6 Figures and tables

Although some material might usefully be presented in either a table or figure, one or the other is often a better choice: is the intention to give exact values (use a table) or to show trends (use a chart)?

6.1 Figures

Numbering

Use consecutive arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) throughout the text. If there are numerous figures, for example in an appendix, these may be numbered using a system that combines the letter designating the appendix and an Arabic number: Figure A1, Table A2.

Styles

There are several types of figures, including statistical (pie charts, bar charts, scatter diagrams and line charts), organization charts and flow charts, and maps. Some data can be expressed in several forms; choose the one that is most suitable.

- **Pie**—A pie chart is used to show proportional relationships. Keep the number of "slices" to a minimum because the larger the number, the harder it is to compare the slices.
- **Bar**—Bar charts show trends or compare quantities. The bars can contain a number of different elements distinguished by shading or colour. It is possible to stack elements within bars or to have several bars for each item. The bars represent discontinuous items (e.g., the provinces of Canada).
- **Scatter**—Scatter diagrams show all data points plotted on x-y axes to show trends or patterns. Various elements can be distinguished by using different graphic shapes for the points.
- **Line**—Line charts are used to show variation in one dimension over variation in another. Both dimensions must be continuous (e.g., growth in height over age).
- **Organization**—Organization charts show the hierarchy in an organization or project. Elements are arranged so that relationships become apparent.
- **Flow**—Flow charts are similar to organization charts in that they are a series of boxes that have relationships to one another. They can show movement over time or over location.
- **Maps**—All maps should have a north arrow and a scale. Give any scale in a bar form so that it will change with the scale of the drawing during reduction or enlargement.

Maps are often problematic. If any of the borders are in doubt, add a disclaimer such as: