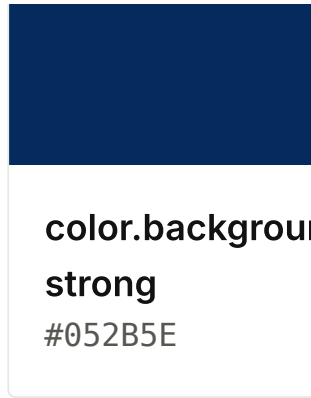
color.backgrou

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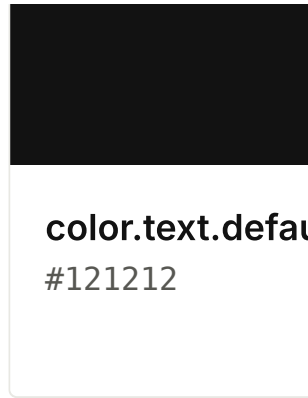




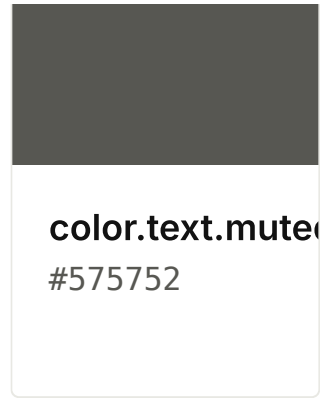
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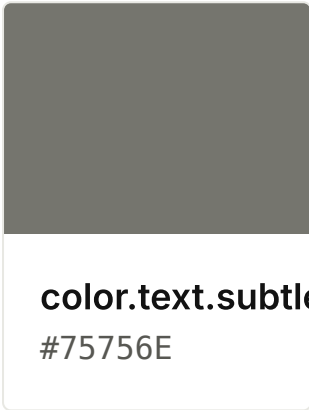
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strong**
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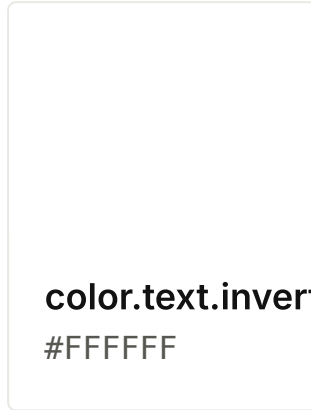
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#121212



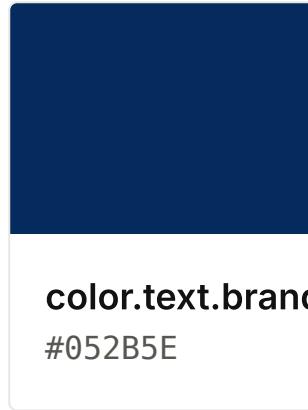
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#575752



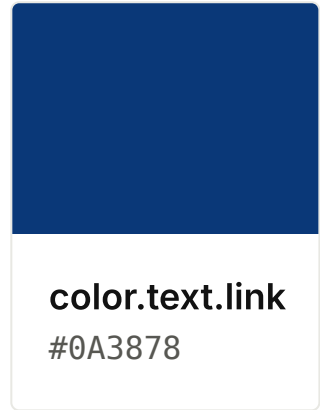
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#75756E



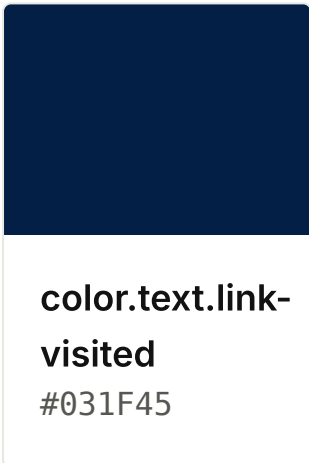
color.text.invert
#FFFFFF



color.text.brand
#052B5E



color.text.link
#0A3878



**color.text.link-
visited**
#031F45

STANDARDS

Typography

Typografie wordt gedefinieerd als roles in de alias-laag. Elke role kan per script (Latijns, Cyrillisch, Arabisch, CJK) een fallback-stack hebben.

Type-specimens

`typography.display`

Federaal Belgische merkarchitectuur — AaBbCc 0123 ξφψ Москва

`typography.heading-1`

Federaal Belgische merkarchitectuur — AaBbCc 0123 ξφψ Москва

`typography.heading-2`

Federaal Belgische merkarchitectuur — AaBbCc 0123 ξφψ Москва

`typography.heading-3`

Federaal Belgische merkarchitectuur — AaBbCc 0123 ξφψ Москва

`typography.heading-4`

Federaal Belgische merkarchitectuur — AaBbCc 0123 ξφψ Москва

`typography.body`

Federaal Belgische merkarchitectuur — AaBbCc 0123 ξφψ Москва

`typography.body-sm`

Federaal Belgische merkarchitectuur — AaBbCc 0123 ξφψ Москва

`typography.caption`

Federaal Belgische merkarchitectuur — AaBbCc 0123 ξφψ Москва

`typography.eyebrow`

Federaal Belgische merkarchitectuur — AaBbCc 0123 ξφψ Москва

STANDARDS

Logo usage

Logo usage

The federal logo has three components: the **mark** (the symbol), the **wordmark** (the typeset name) and the **lockup** (the assembly of mark + wordmark + optional institution name).

Clear-space

A free zone equal to at least the height of the mark (X) applies around the logo. No other text, image or graphic element may be placed in that zone.

Minimum size

Medium	Minimum width
Digital screen	96 px
A4 print	18 mm
Business card	12 mm
Favicon	32 × 32 px

Below these sizes, only the **mark** is used, not the full lockup.

Co-branding

When the federal logo appears next to another logo (institution, campaign partner, international cooperation), the following rules apply:

- the federal logo is placed **on the left**, or **above** in vertical compositions;
- the separation between the two logos is a thin vertical line (1 px on screen, 0.5 pt in print);
- both logos share the same **optical height** (not necessarily the same physical height — the mark is balanced visually).

Do and don't

Do	Don't
Place the logo on a plain background	Logo over a busy photograph
Use the official colour version (blue or white)	Fabricate your own colour versions
Use the lockup as a whole	Move mark and wordmark separately
Respect the minimum size	Reduce the logo to illegibility
Preserve clear-space	Place text within the X zone

STANDARDS

Accessibility

Accessibility is not optional

The federal brand system meets at least **WCAG 2.1 level AA**, in line with the Belgian Accessibility Decree and EU directive 2016/2102. Where feasible, we aim for AAA.

Contrast

Contrast between text and background is enforced at the token level, not at the component level. Specifically:

- Body text (`color.text.default` on `color.background.default`): contrast ratio $\geq 7:1$ (AAA).
- Secondary text (`color.text.muted`): $\geq 4.5:1$ (AA).
- Text on coloured backgrounds (buttons, banners): the pipeline rejects combinations that do not meet AA — a merge blocker in CI.

Keyboard navigation and focus

Every interactive element has a visible focus indicator (`color.border.focus` with at least 2 px border width). Tab order follows reading order.

Multilingualism and script support

The specifications explicitly require Latin, Cyrillic, Arabic, Greek, Japanese and Chinese support. Typography tokens define a fallback stack per script:

- `font.family.primary` for Latin, Cyrillic and Greek (Inter)
- `font.family.arabic` for Arabic (Noto Sans Arabic)
- `font.family.cjk` for Japanese and Chinese (Noto Sans CJK)

The render pipeline automatically chooses the right stack based on the `lang` attribute.

Validation

WCAG checks run automatically in CI. A new or changed token that breaks the contrast rule blocks the merge until it complies or is explicitly marked as an exception by the Chancellery.

STANDARDS

Co-branding

Co-branding

When the federal brand appears alongside another brand — a Flemish or Walloon partner, a European institution, a private campaign partner — the rules below apply.

Hierarchy

The federal brand is **always on the left or above** in a lockup. The system thereby confirms that federal responsibility carries the communication, even when executed with a partner.

Visual separation

Between the two brands runs a thin **separator line**:

- digital: 1 px in `color.border.default`
- print: 0.5 pt
- audiovisual: 2 px in the final frame

The line prevents visual merging of the two brands.

Optical height

The two logos are not aligned to the same physical height, but to their **optical height**. A logo dominated by a round shape (circle) appears visually smaller than a rectangular wordmark of the same height. The governance layer provides a visual templating tool for this.

Colour interference

When the partner has a strong colour palette, the federal brand is shown **in black or white** to avoid conflict. The tricolour accent disappears in co-branded compositions — otherwise a cacophony of brands emerges.

Specific cases

Some institutions operate in **sensitive sectors** (justice, finance, security) or have a long visual tradition (defence). For them, the full co-brand rule is not enforced; an **affiliation kit** is provided instead (see Defence). The governance cell decides case by case — always motivated, always documented.

INSTITUTIONS

Institutions

Drie integratieniveaus, drie technische overlays. Elk niveau is een keuze, geen oordeel — instellingen kiezen wat past bij hun maturiteit, opdracht en visuele traditie.

Ministry of Defence

Affiliation kit

ministerie · mil.be

Affiliatiekit dekt enkel externe communicatie (campagnes, persberichten, employer branding). Operationeel materieel (voertuigen, uniformen, insignes) valt buiten scope — zoals expliciet vermeld in bestek deel 3 tabel.

FPS Justice

Brand ambassador

FOD · justitie.belgium.be

FPS Chancellery of the Prime Minister

Brand ambassador

FOD · kanselarij.belgium.be

FPS Public Health

Brand ambassador

FOD · volksgezondheid.belgium.be

workfor.be

Flexible integration

platform · werkenvoor.be

Strategie: hybridiseren