NEXT GENERATION INTERNET

NGI 4ALL

D2.1 THE NGI BRAND: TOOLKIT AND GUIDELINES

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Abstract	The main objective of this deliverable is to create a strong, consistent & long-lasting NGI brand, which means unique, conveying most NGI values, impactful, highly recognisable, very modular, and in-line with the times.
Keywords	NGI, brand identity, guidelines, templates, creativity

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* R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)

DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs

DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.

OTHER: Software, technical diagram, etc.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The rebranding of the Next Generation Internet is at the core of the NGI Outreach Office (NGI4ALL project). We have dedicated the first semester of 2019 to define the strategy, creative brief and design of the new branding, which is presented in this deliverable.

The revamped NGI Brand absolves to the following objectives:

Strategic objectives (long-term)

- Making the initiative better known (i.e. seen and recognised) to all target audiences and the general public.

Tactic objectives (mid-term)

- Contributing to the recognition of all projects funded by the program as an integral part of this major global initiative.
- Strengthen community feeling in the NGI bubble.
- Making the initiative better known (through its branding) so that it attracts more and better-quality potential open calls participants.

Operational objectives (short-term)

- Creating a strong, appealing, impactful and highly recognisable NGI "brand" that conveys – as far as possible – the NGI values.
- Implementing, or enforcing the implementation of this NGI branding among all communication channels.

The goals of this document are therefore to:

- Summarize the strategic objectives and foundations which guided the NGI Outreach Office (NGI4ALL project) in the revamping of the NGI brand image (presented in detail in *Deliverable D1.1.1 NGI Marketing and Communication Strategy and Plan*.
- Present the concept and creative execution of the new NGI brand
- Accompany the NGI Brand Guidelines document (as presented and shared to the whole NGI Community)
- Explain how the new brand image will be adopted by all the stakeholders

This deliverable is organised as follows:

- Section 1 summarizes the NGI identity Foundation and Branding Strategy
- Section 2 defines the NGI Branding objectives and process
- Section 3 presents the new NGI Brand
- Section 4 provides the conclusions and next steps

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1 NGI IDENTITY FOUNDATION AND BRANDING STRATEGY

1.1 NGI INITIATIVE

As presented in Deliverable *D1.1.1 NGI Marketing and Communication Strategy and Plan*, the NGI initiative was launched in 2016 with the ambition to ensure that the increased connectivity and the progressive adoption of advanced concepts and technologies, spanning across several domains such as Artificial Intelligence, IoT, Blockchains, Big Data, etc., will ground the Internet of the future so that more value to the people and to the society will be delivered, by:

- **Defragmenting and connecting** through the creation of a pan-European ecosystem embracing European actors and initiatives reaching beyond the ICT scene and fostering a multidisciplinary culture.

- **Engaging new stakeholders,** who might not have been necessarily involved in related EC initiatives, so as to ensure new ideas and fresh approaches are injected into the overall ecosystem.

- **Linking long-term research with applied research and innovation**, with **policy and societal expectations**, which requires the capability to engage with different kind of players.

- **Promoting new functionalities, services, applications and technologies** to support people's lives and global sustainability goals for the good of our society.

- **Reflecting and promoting the European core values**: openness, security, privacy and participation, to create a level playing field for all business actors, open to innovation and preserving democracy.

- **Creating a movement for a human Internet as a political objective** that can be shared across Europe and that national, regional and local initiatives can contribute to.

In this respect, the NGI aims at developing a more **human-centric Internet** supporting values of openness, cooperation across borders, decentralisation, inclusiveness and protection of privacy, giving the control back to the users in order to increase trust in the Internet. The ambition is that the internet of tomorrow should provide more transparent services, more intelligence, greater involvement and participation, leading towards an Internet that is more open, robust and dependable, more interoperable and overall more supportive of social innovation.

1.2 NGI BRAND

Among the key strategic goals of the NGI Outreach Office (NGI4ALL project) was to:

- Create a strong, persistent NGI brand that will serve as an umbrella for all subsequent NGI activities, even after the end of individual projects.

