

NL Branding Expo & Venue dressing concept

Version 1.0 - June 2021



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1. Introduction

1. Introduction

Deciding on the right style for your venue dressing has never been so easy!

This document describes how the NL brand translates to a physical space, **for example at expo stands, events and in TV studio's**. It describes and shows our language of form, explains our design rationale, and offers inspiration.

The heart of this document is formed by **a catalogue of building blocks**. It is from those building blocks, that you can pick and choose and make endless combinations, all while giving your venue the right style of dress, whatever the theme or occasion.

Why?

- It **saves you time** on the design process
- It contributes to a **professional** visual presentation of our nation brand
- It adds to a **clear** and **recognisable** image of NL
- It makes individual buildingblocks multi-deployable and thus more **sustainable**
- it ensures that we communicate in the right way, true to our core values: **open, inventive and inclusive**.

2. When to use this NL expo & venue dressing concept

The NL Expo & Venue Dressing Concept as described in this guide should be used when:

- You speak on behalf of the Netherlands as a nation (“We, the Netherlands”, public-private representation)
- You speak to an international audience
- Activities are in the context of: ‘Solving global challenges together’
- Activities do not concern sensitive political issues or form a risk under a ministry’s areas of responsibility.

For purely private parties, the same criteria apply. However, they need prior consent before using the NL style. In the event of a concrete project involving central government, this consent is taken as given. In any other instances, a license must be obtained. Please see: www.nlplatform.nl/visual-identity.

Additional information can be found in:

- [The NL Brand Guide](#)
- [The NL Brand Architecture manual](#)

For further questions, please contact the NL Branding Team at the Netherlands Enterprise Agency at info@nlbranding.nl.

3. The importance of the right key message

Before you start your design process -albeit for an expo stand, event or any other communication touch point for that matter-, it is important to formulate the key message that you want to bring across with your activity. As you speak on behalf of the Netherlands, it needs to be aligned with our key philosophy 'Solving global challenges together' and we ask you to be mindful that any 'we' or 'our' in your story refers to 'the Netherlands'.

The key message determines the configuration of your expo stand or venue dressing: all content (headlines, stories, actual products, participating companies) should be there, to substantiate your key message.

That means you can stage participating companies as showcases, frontrunners or partners. But please be mindful that they can never be mistaken as the sender. Therefore, be wise and subtle when placing logo's. To help you find the right balance, you will find examples in this guideline.

Solving global challenges together

The Netherlands philosophy is to solve global challenges together. Join us!

2. The concept

Modular

The NL expo & venue dressing concept offers **endless configurations** because of its **modular nature**. By mixing and matching the building blocks from this catalogue, you can create any NL branded environment: from a **playful** lay out to a more **formal** configuration. Also, the same building blocks can be used and reused in other configurations, adding to the **versatility** and **sustainability** of the concept.

By building your environment from loose blocks that all have different functions, your visitor can choose their own path and their own way of interacting with the Netherlands, which is true to our core values: open, inventive and inclusive.

loured blocks, but do ask to limit yourself to choosing two or three colours maximum (orange always being one). To add to the colour blocking effect, it is allowed to now and then play with the sides of a block, giving it an orange (and orange only) framing. Avoid doing this too much though: **less is more**.

To help you find the right balance, we've added some mock ups for inspiration.

→ [Examples in mock ups and on page 22 and 23.](#)

Chunky

The style can be best described as **chunky, bold, boxy and colourful**. The building blocks are solid and robust and will stand out because of its simplicity in both form and colour. But most importantly: they add **character** to any event.

Colour blocking

In a way, the concept is **the embodiment of colour blocking** as we carry out each block in one of the NL brand colours (orange, white or a secondary colour). You can mix different co-

The expo stand as an exhibition

→ Example on page 14.

An important rationale for the design of NL expo stands, is based on the belief that an effective brand experience is both **fun and functional**. Therefore, we treat the ideal expo stand as an exhibition: **by using a mix of storytelling, interactive elements and a inventive lay out, we create an immersive and memorable NL brand experience**, in where we stage participating companies as showcases, experts, frontrunners or partners.

That means that in principle, participating organisations do not participate with their own branding materials, but merge in with the story that we together, as the Netherlands, are here to tell. This way, they participate in an exhibition, rather than renting their own square meters. The result is that the Netherlands introduces visitors to the companies instead of the companies explaining themselves. Not only will this add to the credibility of the companies, we also create an emotional connection, a more powerful and visible impact and thus, **bigger exposure for all participating companies**.

In those situations where the representation of the Netherlands arises from the individual participation of Dutch companies, standing together in close proximity, the communal area can be decorated with the NL Expo & Venue Dressing concept in this guide, dubbed the NL Lounge. All companies surrounding the NL Lounge will present themselves with their own branded material, but ideally indicate they are in connection with the NL Lounge by placing the NL sticker.

Alternative: the NL lounge

→ Example on page 18.

3. Inspiration

Mock up Extra Small (appr. 8m²) - also for studio set up

This set up serves as an inspiration for a small event, studio set up or even to decorate your waiting room. No specific theme or sector has been chosen, so the decor items can be used for various occasions and locations.

Design rationale:

We used only two blocks with various heights to form the background of the set up. Instead of working with just one wall, we choose to work with several blocks, to create depth and a playful setting. We chose 3 colours maximum, to keep it bold and versatile (suitable for various themes and occasions), yet easy on the eye for the viewer or visitor.

Tips for studio's specifically:

Experiment with the layout, by literally looking through the lens, checking both full shots as well as head shots.

As for furniture, this depends on the type of show you are hosting. Please refer to the furniture-page for inspiration.

Buildingblocks used:

- Abri
- Display block
- Storywall
- 3D NL letters



**Mock up Medium
(appr. 25m²)**
This set up serves as an inspiration for a medium expo stand (appr. 10-20m²). The creative industries have been used as an example.

Design rationale:
We are free to choose secondary colours, as this stand is not aligned with an existing NL campaign. The type of industry allows more bold colours to be used. We limited ourselves however, to 3 colours only, so it doesn't become too much.

The objective is always to create an open and inviting space, with hardly any boundaries to enter the stand.

The layout is playful, so visitors can explore and discover stories while on the stand. This way, we create a brand experience, befitting our core values: open, inventive, inclusive.

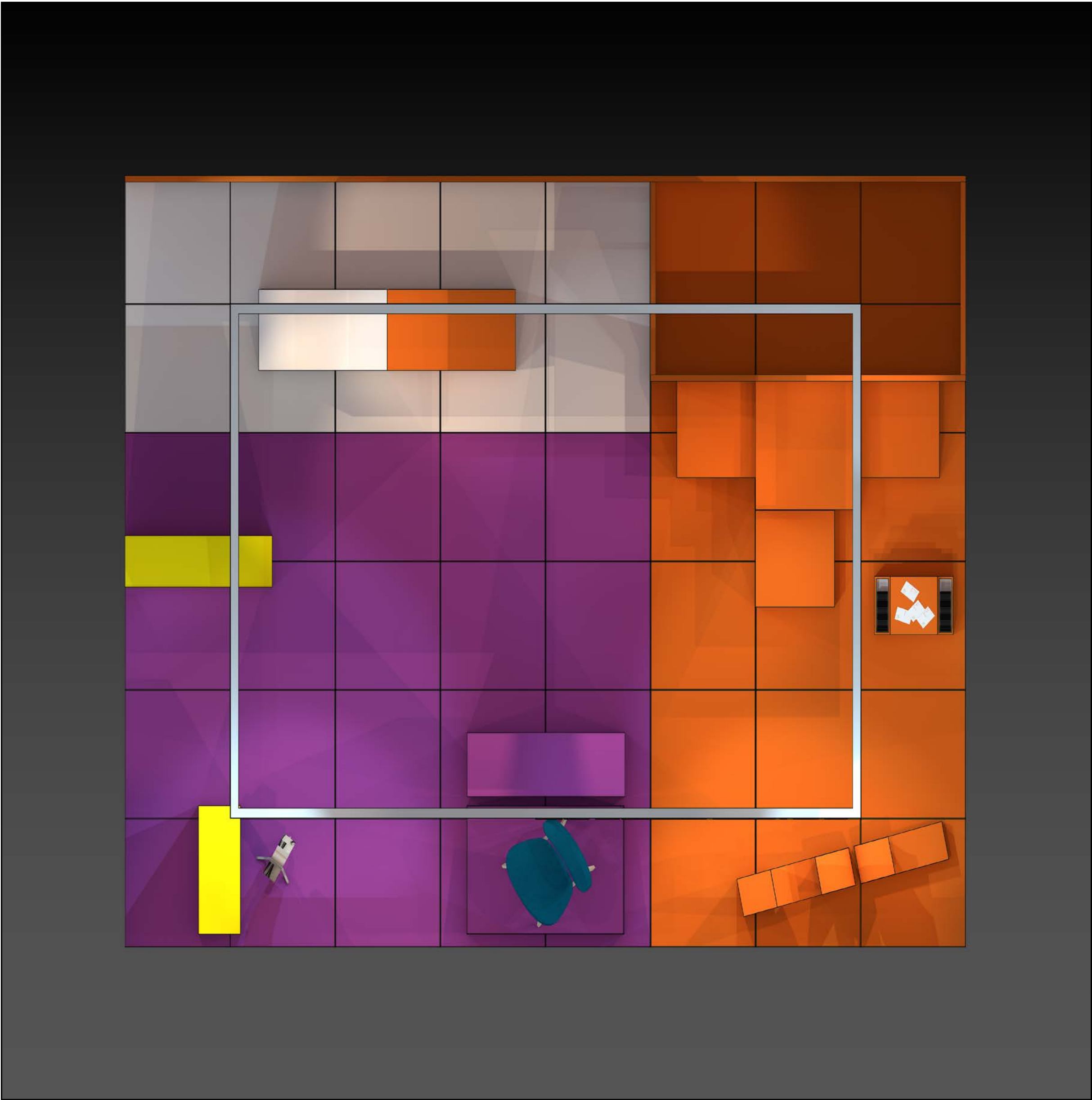
The first things you see are the eyecatcher with key message and the showcases, to attract visitors. The information desk is placed at the back, so we don't scare off people (following retail principles).

