



POLICY INSTRUCTION

BRANDING and VISUAL IDENTITY STANDARDS

26 July 2021

Highlights

1. OCHA has visual identity and graphic design standards for internal and external communication and reporting products, including digital assets such as infographics, websites, videos, social media products and physical medium like print and merchandise;
2. OCHA personnel must design digital and physical products in accordance with OCHA's visual identity and design standards;
3. OCHA managed projects must use the website Common Design as a reference, while keeping their own visual identity.

Contacts

General oversight and design aspects are overseen by the Strategic Communications Branch (SCB). The technical implementation of the website Common Design is managed by the Information Management Branch (IMB). The focal points at time of drafting are:

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The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to Coordinate the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises.

We advocate for effective and principled humanitarian action by all, for all.

www.unocha.org

1. Purpose

This policy establishes the framework and responsibilities for OCHA's overall visual identity for digital and physical products including websites.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all OCHA personnel and projects. Compliance is mandatory.

3. Rationale

A standard visual identity that reflects OCHA values ensures consistent and coherent internal and external communication across the organization. Having a unique look and visual identity make OCHA recognizable to our audiences and helps us achieve our mission¹. It supports our advocacy and fundraising efforts, strengthens our partnerships, and provides credibility. See <https://brand.unocha.org/>

OCHA maintains about 100 websites, many of which provide different experiences and usability. By standardizing design across websites, OCHA will provide a more comfortable and seamless experience for our visitors. While the websites do not need to follow one information architecture or specific layout, they do need to align to OCHA's Common Design of components - headers, footers, menus, page components, typography, icons, layout and views. See <https://web.brand.unocha.org/>

Implementing an OCHA-wide design system will improve user navigation, overall experience, and brand consistency, while reducing development work and costs in the long term.

4 Policy

4.1 Digital and Print Design

4.1.1 OCHA personnel will use the OCHA standard brand, graphic package and official templates when creating documents, presentations, infographics, and other visual products. See <https://brand.unocha.org/>

4.1.2. OCHA personnel will make use of OCHA's standardized visual assets (e.g., humanitarian icons)². If something appropriate is not available, personnel are encouraged to review the UN Secretariat resources³ and get in touch with OCHA's SCB (contact listed above).

¹ OCHA coordinates the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises. See: <https://www.unocha.org/about-ocha/our-work>

² See <https://brand.unocha.org/> for OCHA's standardized visual assets including flags, maps, illustrations, textures, animation intros/outros, audio tracks, etc.

³ See <https://brand.unocha.org/> > UN brand

4.1.3 When designing for a non-OCHA branded product or initiative OCHA personnel will make use of OCHA's standardized visual assets wherever possible. Should these not have a set visual, OCHA personnel must work with SCB to have one developed. Even dedicated campaign websites and multimedia products⁴ that may need their own special *look-and-feel*, should use OCHA's visual identity elements as much as possible.

4.1.4 If a project does not have a set visual, OCHA personnel are encouraged to work with SCB to have one developed.

4.2 Website Common Design

4.2.1 OCHA managed websites, both OCHA-branded and community-branded, must implement OCHA's website Common Design which includes a set of standard aspects and components with which to build a website. See <https://web.brand.unocha.org/> for details on the headers, footers, menus, page components, typography, icons, layout and views.

4.2.2 Websites must align with OCHA's Visual Identity as much as possible. See <https://web.brand.unocha.org/> for an explanation of the Common Design and the related elements such as headers, footers, menus, page components, typography, icons, layout and views, etc.).

4.2.3 Websites that require custom colors/branding must work with SCB and IMB to make sure that they meet usability and accessibility requirements;

4.2.4 Websites built on the UNITE Web solution⁵ do not need to adhere to OCHA's Common Design as they adhere to the UN Secretariat standard;

4.2.5 Websites must adhere to the Accessibility Guidelines for UN websites⁶. All websites must aim for as much accessibility as possible, including mobile responsiveness, in order to maximize user experience;

4.3 Staffing

4.3.1 OCHA personnel who are planning to hire a staff member or consultant (designer, developer, external design company, etc.), must visit brand.unocha.org and are encouraged to contact SCB and IMB for guidance. This guidance can range from TOR reviews, to candidates' portfolios reviews, to the selection process, to welcome briefings, to accessibility and usability directives.

⁴ Includes, but not limited to videos, animations, infographics, and social media cards.

⁵ Example of site built on UNITE Web: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>

⁶ Accessibility Guidelines for UN Websites: <https://www.un.org/en/webaccessibility/index.shtml>

5. Acronyms and definitions

The following acronyms and definitions apply to this directive and subsidiary SOPs and guidelines:

Accessibility: Web accessibility means that websites, tools, and technologies are designed and developed so that people with disabilities can use them. More specifically, people can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with and contribute to the Web⁷.

Branding and Visual Identity: We often refer to branding and visual Identity interchangeably to describe the logo and look and feel of an organization or product. However it is important to clarify that branding is a broader concept that consists of many other aspects, such as: the mission, vision, target audience, name, and tagline. The visual identity is the part of branding which sets the guidelines that promote consistency in a brand's use of visual elements. Some components of a visual identity are: the logo, colours, fonts, icons, and images. The visual identity determines the style of all multimedia content, including header, footer, buttons, and links on a website; email signature; graphics for social media; text overlay and graphics on videos; print material, and so forth.

Community-branded website: a website whose purpose is to support the humanitarian community but UN and/or OCHA-branding may be perceived as detrimental to its success. These websites may be for OCHA projects or for community initiatives where OCHA is providing support (e.g., IASC);

GIFT - Global Information Management Functional Team

IMB - OCHA's Information Management Branch

OICT - UN's Office for Information and Communication Technology. They are a UN Secretariat entity with oversight of all ICT matters.

SCB - OCHA's Strategic Communications Branch

TOR - Terms of Reference

6. References

[A11Y](https://www.a11yproject.com/) - <https://www.a11yproject.com/>

[Accessibility Guidelines for UN Websites](https://www.un.org/en/webaccessibility/index.shtml) - <https://www.un.org/en/webaccessibility/index.shtml>

[OCHA Visual Brand Portal](https://brand.unocha.org/) - <https://brand.unocha.org/>

[OCHA Common Design demo/resource](https://web.brand.unocha.org/) - <https://web.brand.unocha.org/>

[UN Secretariat Visual Identity](https://iseek.un.org/branding) (Intranet) - <https://iseek.un.org/branding>

⁷ See W3C Accessibility: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-intro/>

7. Monitoring and compliance

The Chiefs of SCB and IMB will monitor the implementation of the policy. The chiefs will delegate the technical implementation and management of the related standards to appropriate members of SCB and IMB.

8. History and Approval

Version 1 approved by Zoe Paxton, Chief of SCB and Andrew Alspach, Chief of IMB & Chair of GIFT, on 26 July 2021