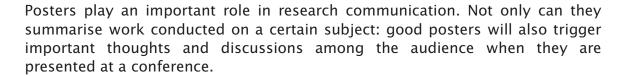
# Creating an NCCR North-South Poster

### Guidelines

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But how can a poster catch the attention of the public in the first place?

The aim of this brief handbook is to facilitate the preparation of attractive and informative posters. Furthermore, these guidelines provide information about formal requirements for posters that should follow the NCCR North-South Corporate Design.

#### Why a consistent design?

There are countless ways of designing a poster and every subject requires a different application of these options. Therefore it is neither possible nor desirable to standardise a poster design as a whole. However, consistent use and specific adoption of certain formal elements are essential to integrate posters into the framework of the NCCR North-South Corporate Design and Corporate Identity. By unifying all design aspects in a standardised and powerful appearance, the NCCR North-South Corporate Design fulfils an important function: it triggers recognition of a common NCCR North-South identity. This is of great importance for both external and internal purposes. Integrating your poster into this layout framework will make it clear to everyone that your research was carried out within a research programme with an international scope. Your project will be given more "weight" through this corporate identity.

# Formal requirements of the NCCR North-South Corporate Design

**Poster size:** Preferably A1, 60 x 84 cm

(this can be downsized to A4 format)

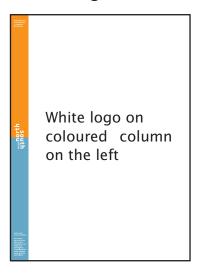
Font: Lucida Sans STD

**Line spacing:** At least 3 pt. more than font size



Choose a font size that will allow you to distribute A4 copies of your poster to the people who come and look at it (handouts).

#### Basic design:



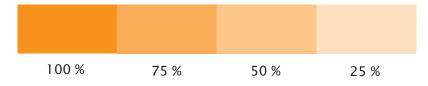
#### **Basic Design Colors:**

Orange Office: RGB: R=100% G=65% B=25%

Print: Pantone 144

CMYK: C=0% M=50% Y=100% K=0%

Screen: RGB: R = 250 G=129 B=8

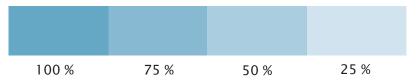


Blue Office: RGB: R=50% G=72% B=80%

Print: Pantone 550

CMYK: C=45% M=0% Y=0% K=25%

Screen: RGB: R=147 G=178 B=185



#### Layout

Unlike other publications, posters are not meant to be read but rather to be browsed through rapidly. Only if certain elements catch the attention of the viewer, will contents be read more thoroughly, allowing discussions to arise.





Do not overload your poster! The objective of a poster is not to deliver as much information as possible on the small space available: instead, choose the layout, the structure and the elements with a view to having an immediate visual impact on the people who will be your audience.

Catching the eye of a specific audience is not the only design criterion: remember that each theme will make different demands on the design. A universally valid formula for poster design does not exist and the layout of individual posters should be carefully adjusted to the requirements of the audience, the content and the message one wants to convey.



Note that an academic audience may have completely different expectations from development and policy experts. It is vital that you adapt your poster to these expectations.

#### Structure

The poster's structure is an important design element, as it significantly affects the readability and the impact of the poster on the viewer. As the various structure types accentuate the elements of a poster in different ways, it is worthwhile thinking through structure options carefully, especially as redesigning the structure of a poster is very time consuming. This will allow you to identify the structure that best meets the individual requirements of the subject treated in the poster.

#### The two-column poster

Posters in two columns are very reader friendly, especially when they contain little flowtext (approx. 1000 characters) but a lot of other elements such as bulleted lists figures or tables. Indeed, the two-column structure provides a sense of order that is simple to follow and does not distract from the content. This allows the designer to focus the viewer's attention on the subject.



#### The three-column poster

A three-column structure is particularly suitable for posters that contain a relatively large amount of text (approx. 1500 characters). The optical division of the text into smaller parts will increase the willingness of the public to also read longer texts. But bear in mind that more columns also mean more (and narrower!) rows. The movement of the eye will therefore be interrupted more often, which significantly reduces the readability of the text and overall poster, and puts a strain on the viewer's absorbing capacity.



#### The vertically divided poster



This reader-friendly configuration is an adequate structure if figures are used that fill up the whole width of the poster.

It also supports the popular "sandwich layout", in which pictures and text are arranged alternately.





Furthermore, this structure will allow you to make clear divisions between individual parts and display them as independent components.

#### **Colours**

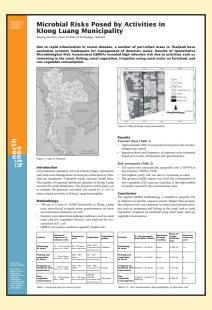
The use of colours strongly determines the ability to catch the audience's attention.

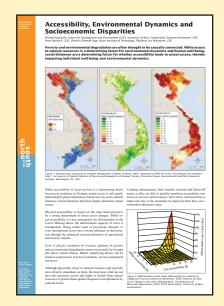


Black and white illustrations should be avoided if possible.

Test this yourself:

Quite spontaneously, which of the two posters would you rather read?





However, it is also important to choose colours wisely, as a very colourful design will not necessarily result in a more attractive poster. Rather than overloading your poster with different colours, it is advisable to decide on a harmonizing colour concept that is applied in illustrations and to highlight important elements. The readability of the poster and the adequateness of the contrast between colours should be considered at all times. You should also bear in mind that colours might have a different shade when printed out. (Each printer has its own "calibration"!) If you have the opportunity to do so, test-print colours before you decide on their use.