→ continue on next page



Buildingblocks used:

- NL eyecatcher (communicating the key message in a catchy relevant phrase, aligned with the international positioning strategy ‘Solving global challenges together’)
- NL 3D letters (orange, always)
- 1 presentation wall (orange)
- 1 Conversation rock (orange)
- 3 Abri displays (yellow, purple) to explain our message and showcase stories of private organisations.
- 1 display block with actual product (purple)
- Information desk (white)



Mock up Large
(appr. 50m²)

This set up serves as an inspiration for a medium expo stand (appr. 30-40m²). The maritime sector has been used as an example.

Design rationale:

In this case, we have to commit to predefined secondary colours, as this stand is in line with the existing NL campaign “The Maritime Future is NOW”. Hence the colours, strategically placed stickers and headlines.

The objective is always to create an open and inviting space, with hardly any boundaries to enter the stand. The layout is more formal, befitting the target group. However, visitors can still explore and discover stories while walking around on the stand.

This way, we create a brand experience, according to our core values: open, inventive, inclusive.

The first things you see are the eyecatcher with key message and the four showcases, to attract visitors. In the middle, a small lounge has been set up. The information desk is placed at the back, so we don’t scare off people (following retail principles).

Exhibiting partners can be presented as showcases within the stand.

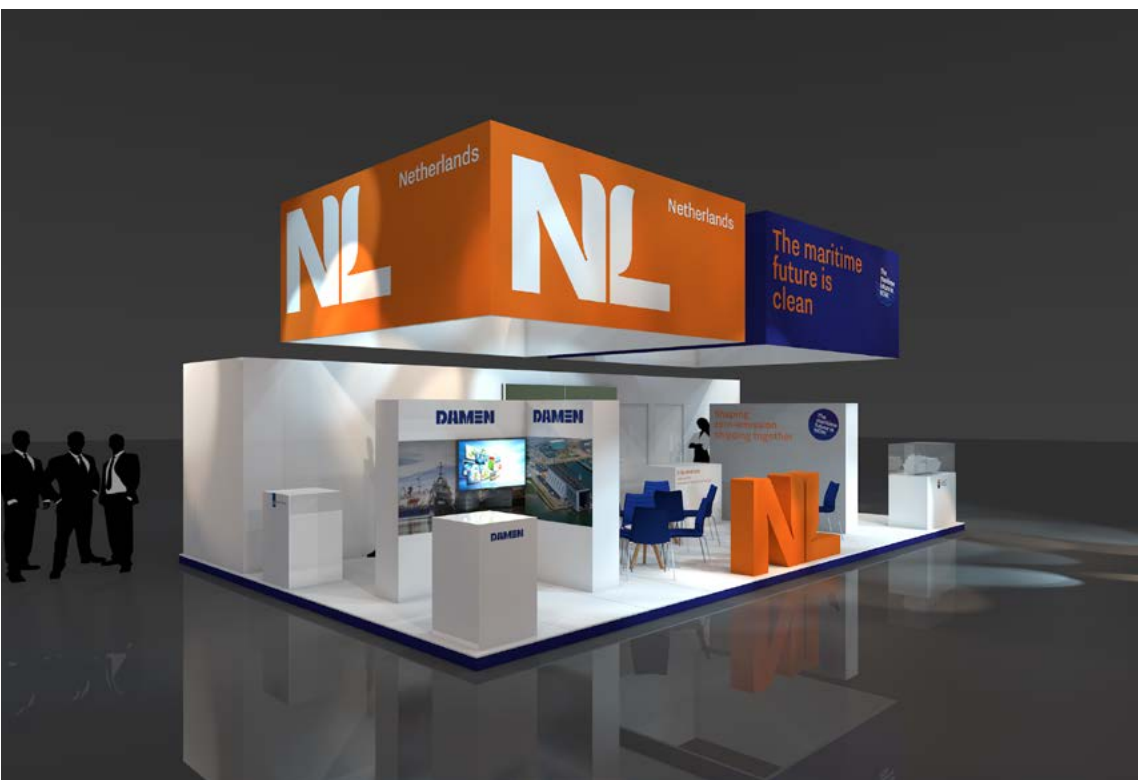
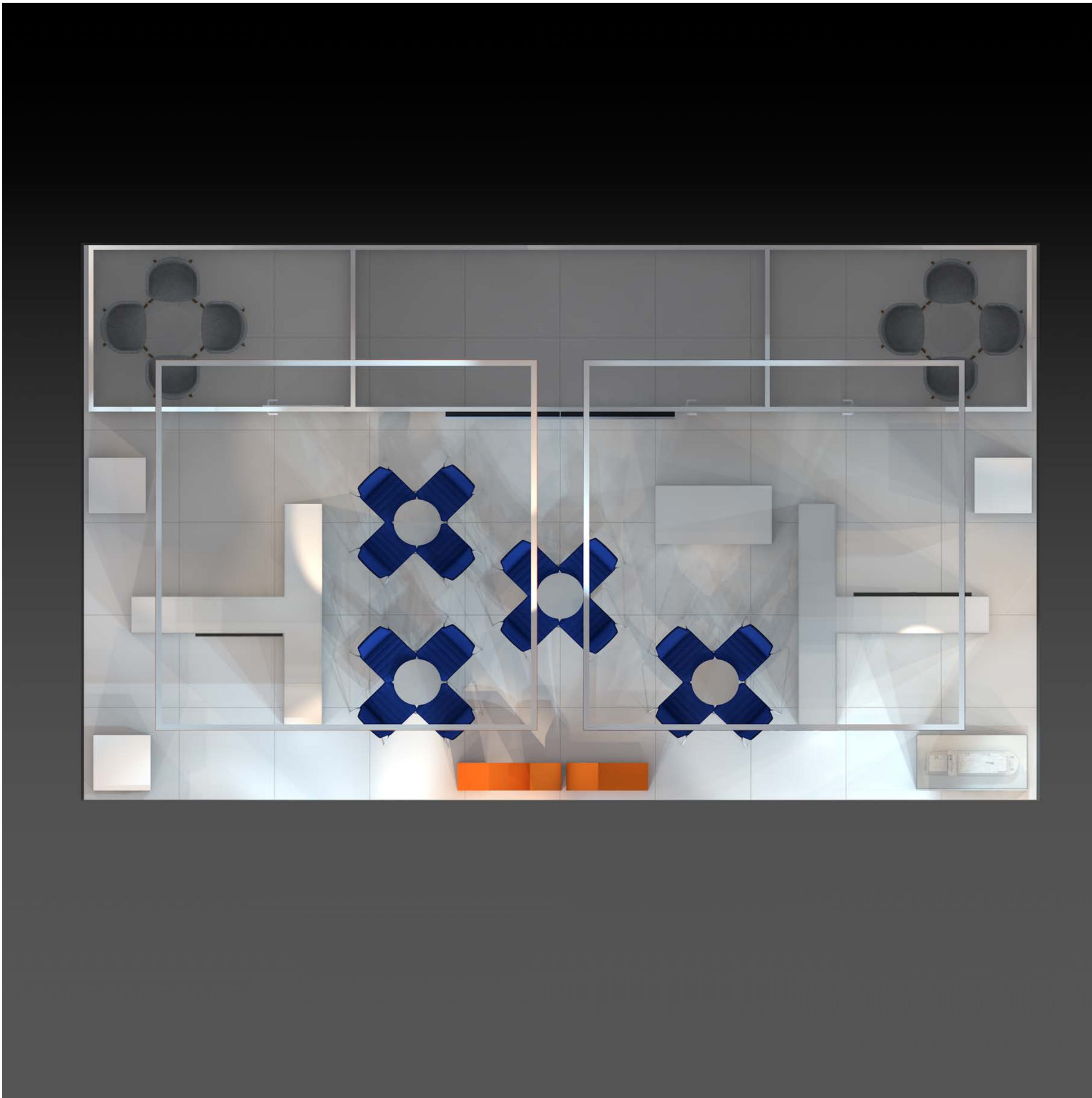
→ continue on next page



More images of this set up can be received upon request.

Buildingblocks used:

- 2 NL eyecatchers (communicating the key message aligned with the relevant campaign)
- NL 3D letters (orange, always)
- 1 video wall
- 2 story walls to showcase stories of private organisations (one including a video)
- 1 messagboard or polling station
- 2 display blocks with actual product (white)
- Information desk (white)
- 1 Storage and 2 meeting rooms
- Seating area



Mock up Extra Large (appr. 250m²)

This set up serves as an inspiration for a extra large expo stand (appr. 100-150m²). The agri food sector has been used as an example.

Design rationale:

We have to commit to predefined secondary colours, as this stand is in line with the existing NL campaign “Farming the Future”. Hence the colours, strategically placed stickers and headlines.

This many square meters, gives us the opportunity to break with the traditional way of designing an expo stand. Therefore, we treated this stand as an exhibition: by using a mix of storytelling, interactive elements and a inventive lay out, we create an immersive and memorable NL environment. Because of the variation, we keep visitors engaged and eager to discover more. This creates an emotional connection, a more powerful impact and better exposure for all participants.

The objective is always to create an open and inviting space, with hardly any boundaries to enter the stand. With a stand this size, we need to take into account routing. Therefore, the visitor’s journey can start on all sides, and eventually will end in the heart of the stand, at the seating area with coffee, for meaningful interaction.

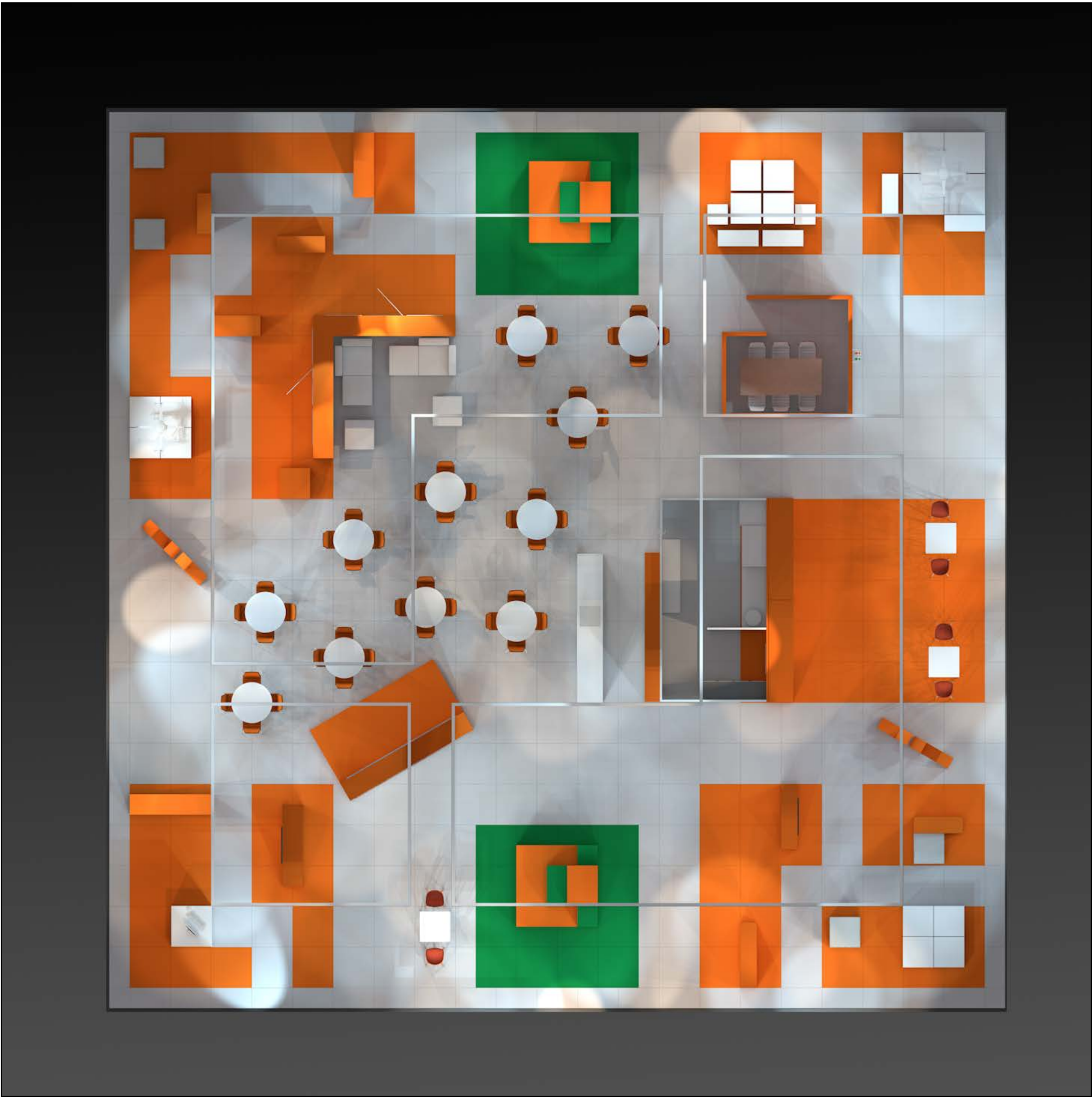


More images of this set up can received upon request.

The first things you see are the eyecatcher with key message and the showcases, that form the substance of our key message, to attract visitors. Also, the event area is placed centrally: it is not just the big screen that catches your eye while playing relevant filmclips, as soon as an event takes place, no visitor can miss it due to its central location on the stand.

Buildingblocks used:

- All buildingblocks in a playful mix.
- For every participant, the ideal and relevant buildingblock has been chosen to tell their story (substantiating the overall message); this can be an abri display, display block with actual product, video, one of the stories in an exhibition wall etc.



Mock up NL Lounge

The NL Lounge is the communal area in the middle of Dutch participants. The set up on the right serves as an inspiration. Depending on size, you can pick and choose elements.

Design rationale:

- The communal part of the Dutch participants' area is called the NL Lounge. It offers things like coffee, a presentation area, meeting rooms, and seating area.
- Individual companies are situated around the NL Lounge, in their own corporate identity. They use their own branding materials to decorate their rented square meters.
- The NL Lounge is designed in basic NL colours and theme. Unless it is to activate an NL campaign, in that case you use the colours and theme of said campaign.
- Individual companies ideally indicate by means of the NL Sticker*, that they are part of the Dutch area and their visitors can make use of the NL Lounge.
- Optional: NL Branded elements like displayblocks and wayfinding can be dotted around the Dutch participant's area.

→ continue on next page

* or relevant campaign sticker.



More images of this set up can be received upon request.

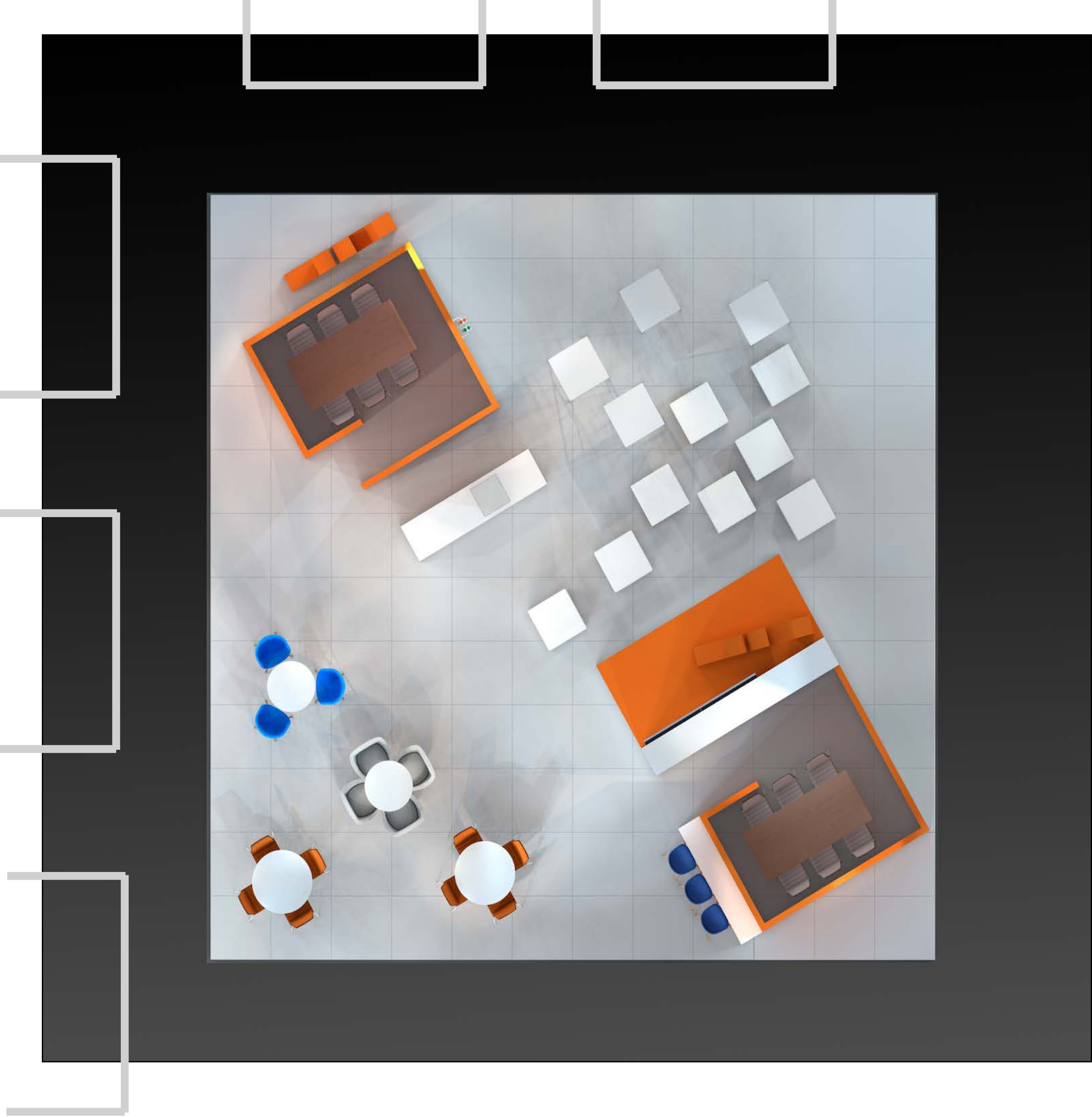
For Dutch participants area:
Participants can place sticker* on their own stand, to show their connection.