An umbrella branding (or family branding) strategy – as also anticipated by the Director General Roberto Viola - the NGI should be considered as an *umbrella* initiative, which will ensure that its goals and vision of shaping a human-centric Interne are the defining and unifying factors under which all NGI projects, current and future, can rally. The basic idea behind this approach is to enhance the impact (marketability) of NGI initiatives and outcomes

coming from different players and it follows the psychological concept that any outcome (product) that carries the same brand name is produced using the same high standards of quality, but also, the same core vision and values. The master brand elements of the NGI brand (or better the refined and reloaded version NGI4ALL created in these first months of its duration) will have to be incorporated consistently in all NGI outcomes as it reflects trust, respect and loyalty. In this way, even as the projects change, the core brand message of building a European, human-centric Internet will not lose prominence or impact in the dialogue with all key players.

Therefore, we have developed a high-quality brand image that meets a series of well-defined criteria. Brand that can be used by all stakeholders in their communication and last well beyond the lifetime of the various CSAs and RIAs concerned.

1.3 THE VALUES ON WHICH NGI4ALL BUILT THE NGI BRANDING

NGI relies on 4 pillars:

Pillar 1: The Humanist vision

The core NGI brand pillars relate to the core values the initiative is grounded:

TRUSTWORTHINESS. The Internet must be trustworthy, meaning that a user must be able to make a judgement about the risks involved in using the Internet, and decide that the risk is acceptable.

SAFETY AND RESILIENCE. The Internet must be safe to use. The user must not be hurt by using it and protected from threats and exploitation. The Internet is now a critical infrastructure, depended on by people worldwide, so its infrastructure should also be robust and resilient to attacks and threats.

TRUTHFULNESS AND TRANSPARENCY. Biased content and deliberate misinformation should be minimised, and citizens need to be educated to identify so-called "fake news". Transparency for the processing of Internet users' data and the provenance of information delivered via the Internet should be emphasised as priorities and mechanisms to enable them should be supported.

FAIRNESS AND SUSTAINABILITY. The Internet should support equal and fair opportunities for all users of all types. The Internet should also provide sustainable opportunities for human employment, incentivise economically sustainable business models and promote environmentally-sustainable technology.

Pillar 2: The Political vision

- The NGI Initiative is aimed at fostering a vibrant **Open Internet movement** that links **research**, **policy**, and **society**.
- It is focused on people's real needs and addresses global **sustainability challenges**.
- By design, it should protect **free speech**, **private enterprise** and much more.
- The NGI must contribute to preserve and expand the **European way of life**.

Pillar 3: The Technical vision

- The NGI needs a solid technical foundation to build on.

- The NGI should be an **interoperable ecosystem** (network infrastructures & platforms).

- It implies a technical revolution, based on advanced concepts and methodologies.

  - Artificial intelligence
  - Internet of Things
  - Big Data
  - Blockchain
  - Interactive technologies

Pillar 4: The Economical vision

- Launched in the framework of Digital Single Market.

- The NGI is supposed to impact many application domains and generate digital social innovation.

- It enables human potential, **mobility** and **creativity** while dealing with our **natural resources**.

The Next Generation Internet is set up to empower, to "un-limit our choices". It fosters **diversity** and **decentralisation** and grows the potential for **disruptive innovation**.

1.4 THE UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION OF THE NGI

The NGI European initiative is reframing the digital revolution approach, putting the human at the centre and enabling, thanks to significant financial and political investments, the development of a new Internet, at the service of people.

> *"NGI massively funds European innovative research projects that make it possible to imagine and develop a new Internet that is safer, more open, more respectful of people and more useful to all citizens."*

1.5 THE AUDIENCES NGI4ALL TARGETS

The target audiences we defined to draft the Creative Briefing as it is described in the "Work Method" section are as follows:

Primary target audience

- EC Representatives

- Existing CSAs, RIAs and ongoing projects

- Potentials new projects' participants:

- Researchers
- Academic world
- Established businesses
- Start-ups
- Geeks

Secondary target audience

- Policy and decision makers
- Civil society

Tertiary target audience

- General public

2 NGI REBRANDING OBJECTIVES AND PROCESS

Our overall ambition is to transition the NGI brand from today's positioning: highly respected but not loved yet, to the next phase, where it gains loyalty, emotional resonance, affiliation and where stakeholders are morphed into ambassadors. The underpinning values of the NGI brand (trust, reliance, openness, etc.) should resonate through the technological, economic, sociological reasoning.

2.1 THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS NGI BRANDING REVAMP

Strategic objectives (long-term)

- Making the initiative better known (i.e. seen and recognised) to all target audiences and the general public.

Tactic objectives (mid-term)

- Contributing to the recognition of all projects funded by the program as an integral part of this major global initiative.

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Operational objectives (short-term)

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- Complementing, or enforcing the implementation of this NGI branding among all communication channels.

