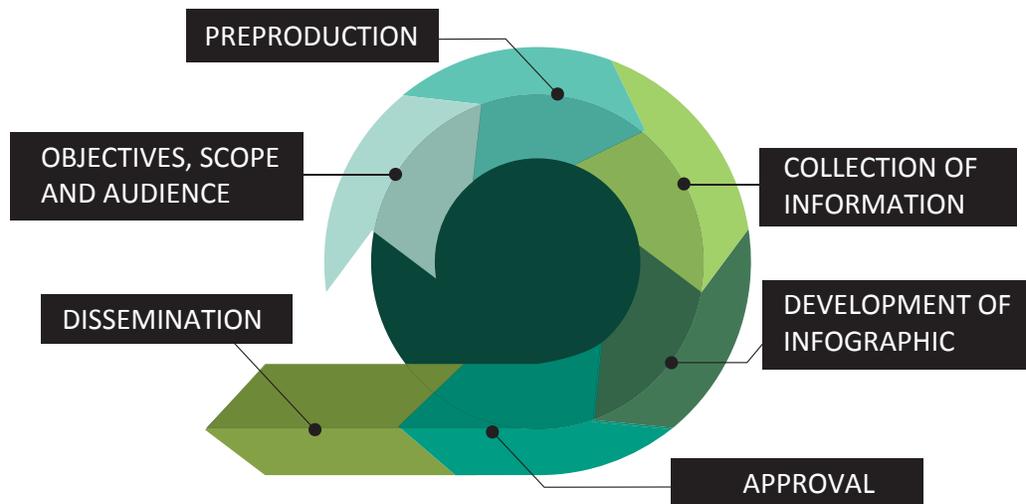# infographics

What is an infographic?

An infographic is a visual representation in which text and graphic elements are combined to disseminate knowledge and provide information on a specific topic. Visualization techniques allow you to emphasize the most important aspects of a given project (data, ideas or events) and illustrate the connections between them.

The use of images facilitates analysis, assimilation and storage of information by the recipient.

How are they made?

PREPRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND AUDIENCE

COLLECTION OF INFORMATION

DISSEMINATION

DEVELOPMENT OF INFOGRAPHIC

APPROVAL

1. Definition of objective, scope and audience

The first step in the development of an infographic should be to answer the following questions:

1. Objective : What do you want to achieve with the infographic? It is necessary to define the main goal, for example: to raise awareness of a specific topic or business model, determine accountability, etc.

2. Audience: What is the target audience? It is necessary to identify to whom the infographic is directed, and what is expected of them, for example: achieve a better understanding of a business model that has been developed.

3. Scope: What knowledge do you want to systematize and disseminate? It is necessary to identify high-level content and key messages that will be included in the infographic, for example: present the results of a project, tell the story of a project, the lessons learned, the context of the project, etc.

2. Pre-Production

Once you have identified the objectives, scope and target audience of the infographic, proceed with its pre-production. Pre-production is an internal work phase of the project team. It should include:

- Budgeting: Plan your infographic work within the scope of the available budget, and identify funding sources.

- Development of the first draft of content: Develop a first draft of key content and messages for the infographic.

3. Collection of information

In this phase it is necessary to collect and study the material to be used for the production of infographic. Keep in mind that in an infographic, quantitative data (e.g. project results) should be given more importance than qualitative information.

Possible sources of information:

- Project documentation: donors' memoranda, mission reports, project status reports (PSR), evaluation reports (interim and final), baselines, information about monitoring and evaluation system, technical visits, etc.

- Other knowledge products, if any, previously carried out for the project that may provide results (e.g. case studies, audiovisual materials, etc.).

- Internal working session with the project's actors, if necessary.

4. Design of the infographic

In the design phase of an infographic you will need the support (internal or external) of a graphic design specialist, with whom to work closely throughout the process.

Some free tools useful for developing computer graphics are:

- Stat Planet, a tool for creating quality images.

- Creately, a tool for creating diagrams and flowcharts.

- Google Public Data, a tool that allows you to use Google public data and turn it into an infographic.

- Wordle, a tool for creating visualizations from text.

Reviewing infographics made by others can help you become familiar with what is explained in this guide. Some recommended sites to visit:

- http://www.good.is/infographics

- http://www.gapminder.org/

- http://inkscape.org/

- http://kuler.adobe.com/

- http://www.dafont.com/

- http://www.iconarchive.com/

- http://hohli.com/

- http://www-958.ibm.com/software/data/cognos/manyeyes/

It is also recommended to establish interim validation points to ensure that the final product meets the expectations of the MIF and the Executing Agency.

Once you have the support of the graphic design specialist, proceed to the design of the infographic:

- Selection of key messages: Prioritize key messages that the infographic should contain, and organize information into categories, e.g. geography, scope, duration, impact, organization, processes, technology, economic issues, etc.

- Selection of graphic elements: Identify the most appropriate image or graphic for each category of information. For example, if you want to specify the place where the events took place, the right thing will be to use a map, however if you want to explain the percentage of youth impacted by a successful project, the right thing will be use a statistical graph. At this point you must take into account the organizations' corporate identity guides (MIF and Executing Agency).

- Preparation of drafts: Design one or more drafts which organize the previously systematized information. It is preferable to make several sketches and to choose the one that best meets the informative and illustrative purposes. These sketches can be done by hand or with specialized software.

As a guideline, the sections an infographic should have include:

- Title: Summarizes the visual and textual information presented in the infographic. It should be direct, short and attractive. If appropriate, it may have a subtitle that provides additional information.

- Text: Contains the key messages and complements and supports the images. Use the minimum possible text to maintain emphasis on the visual graphics.

- Body: Contains visual information that can be presented through graphics, maps, statistical tables, charts, images, tables, etc. It also contains written explanatory information that is presented in labels (numbers, dates or descriptive words). The visual information should always have one central image that by its location or size prevails over the rest, and which serves as the basis for other graphics or text.

- Additional information: Cite the sources for the information presented in the infographic. Also, note the name of the author or authors of the infographic (both design and research). It is advisable to indicate the source with a smaller font and in a location that does not distract the viewer's attention.

- Development of an infographic: Once the draft of the infographic is completed, the development proceeds. To do this, take into account:

- Proportion and perspective: There should be a balance between images and text.

- Color: There should be good contrast between colors to facilitate reading. It is important to keep the MIF's and Executing Agencies' corporate images in mind.

- Fonts: The infographic should use fonts and font sizes creatively.

- Icons: An infographic should contain simple graphics (icons) to communicate effectively.

5. Approval

The graphic designer must submit a version of the infographic to the MIF team and the Executing Agency to incorporate their feedback and obtain their approval.

6. Dissemination

Dissemination is key to guarantee that the infographic has reached the target audience. This step will require selecting and using the most effective communication channels to reach that audience. Moreover, the information acquired can lead to a whole range of products that support the dissemination.

It is important to have adequate tools to measure the impact of each dissemination action, and prove whether we are reaching the key audiences and to receive their opinion on the audiovisual.

In order to achieve this, each communication channel should be accompanied by an indicator and the most accurate tool to measure its impact.

Characteristics

- Format: An infographic can be static or multimedia. A multimedia infographic can explain sequences or movements better than a static one.

- Length: The infographic should be contained on a single page (or double page). Moreover, the size of the infographic should be such that it can be read at a width of 600 pixels (maximum available in most blogs).

- Frequency: Depends on the project's execution plan.

- Responsible for the preparation: Graphic designer and executing agency.

- Responsible for validation and approval: Executing agency and MIF project team leader.

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