Update Administrative Divisions

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DevResults generally acquires maps for your country or countries from the publicly available files at **gadm.org** or **HDX/humdata.org**. If the information we have provided is inaccurate or out of date, your team would need to provide the geospatial files (KML/KMZ, geojson, or shape files) with the information you want to use on your site.

Why do I need to update administrative divisions?

All indicator results in DevResults must be associated with a place, whether this place is a point on the map, a shape like a district or region, or the whole country (or even whole world). There are two aspects to this:

- **Data aggregation:** In order to aggregate from points to districts to regions to countries, DevResults requires that each lower-level shape is completely contained in a higher-level shape so that the results can be rolled up unambiguously from lower-level mutually exclusive and exhaustive shapes to higher-level ones.
- **Data visualization:** In order to produce map tiles and visuals, each result must be symbolized or color-coded on a map. Unlike a table, there is no way to visualize 'Other' or 'Unknown' areas on a map elegantly. Therefore, all data must be mapped to a geographic place, either a point (location) or an administrative division.

Why can't the base map be updated automatically?

While we certainly could update base maps automatically, this would probably not be ideal for most users, both for technical and political reasons.

Technically speaking, redrawing boundaries unexpectedly would change indicator totals in unexpected ways; this is what's known as a "**boundary problem**." In the very best case — if two districts were merged into one — it might be possible to calculate the right value, but the data would no longer historically comparable. In the worst case, reapportioning results from one area to a totally differently-shaped area would be ambiguous and prone to error.

Politically speaking, some external stakeholders may prefer different maps. Perhaps different line agencies in a national government may use different versions of their own country's district boundaries for historical reasons. Likewise, their may be an updated official map, but organizations and citizens still operate by the old boundaries and names out of habit. Globally speaking, certain institutions and governments recognize different boundaries, especially in disputed areas, and presenting them with a conflicting map may prove offensive.

For these reasons and more, we prefer to update administrative divisions only when requested. Often there are decisions to make about how to merge historical results into update boundaries, and we can help advise on the best strategy for doing so.

How do I find geospatial data files?

Your team would need to provide alternative geospatial files that contain the correct administrative divisions for countries for which you need to report indicator results. While we prefer to work with KML or KMZ (Google Earth) files, we can convert from ESRI Shapefiles or Geopackage files to KML/KMZ if necessary. Please see more information **about KML files**.

Often, the geospatial file for your preferred base map can be obtained from your organizational partners or certain local government agencies. Potential alternative sources of geospatial data online include:

- Clearinghouses such as **Humanitarian Data Exchange**, aka **HDX**: **data.humdata.org**
- Research databases such as **Natural Earth**: **naturalearthdata.com**
- Government mapping or statistical agencies, listed here: **salb.un.org**
- Community resources such as **geoBoundaries**
- Geo-spatial data repositories or clearinghouses, such as **data.world**
- Academic sources, such as: **guides.library.upenn.edu**

What happens to data when you update administrative divisions?

It depends. If you need to update a level of administrative divisions for a country, reach out to us at **help@devresults.com**. If any shapes have changed, it's important to replace full layers per country (like all regions or all districts) because different sources of shapefiles rarely have boundaries that line up. Gaps or overlap at borders can cause issues with aggregating location-level data. We will ask you for a crosswalk that maps the original divisions to the new divisions in your new KML file for that country. For any places that are merged, split, or deleted, we'll walk you through options for handling data associated with those places.

What if I can't find an accurate file or map?

There are a few circumstances in which we could address this issue without needing new maps:

- If you only need to rename places and do not need to change their boundaries, you can make these changes yourself. Go to **Program Info > Administrative Divisions** and click on the place you'd like to rename. An Edit button appears. Click this button to make the change. (You must belong to a permission group with the ability to edit geographic information to do so.)
- If any administrative division level is incorrect but 1) you don't need to report data at that level and 2) you don't need to view results aggregated by that level, then we can delete that level.
- If you need to merge existing administrative divisions into a single administrative division (for example, combine Capital East and Capital West into one division, Capital), we can make that update. Reach out to us at **help@devresults.com** to discuss how to handle any associated data.

> Didn't answer your question? Please email us at **help@devresults.com**.

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