2.2 BRAND: THE STARTING POINT

We didn't start from nothing when designing the NGI Branding. The NGI had indeed an existing and already exploited logo and graphical charter.

This logo was already used in many situations and on many channels "as it is". We assessed its strengths and weaknesses as follows:

Qualities

- Clean

- Sober and simple

- Easy to adapt

- Symbolic (comic strip bubble-like, meaning "dialogue")

FIGURE 1. THE OLD NGI LOGO

Drawbacks

- Cold, faded

- No graphical exploitation of the NGI acronym

- One very "neutral" colour only

- No visual

- Doesn't convey NGI values (human-centric)

This logo, as well as its official colour charter had already been "adapted", by NGI4ALL itself, and by some other CSAs. **As it is detailed in the "Creative Brief" section, we opted for a radical evolution of this logo rather than a totally new approach**.

2.3   FORECASTED USES

The logo and the whole branding that have been created will be used on:

- NGI owned communication channels

- CSAs and RIAs communication channels

More specifically:

- Website (interface)

- Email (signature)

- Facebook (interface)

- Twitter (interface)

- LinkedIn (interface)

- Instagram (interface)

- YouTube (interface)

- Videos (signature)

- Infographics (signature)

- PowerPoint presentations

- Electronic documents (Press releases, reports…)

- Paper documents (brochures, flyers, business cards…)

- Booth / promotional material (posters, rolls up, flyers, merchandising / goodies…)

2.4   THE NGI4ALL WORKING METHOD

The work method we adopted is quite classical when brand image design is at stake:

Getting insights

First, we decided to include all stakeholders in our approach, people who would use the branding in their communication: other CSAs and RIAs. We setup **an online survey** to get stakeholders' insights, wishes, ideas and suggestions. Most of them answered during the two weeks period of the survey and we got many valuable insights.
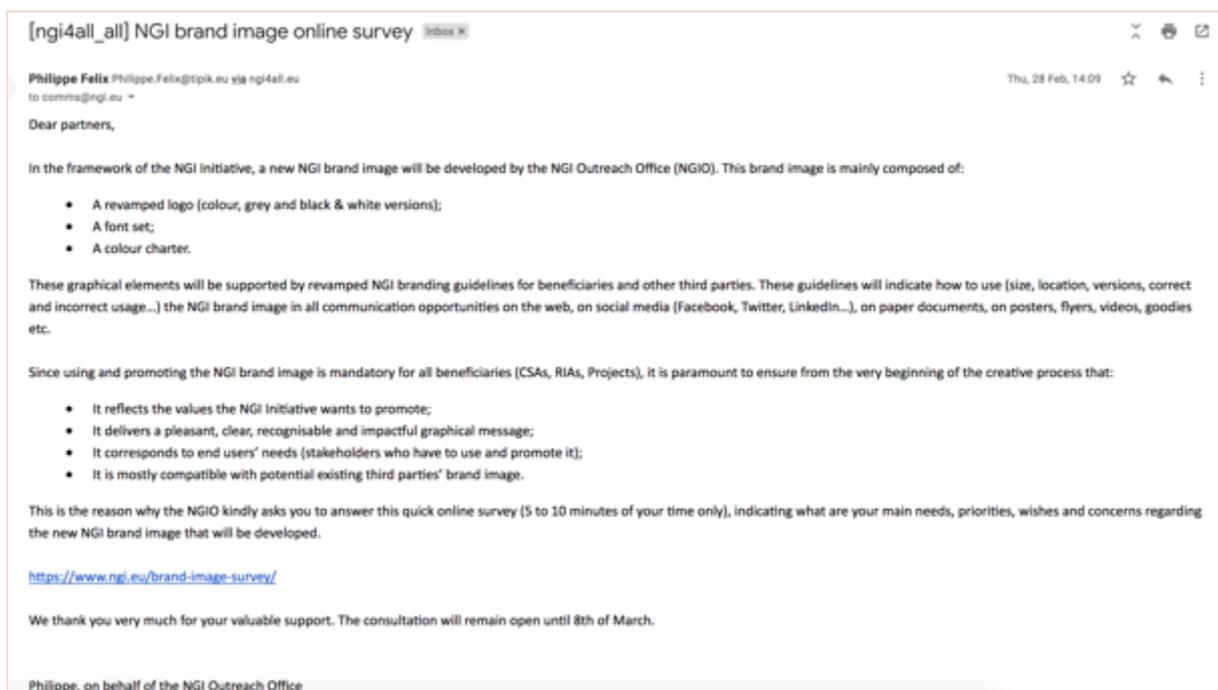

FIGURE 2. SNAPSHOT OF THE EMAIL SENT TO THE NGI COMMUNICATION TASK FORCE TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY IN THE NGI REBRANDING PROCESS

Establishing the specifications

Based on this input, on our in-depth knowledge of the NGI initiative, on the objectives of the mission, on the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing branding and on the preparatory work that had already been carried out, we established the specifications of the mission, that were formalised by our branding expert as a "Creative Brief" (its components are described hereunder).

Selecting and briefing our graphic designers

We selected four excellent graphic designers, and we briefed them personally, during four two-hours sessions. We asked them to provide us with their creations, to present them and to defend them.

The creative briefing (summarized):

- Human centred
- Balance between "digital & analogic"
- Evolution vs. Revolution
- Readable and recognisable in any circumstances
- Open source font (chosen font: Montserrat)
- Wide colour range
- Fashionable
- Highly modular & responsive

Selection of the best approach

We received four creative approaches; our NGI team (Creative director, Branding Expert, Account Managers and Project Managers) assessed them and choose the "very best one". The "very best one" is not in this case a subjective assessment, even if some subjectivity is obviously part of the process. We indeed confronted the four approaches that we received against objective criteria as they were mentioned in the creative brief.

In order to emphasize the "human centricity" we had two creative options:

- A visual approach
- A typography approach

The visual approach was tried and rejected as:

- Graphically complex
- Almost impossible to use on social media (small square size)
- Difficult to combine with "Next Generation Internet" or "NGI"
- Culturally risky

We instead explored and finalised the typography approach, as it is:

- Visually simpler
- More impactful
- More modular
- International & multicultural, "one fits for all"

To create an "umbrella" brand, capable of unifying the NGI ecosystem while providing enough flexibility to the different stakeholders involved, we have defined a **brand modular colour range** working on:

- Gradient principle
- One main blue colour gradient dedicated exclusively to the NGI corporate communication

- Many gradient options (for co-branding purposes) allowing projects and other third parties develop their <u>very own flavour</u>

Final creation, presentation to the EC and validation

We then fully developed (and tested) the selected approach. We presented it to the Commission decision-makers (29th of April 2019 videoconference), we collected their feedback, and we implemented the corrections asked. We then presented the final version to the Commission, and it has been approved.

The final branding as well as a first version of the Guidelines have been presented to the European Commission and the NGI Project Coordinators in Brussels, on 16th of May 2019.

3   THE NEW NGI BRAND

The NGI Outreach Office has developed a new graphic environment (See Brand Guidelines in Annex 2) which details the features of the NGI **logo**, brand **guidelines**, and sample **templates**.

It is available on the NGI Drive (https://drive.ngi.eu), which is a private online environment where the NGI projects and the European Commission can connect to download the files or the support documentation they need.

3.1   THE LOGO

The logo has been created in four versions, delivered in many usable formats (Adobe Illustrator, EPS, PDF, JPG and PNG), in all relevant colour codings (RGB, CYMK, Pantone, Web…). The final batch includes 111 versions.

The logo and its variations can be used and adapted whatever the context, on any support.

FIGURE 3. RATIONALE OF THE GRAPHIC SOLUTION FOR THE NGI NEW LOGO

The logotype has a comprehensive and modular graphic environment, made of six versions, with and without the tagline "Internet of Humans"

The graphic universe developed is composed of four versions of the branding:

- Version 1: EXPLICIT (Next Generation Internet)

- Version 2: ACRONYM (NGI)

- Version 3: TAG / CO-BRANDING (NGI + e.g. NGI + project name)

- Version 4: ICON (N) (mainly for social media profiles)

- When needed, the logo can also be used as a signature, based on the TAG version (powered by NGI)
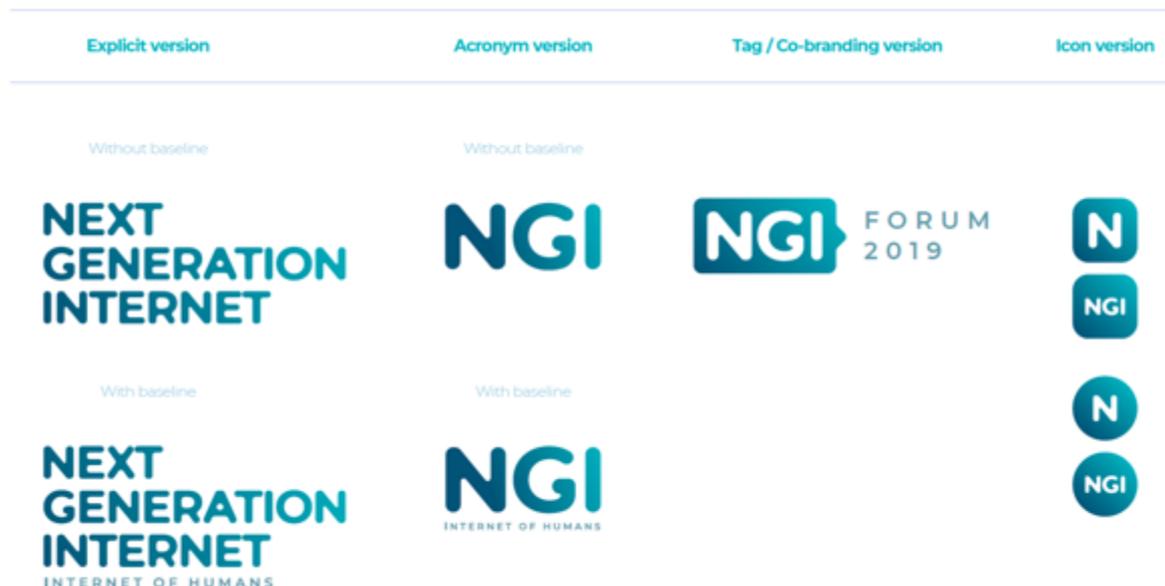

FIGURE 4. THE 6 VERSIONS OF THE NEW NGI LOGO

3.2 THE GUIDELINES

The NGI Brand Guidelines (see Annex 1) explains the brand identity itself, its general principles, how to use it and how to avoid any mistake when adapting it. The table of content of this document is as follows:

- Logotype in various version

- The font and typographic evolution

- The colour schemes

- General principles

- Uses

- Web

- Social Media

- Co-branding

- Signature

- Paper

- Roll-ups, banners

- Do's and Don'ts

With these guidelines, any graphic designer is "a-priori" able to correctly implement the branding for its own purposes.

The templates

We finally delivered three templates that are a Word template, a PowerPoint template as well as an NGI homepage mock-up.

3.3   THE BRANDING IMPLEMENTATION

Preliminary remark: it is very important to remind that **any new brand is a living creature**. Which means that during a launching period that can last some months or even more, a mark cannot be considered as "engraved in marble". Based on the audience's feedback, or potential unexpected problems encountered during its implementation, some adjustments can be – and should be – done to improve it until problems of any kind are completely solved. Concretely, it means that NGI4ALL has delivered a "Version 1.0" of the "NGI Branding V 2.0", which is considered as final, unless reality catches up with us.

Presentation

The branding implementation has begun when it has been presented to its users (CSAs and RIAs) as previously described. During this presentation, branding principles have been explained (and agreed by all), including the mandatory aspects of its implementation, optional aspects, and also the customisation parameters that can be exploited in case of co-branding. (A new RIA wanting to create its own brand, based on the NGI overall branding for example).

Publication

The final deliverable (111 logo versions, Guidelines and templates) has been made downloadable on the NGI online repository the first week of June 2019.

Webinar

5th of June 2019, a webinar is organised with all communication officers to present the final branding version as well as the Graphic Guidelines. This webinar will be extremely interactive, and the NGI4ALL creative director will answer all questions that will be raised.

Training & Support

Several trainings (mostly via webinars) will be organised in the coming months, with the aim to share with all stakeholders the experience of their peers while implementing the NGI branding. A continuous support (by phone, email or videoconference) is also planned to solve potential problems that could occur or to answers questions that could arise.

New brand image roll-out plan

The NGI Outreach Office already started to produce the communication materials (e.g. NGI Forum promotional flyers) according to the new NGI brand, and it will publish online the rebranded NGI portal along with the rebranded NGI Forum website by the end of June 2019.