Optionally, in the Dutch area, NL Branded display blocks and wayfinding can be added here and there.



* or relevant campaign sticker.



4. Catalogue

A1: 3D NL Lettering

3D NL letters are pure branding and can be used to underline sendership, but can also serve a speakers platform or informal info desk.

Consists of:
2 pieces (N and L)

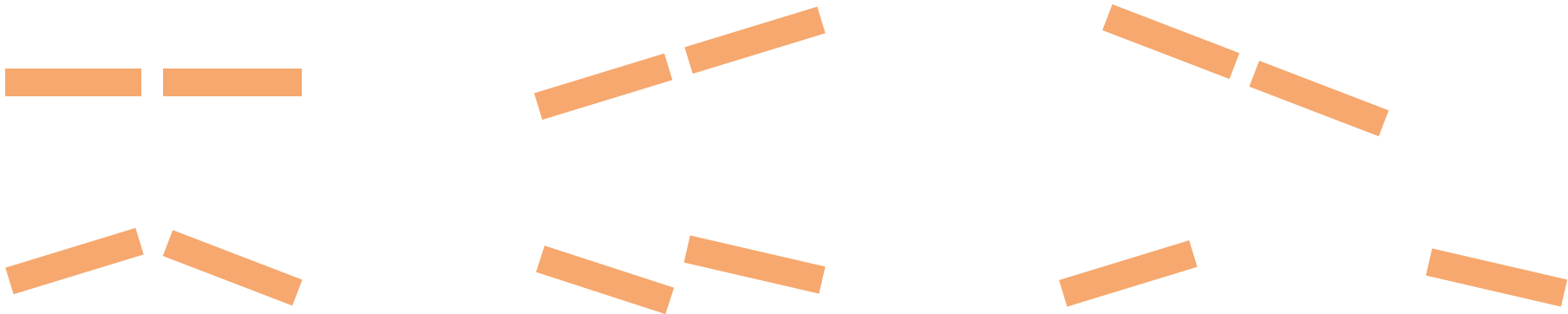
Graphic design:
Exact replica of brand symbol

Suggested position:
In clear view, prominent position. Can be placed playfully, to create a bit of depth. NL letters should form one brand symbol, never place the letters seperately.

Suggested dimensions:
100h x 100w x 40d (cms).



Correct positioning:



Wrong positioning:

A2: NL Eyecatchers

Big boxy eyecatchers hang above the stand with both logo branding and key message.

Consists of:

Number of eyecatchers depend on size of stand

Graphic design:

Left eyecatcher holds logo, right eyecatcher holds key message (and campaign sticker if relevant). Choose orange and one secondary colour to create colour blocking effect.

Suggested position:

In clear view, towering over the stand.

Suggested dimensions:

Appr. 100h x 150w (minimum proportions 1:1.5) with ca. 20cm in between.

NB. When using multiple eye catchers above your stand, the height of these eyecatchers should all be the same



Two eyecatchers in duo tone: one holds logo, the other holds key message (NL logo left)



A3: NL Eyecatchers - in case of truss construction

In the event of a truss construction, this is the way the NL Eyecatchers can be placed.

Consists of:

Number of eyecatchers depend on size of stand. Preferably minimum of two to create colourblocking effect.

Graphic design:

Left eyecatcher holds logo, right eyecatcher holds key message (and campaign sticker if relevant). Choose orange and one secondary colour to create colour blocking effect. Always strive to be bold. Place key message on one side, and logo on the other, to avoid clutter.

Suggested position:

In clear view, towering over the stand.

Suggested dimensions:

Appr. 100h x 150w (minimum proportions 1:1.5) with ca 20 cm in between. NB. When using multiple eye catchers above your stand, the height of these eyecatchers should be the same.



Two eyecatchers in duo tone: one holds logo, the other holds key message (NL logo left)



One eyecatcher: holds both logo and key message.

Category B: Exhibition modules

B1: Storywall

Wall to introduce a (sub) key storyline in text and visuals. To increase interactivity, it is optionally to include ‘doors’ that can be opened to reveal showcases that substantiate the key narrative.

Consists of:
1 or 2 pieces

Graphic design:
Lay out always according to brand guidelines. Design adjustable to story and number of showcases. Can hold logo’s of companies/products on show.

Suggested position:
In combination with a mix of various display blocks.

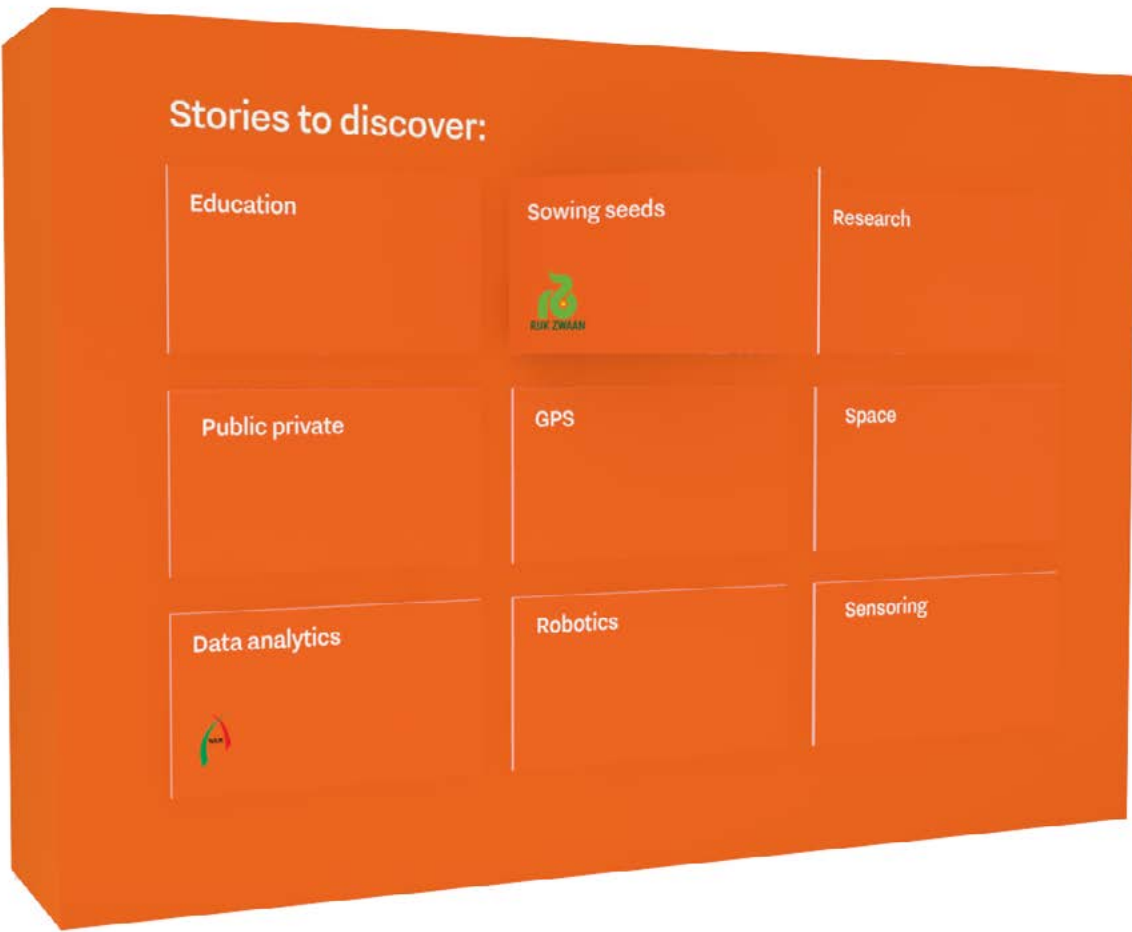
Suggested dimensions:
200h x 300b x 20d (cms).



Lay out example with image + key narrative



Lay out example with image and key headline only



Lay out example with doors that reveal showcases (can hold company’s logo’s)



Seperated abri that holds key narrative, with story wall with doors to reveal showcases.

B2: Abri Display

Block to showcase a single story (for example: a showcase of a participating company).

Consists of:
1 piece

Graphic design:
Can hold text, image or TV screen or even actual product (see clothing example). Lay out according to brand guidelines.

Suggested position:
In combination with a mix of various types of display blocks

Suggested dimensions:
200h x 100b x 18d (cms).



Category B: Exhibition modules

B3: Display Blocks
(w./w.o. glass)

Block to showcase products, with or without glass display. Sizing according to needs, as long as visually chunky. Smallest size is 1:1:1 block.

Consists of:
1 piece w.o glass, 2 pieces w. glass display.

Graphic design:
Can hold NL logo or participant’s logo, or even a short text, as long as it is under a banner like “Showcase:” or “Our partner:” or similar.

Suggested position:
In combination with a mix of various types of display blocks. Blocks can be combined to make an island of blocks, to hold a bigger object.

Suggested dimensions:
Minimum size block 70 x 70 x 70 (cms).



Category C: Event modules

C1: Stage

Your main eyecatcher on the stand (optionally adorned with NL 3D letters) from where a presenter can do a welcome talk or give presentations.

Consists of:

1 piece

Graphic design:

Can hold text and/or image, lay out according to brand guidelines.

Suggested position:

In combination with NL 3D letters and for audience poufs and standing tables for informal setting.

Suggested dimensions:

300hx 400w x 100d (cms)



C2: Stage with 2x2 video

Stage with integrated video and podium as the main eyecatcher on the stand, from where a presenter can do a welcome talk or give presentations. Also, video can show continuous loop of video or slide-show with participating companies.

Consists of:
1 piece with 2x2 screens

Graphic design:
Can hold text and a 2x2 screen top right, preferably with small NL logo to avoid clutter. Lay out according to brand guidelines.

Suggested position:
In combination with poufs and standing tables for informal setting for audience.

Suggested dimensions:
300hx 400w x 100d (cms)



C3: Stage with 3x3 video

Stage with integrated 3x3 video and podium as the main eyecatcher on the stand, from where a presenter can do a welcome talk or give presentations. Also, video can show continuous loop of video or slide-show with participating companies.

Consists of:
1 piece with large 3x3 screens.

Graphic design:
No text, logo can be placed on front of podium.

Suggested position:
In combination with poufs and standing tables for informal setting for audience.

Suggested dimensions:
300hx 400w x 100d (cms)



D1. Messageboard

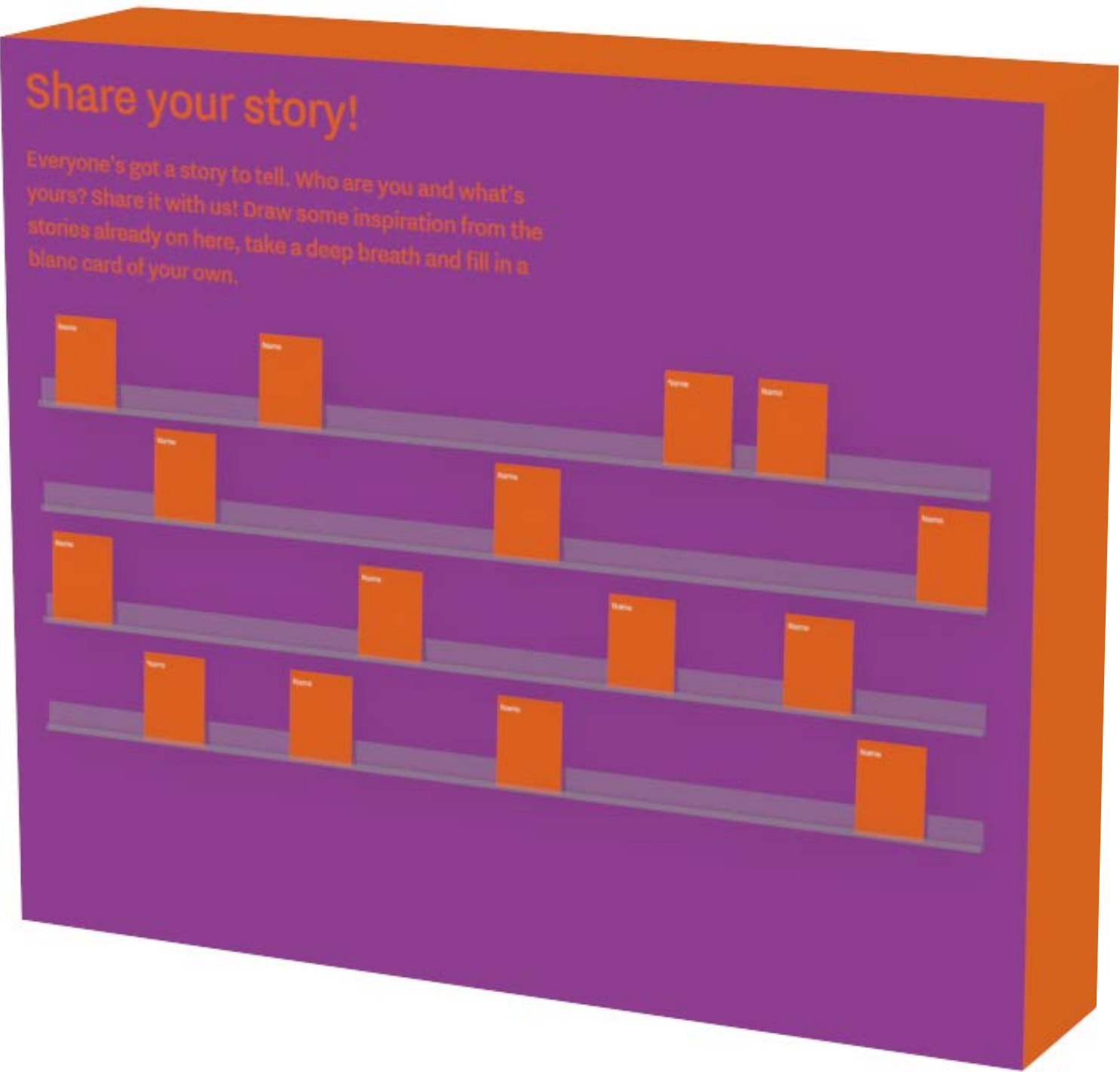
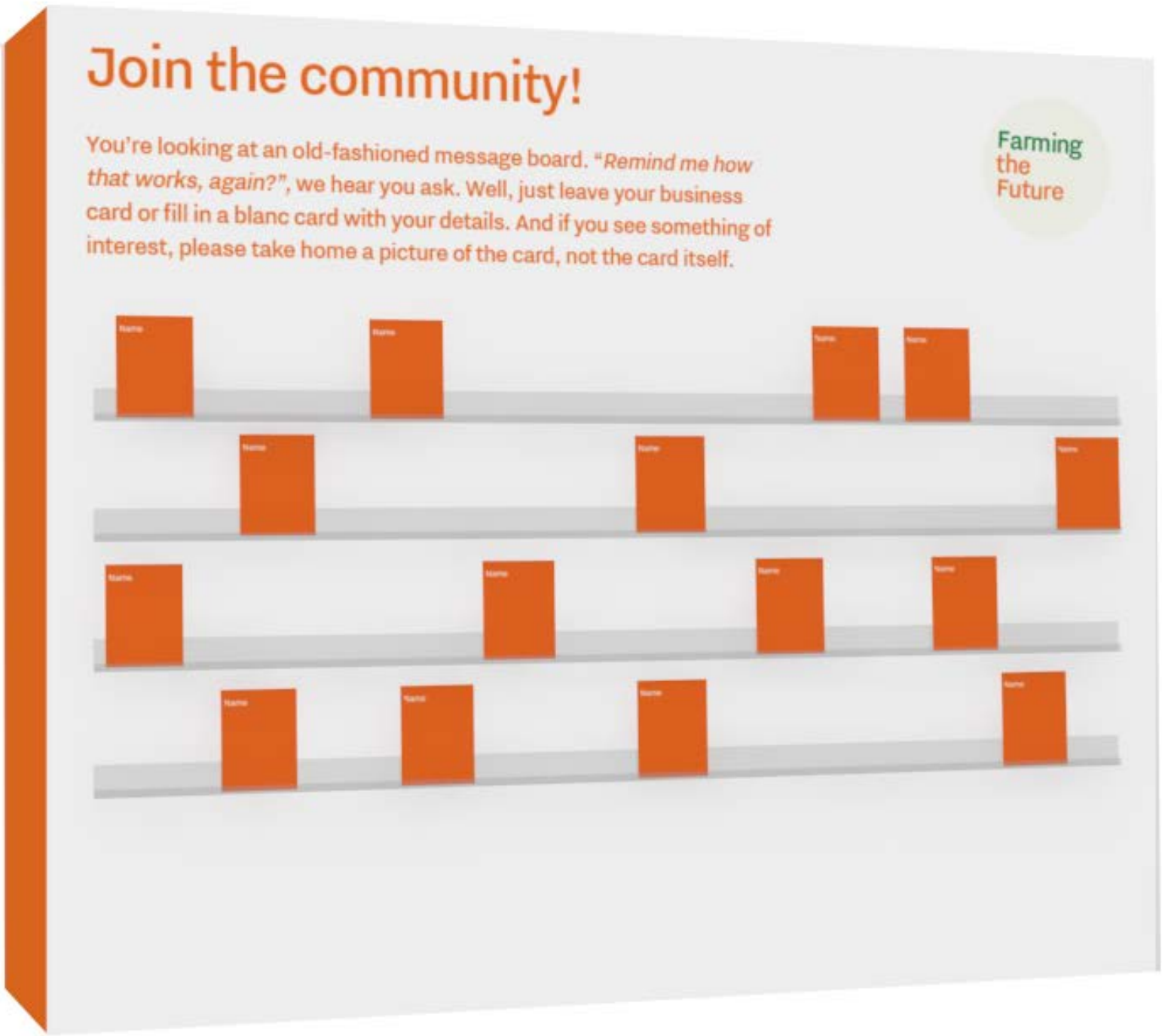
Interactive module that asks visitors to leave behind a message (facilitate in pre-printed cards with short question) or business card for other visitors, so visitors can network on the Netherlands pavillion even beyond their visit.

Consists of:
1 piece

Graphic design:
Defined.

Suggested position:
On the outside of the stand, with easy access, even for visitors just passing by.

Suggested dimensions:
200hx 300w x 30d (cms)



D2. Polling station

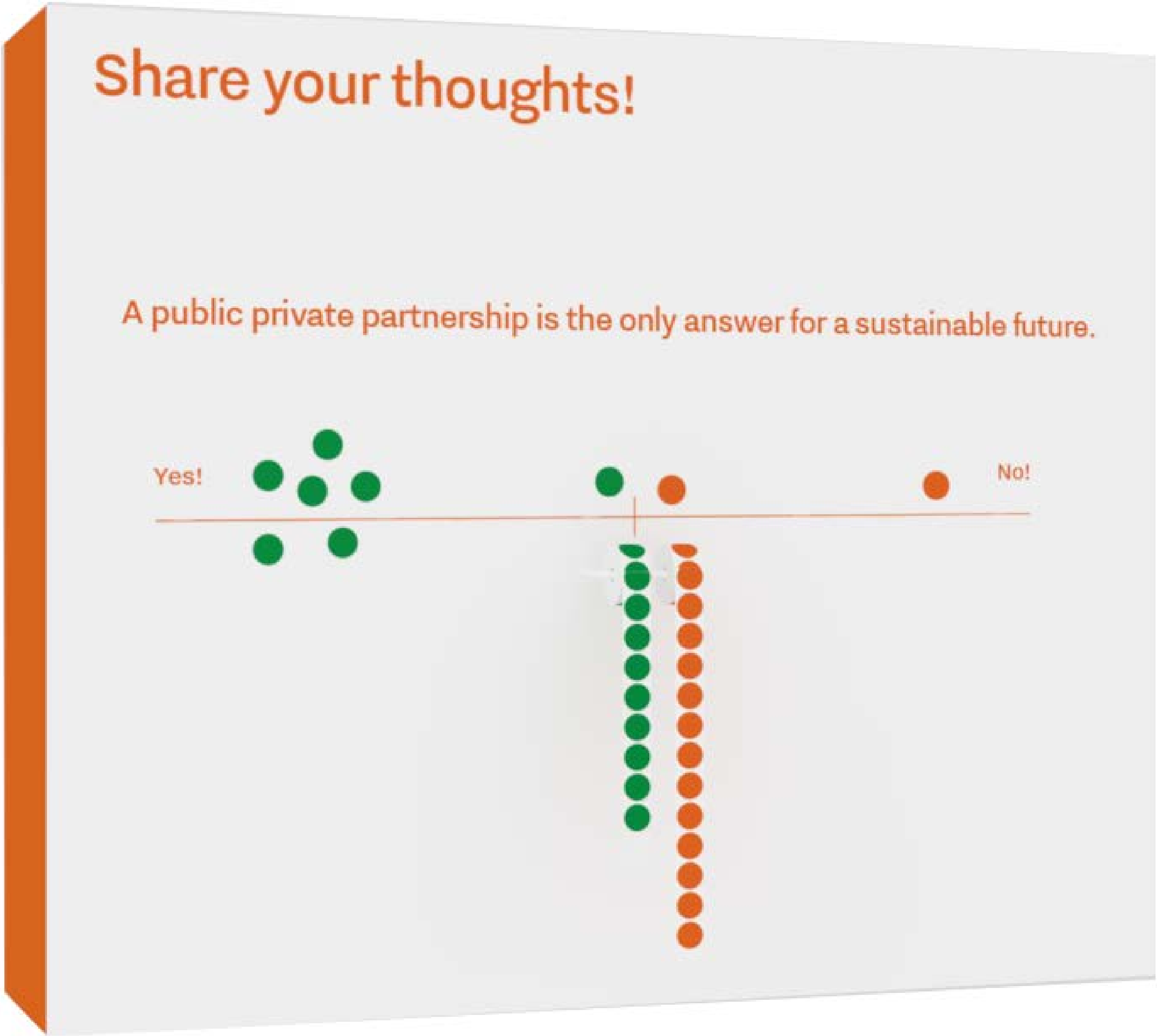
Interactive module where visitors can cast a vote by placing stickers on a bold statement, relevant to your key message.

Consists of:
1 piece

Graphic design:
Defined.

Suggested position:
On the outside of the stand, with easy access, even for visitors just passing by.

Suggested dimensions:
200hx 300w x 30d (cms)



D3. Private conversation seating

Shielded, yet still informal and accessible seating for more private conversations.

Consists of:
1 or 2 pieces, with cushions semi-detached.

Graphic design:
Monocoloured. Doesn't need graphic design, but you can consider a relevant sentence to make your visitors smile.

Suggested position:
To increase privacy, place these seats slightly to the back of the stand.

Suggested dimensions:
1 piece: 200w x 100d x 200 h (cms)