#### **Poster elements**

NCCR North-South posters should contain the following elements:

- Title
- Authors, Institutions, JACS
- Lead Text
- Main Text
- Illustrations

# 

#### Title

Max. 70 characters (incl. spaces)

The font size (min. 75 pt) and prominent position make the title one of the most noticed and most important elements on a poster. A careful choice of wording for the title is therefore of major importance: The title should not only indicate what the poster is about in very few words: it should also hint at, why it is worthwhile to continue reading. However, the max. length of 70 characters for the title will require condensing the contents to a core message. It might also be useful to test various versions of the title on several readers, asking them to say whether they would read a posterwith such a title if they were to come across it by chance at a conference.

## Authors, Institutions, JACS

Max. 70 characters (incl. spaces)

Immediately under the title, the authors, institutions and JACS must be listed in italics. Do not exceed 70 characters.

#### **Lead Text**

Max. 350 characters (incl. spaces)

A lead is a strongly shortened abstract; it can be compared with the first paragraph in a newspaper article. The lead should clarify and specify what is hinted at by the title and offer a short intro-duction to the most important aspects of the subject. With a maximum of 350 characters, it is only a small text element; but it is a vital one, as its function is to keep the passer-by from moving on and not reading your poster.

#### **Text**

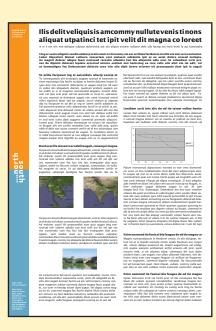
Maximum 1500 characters (incl. spaces)

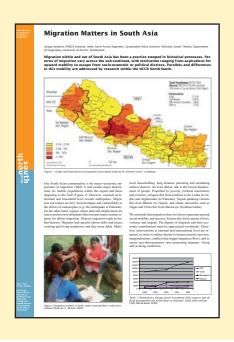
As you only have a maximum of 1500 characters for this part, choose to describe just the most important and most meaningful aspects and results. Please note that the font size should be at least 35 pt and that enough free space should be left around the text. In order not to overwhelm the viewer with a large amount of flow text, it is also advisable to use structural elements such as subtitles or bulleted lists. Titles optically divide the text into manageable pieces for the viewer's eye, making selective reading of those parts that are of interest to them possible.



Generally, use text sparingly: try to limit the amount to 50% of the overall space. Think of displaying contents in alternative ways such as illustrations, tables, small boxes with key messages, etc. Only the most important contents that cannot be displayed differently should appear as a continuous text.

Compare the two posters below: At first glance, which one do you find more attractive?





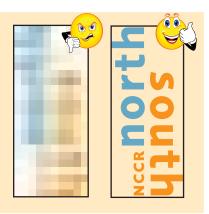
#### Illustrations and tables

2-4 figures or 1-2 figures + 1 table

Figures and diagrams play an important role in catching the audience's attention. Well-chosen illustrations can contribute significantly to the success of a poster. But please note that the large size of posters requires very high resolution (300 dpi) for photos and other bitmapped material.



It is extremely important to make sure your photos, logos and other bitmaps are at least 300 dpi at the size you need for your poster (i.e. very large!). Lower resolution leads to fuzzy-looking figures with hundreds of little squares that impair the overall "reading" of the image.



Bear in mind that the original size of the figures must be approximately  $210 \times 300 \text{ mm}$  for portait format and for  $445 \times 300 \text{ mm}$  for landscape format. Anything below this will strongly compromise the quality of the picture when the poster is printed.







If you change the size of figures, make sure you maintain the correct proportions: Do not stretch or squeeze any figures!



In addition to these purely technical aspects, it is necessary to be aware of the importance of the contents of photos, graphs, diagrams, etc. Do not use them as simple "space-fillers": they should be chosen as essential meaning-bearing components of the poster. Only if the figures and tables support and strengthen the message of the poster will they be an integral part of a coherent poster.

Furthermore it is important to make sure that all illustrations are completely self-explanatory and do not require additional information. This is especially the case for graphs. All axes and units must be labelled correctly and the legend has to be displayed visibly. For diagrams and schemes, the rule is: "the simpler the better" (because the more readable).

Finally, if you need to add your institution's logo, please make sure you use it correcty. Institutions usually have clear rules regulating the use of their logos and corporate identity.

#### Captions, sources and copyright

All illustrations and tables require a caption: try to keep your comments brief. In addition, each illustration and table needs a correct credit or source.

If you use someone else's material, remember to inquire beforehand whether you have the right to use it. This is not only a matter of courtesy: using material without acknowledging sources might get you into legal trouble because of copyright laws. It is your responsibility as an author to secure copyrigh for other people's material, be it text, illustrations or tables.

Should it not be possible for you to design a poster that meets the requirements of the NCCR North-South, the MC will be pleased to advise you. In this case, please write yourself to nccr-north-south@cde.unibe.ch

All examples used in these guidelines can be found in the pre-conference proceedings of the ICRD 2008. You can download this file from the following link: www.nccr-north-south.unibe.ch/publications/Infosystem/Online%20Dokumente/Upload/ICRD2008\_Conference\_Reader\_def3\_screen.pdf

InDesign templates for the different poster structures can be downloaded from www.nccr-north-south.unibe.ch under "other Documents and Media" and the search criterion "poster template".

For further ideas about successful design and use of posters, the NCCR North-South Management Centre recommends the following open access paper:

**Erren TC, Bourne PE.** 2007. Ten simple rules for a good poster presentation. *PLoS Computation Biology* 3(5):0777-0778.

Available at: http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=1876493 &blobtype=pdf.

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