The existing NGI projects will have time till the end of August 2019 to adopt the new branding (online and offline) while the projects recently started will adopt it since inception. Here below the rebranding time plan internally discussed and presented to the EC and the projects' coordinators on 16th June 2019
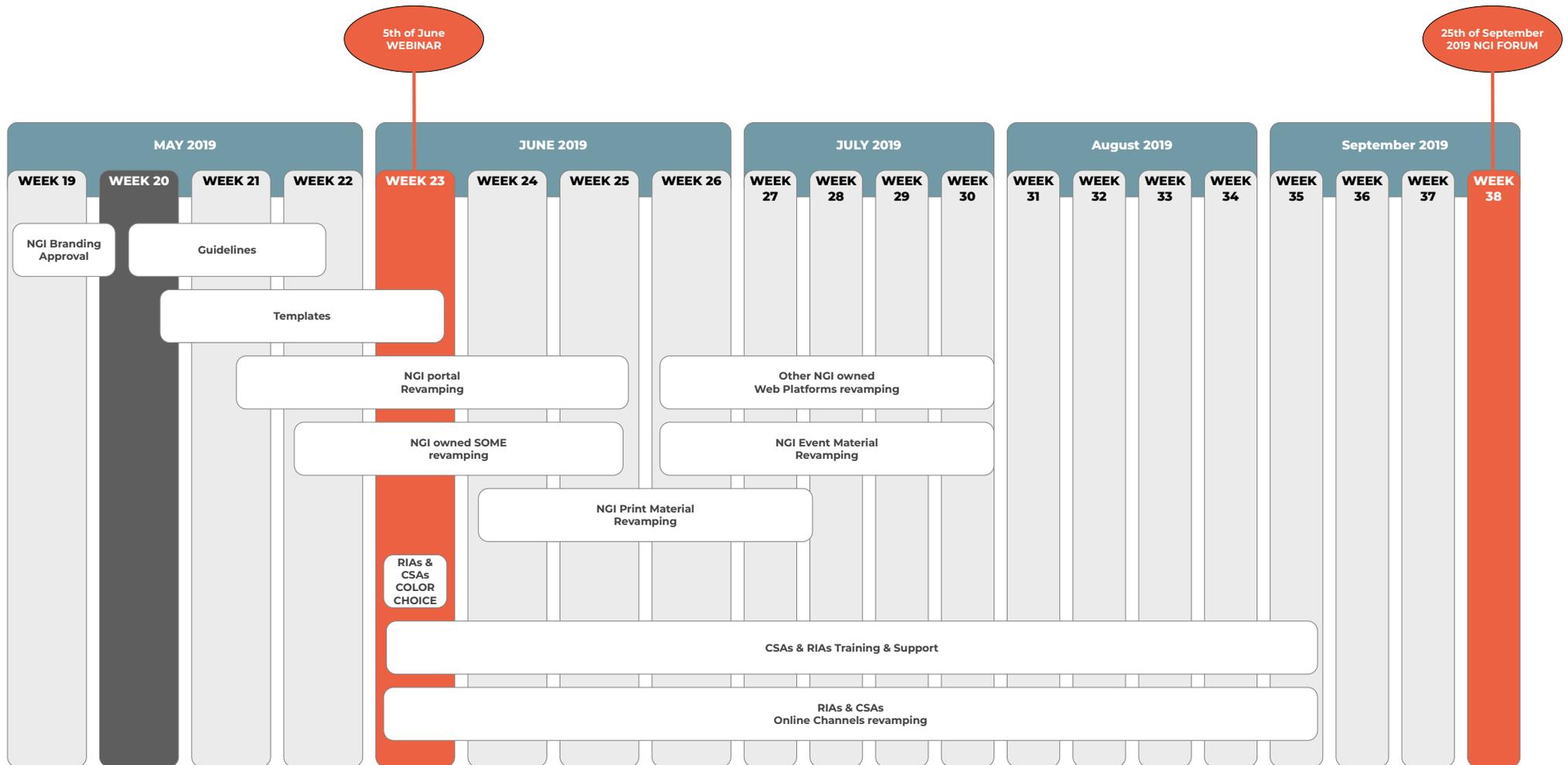
FIGURE 5. BRANDING ROLL-OUT PLAN

4 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Currently the NGI Outreach Office is at work to implement the new brand across all media and platforms (online and offline), to support all the NGI stakeholders in the adoption of the new brand in order to guarantee:

- The first public launch by end of June (rebranded NGI portal, rebranded NGI Forum website)
- Alignment of all the NGI projects online and offline branding by end of August 2019
- Official launch at the NGI Forum

We believe that the whole NGI ecosystem will greatly benefit from the new rational, high quality design brand architecture, offering a well recognizable, human, fresh and dynamic image.

ANNEX 2: NGI BRAND GUIDELINES