D4. The conversation rock

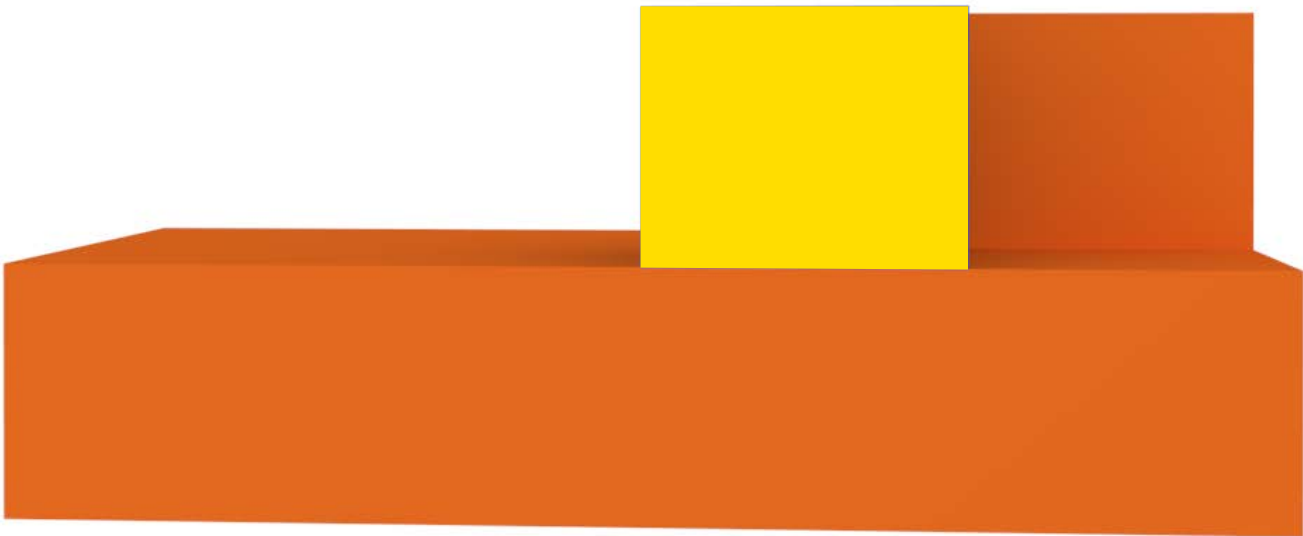
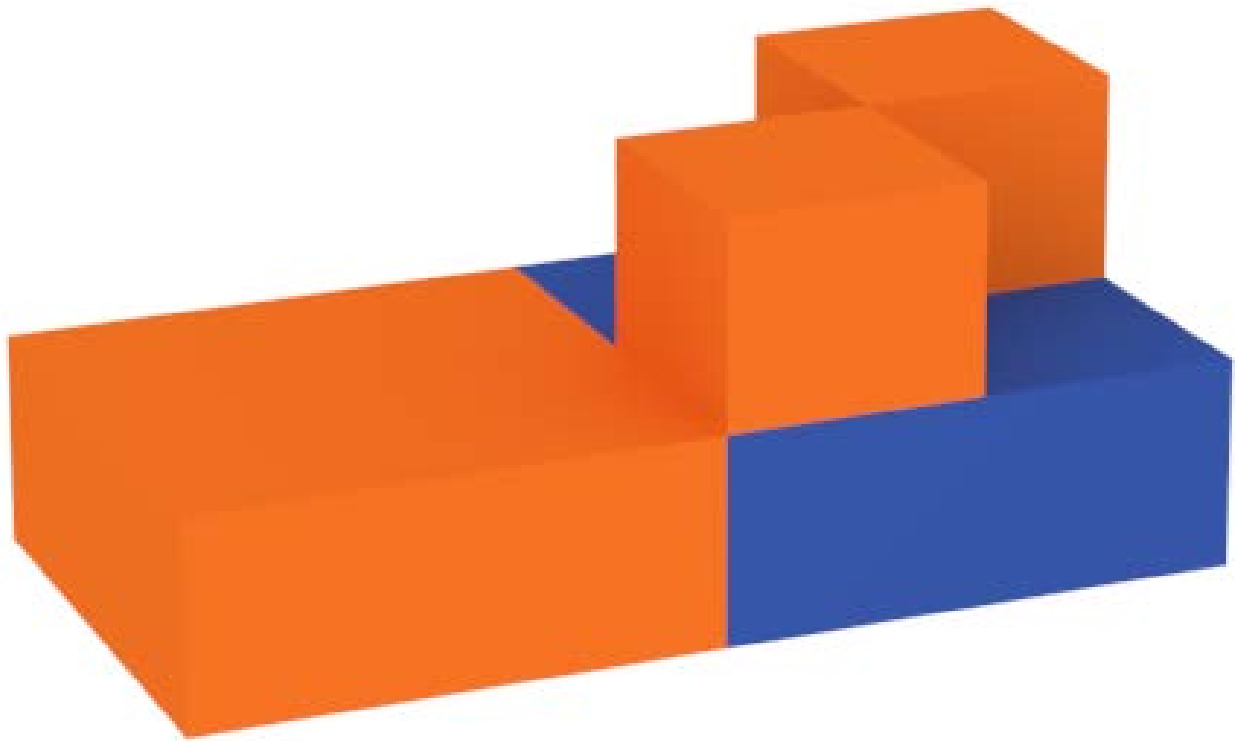
Rock of blocks to stimulate spontaneous interaction.

Consists of:
Blocks and cards with conversation starters

Graphic design:
None

Suggested position:
On cross roads in your stand. Tip: add printed conversation starters: little cards with easy questions that get the conversation going:
“What brings you here?”
“Where are you from?”
“Have you visited one of the key notes?”
“What does your company do?”
“Would you like a coffee?”

Suggested dimensions:
100hx 300w x 100d (cms)



D5. The meeting room

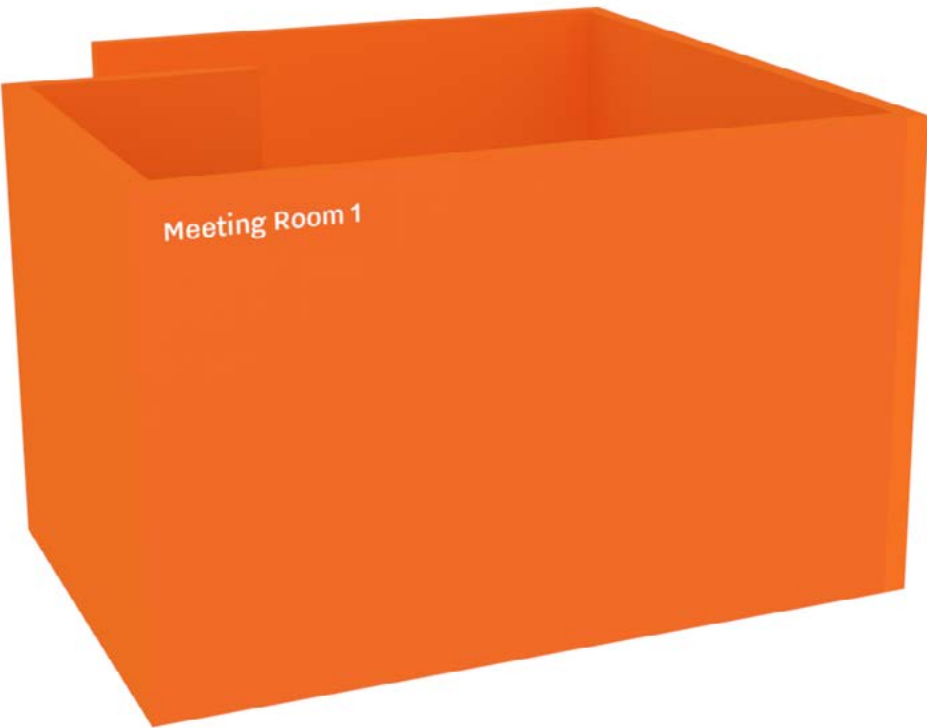
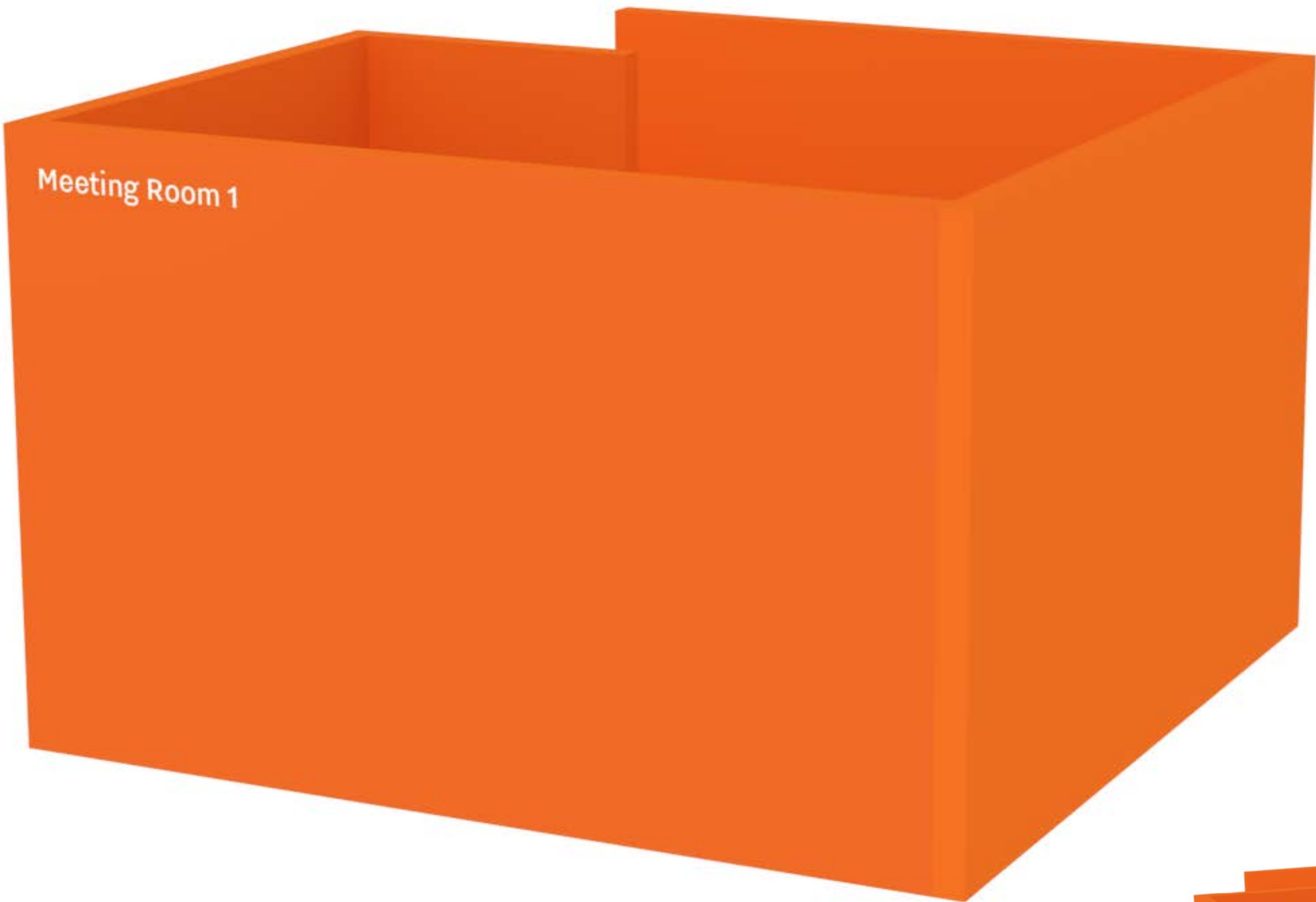
Private meeting room with easy walk in, that can be booked for private sessions.

Consists of:
1 piece. See furniture list for interior.

Graphic design:
Naming the meeting rooms can be handy, when you have multiple. Depending on placement in expo stand, you can decide to use the walls as storywalls.

Suggested position:
In the back of the expo area (heightened privacy)

Suggested dimensions:
300hx 300w x 300d (cms)



E1. Coffee corner

Achterwand met balie vormt de coffee corner en infobalie.

Consists of:

Suggested position:

Suggested dimensions:
300hx 600w x 200d (cms)



Category E: Facilitating modules

E2. Speaker table

In plaats van een statafel met rok, graag een blok maken.

Graphic design:
Depending on what your background is.

Consists of:

Suggested position:

Suggested dimensions:
300hx 600w x 200d (cms)



E3. Dispenser

Hand sanitiser dispenser

Graphic design:
Fixed.

Consists of:

Suggested position:

Suggested dimensions:
300hx 600w x 200d (cms)



E4. Wayfinding

Stickers on floor?
Richting aangevers

Graphic design:
xxx

Consists of:
xxx

Suggested position:
xxx

Suggested dimensions:
150hx 30w x 3d (cms)



E6. Lanyards

Everyone on the NL stands, is a NL representative. Therefore, they should be recognisable as such. They can use a NL badge, button or lanyard.

Please make sure you choose sustainable promotion items, like reboard for buttons and recycled PET or bamboo for lanyards.

Graphic design:
See instructions on the promotional gifts page in the [NL Toolkit](#).



5. Furniture

Furniture guidelines

We strive for a combination of different seating configurations to serve different activities: high, low, active, formal, informal, comfortable, businesslike. When placing them in your area, make sure to mix them, so it feels playful, inviting and informal. Avoid repetition, as that can become clinical and cold. We are looking for Starbucks rather than an impersonal airport lounge.

Play with a mix of materials, colours and textures. Avoid using smooth materials only: no RVS coatings, glass or steel. Choose inviting, modern furniture with character. Dare to play with colour, but don't overdo it.

Go for simple lines and rounded shapes and furniture that is easy to sit on and get out up of. By not choosing squared furniture with sharp edges, it creates an interesting contrast with the NL Branded blocks.



Configurations for inspiration only.
Source of images: JMT catalogue.

6. Styling

Styling ideas

Styling is an important part of your decoration and can prove to be the finishing touch to creating a more formal or more personal atmosphere.

It is important to think about it consciously, as it can actually make or break our key philosophy: ‘solving global challenges together’. Why? If we are advocating for clean oceans, we should not serve our coffee in single-use plastic coffee cups or decorate our opening or closing event with plastic balloons. Sounds silly, but in the rush of things, these details can be overlooked. Should you place separate waste bins however, and serve your coffee in reusable coffee cups that your visitor can keep, then you are truly walking the talk, and reinforcing our message.

To help you on your way, we have collected some ideas. More ideas for meaningful promotional give-aways can be found in the **NL Toolkit**. Also, we’re always open to bounce off more ideas: info@nlbranding.nl

Lighting

The correct lighting can make or break your presentation. There often is an already existing system, but in other places, the exhibiting company has to take care of that themselves. Ask your contractor for the lighting plan.



Feed two birds with one scone (!) by serving your coffee in reusable coffee cups that visitors get to keep. Not only will it make a nice eco-friendly gift, it also creates visibility for your stand throughout the whole expo. Imagine your visitors walking around with it all day!



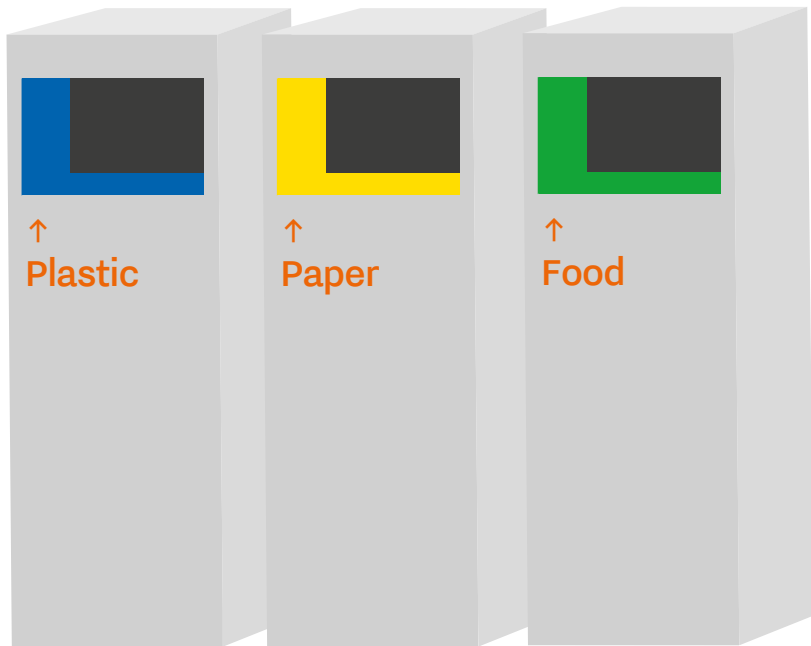
Even consider your stir bars and straws. There are great eco-friendly alternatives to plastics, like compostable wooden stir bars and the Dutch company Straw-by-straw.



Consider placing (or hanging!) clusters of plants in various levels and vessels spread around your event space; they add interest and warmth within an open space.



Decorate the coffee bar or seating area with relevant coffee table books. It creates a homely atmosphere, while it subtly underlines your authority (and placing a NL sticker on it helps preventing people from taking it).



Make sure you have separate waste bins for plastic, paper and food waste, preferably befitting to the NL style.



Although there is nothing wrong with the orange tulip, placing a single tulip on each table in your seating area is a little... “been there done that”. Let’s try something different! If you wish to use (orange) flowers, rather choose one or two big impressive flower arrangements. Also, consider combining the orange tulip with the national flower of the country you are in.

7. Materials

We cannot stress enough: the Netherlands stands for ‘Solving global challenges together’. It rings through in everything we say and do, whatever subject we talk about. And we don’t talk around the bush. That implies a big responsibility for choosing the right materials for our expo stand or studio decor, our styling items and the give-aways - if we have them.

That means we want to stimulate and inspire you to only build, purchase, rent or even loan items that match our ambitions.

Here are some tips:

- Choose reboard wherever you can: it’s easy to transport, easy to recycle, and much stronger than you think; you can actually make all items from this catalogue from it!
- If you choose wood as your material, please source for repurposed or Formaldehyde Free plywood.
- Consider aluminium: it’s durable, lightweight and very easily repurposed into something new.

(That being said, do make sure the actual repurpose is already decided upon before choosing this material, otherwise it is an empty promise!)

- Try think ahead: you may have to design one stand, but how can you design it in a way that the individual building blocks can be used again in a different set up at the next trade fair? This way you can create your own circular set up.
- Limit the number of promotional items: do you really need them? Is your gift really meaningful and reinforcing our key message?
- Upon ordering: choose sustainable, durable goods and ask your supplier about the materials they use, their origin and transport.
- Try find materials and items that tell a story: on origins, design- and production methods.
- Handle with care! When you arrange transport and storage, be sure that the way of handling, transporting and the environment of your storage location will help you prolong the lifespan of your items.

8. Planning

Planning

At which point in the preparations should you include professional event engineers? You could use the following dates as a rough guideline:

- **Small event:** roughly 3 months prior to the event.
- **Medium event:** roughly 4 months prior to the event.
- **Large event:** roughly 6 months prior to the event.
- **Extra-large event:** roughly 12 months prior to the event.

For all situations: the earlier, the better. Including professional event engineers early in the preparations could save you a lot of time, stress and money.

Briefing

Be sure to send all the required information to your event engineers. The better the information you share, the better they can meet your needs. Please use these guidelines as a quick

checklist for your briefing:

- **Name of the exhibition/event?**
- **Place?**
- **Dates?**
- **Hall and stand number?**
- **Stand size (both exact measurements and square meters)?**
- **What is the theme/key message?**
- **Which NL campaign is applicable?**
- **Number of participants/exhibiting companies?**
- **Which modules from the catalogue are a need to have?**
- **Which modules from the catalogue are a nice to have?**
- **Any other useful background information?**

Documents to be added to the briefing:

- **NL Brand guidelines**
- **NL Event & Venue Dressing Concept**
- **Floorplan**
- **Technical guidelines**
- **Budget**

Good luck!

For more information please contact the
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