

# Baselines

Last Modified on 11/28/2018 6:23 pm EST

## Topics in this article

- [When does an indicator have a baseline?](#)
- [How do I enter baselines?](#)
- [How are baselines used?](#)
- [Why is there no separate field for baselines?](#)

## When does an indicator have a baseline?

Some indicators have baseline values. Generally, indicators with baselines are observations, while indicators without baselines are measurements of work done.

For example, "number of people with access to clean water" is an observation. You could do a survey to establish how many people have access (the baseline), then implement a program to improve access, and then repeat the survey to see whether more people have access to clean water.

In contrast, "number of people trained" is a measurement of work done. There is no baseline for this indicator (or the baseline is zero) because before you start, no one has been trained.

You can define whether or not your indicator has baselines on the indicator definition page.

The screenshot shows the DevResults interface for an indicator definition. The breadcrumb trail is: Home > Results > Indicators > # people with access to clean water. The indicator title is "# people with access to clean water" with a sub-label "1.1a". The "Definition" tab is selected. The form includes the following fields and options:

- Default Reporting Cycle:** Quarterly (dropdown menu) with an "Edit reporting cycles" button.
- Unit:** Individuals (dropdown menu) with an "Edit standard units" button.
- Periods Results are:**  Incremental (since last result)
- Targets are:**  Incremental (since last target),  Cumulative (over the life of the project)
- Baselines:**  Indicator has baseline values (with a help icon)

## How do I enter baselines?

Enter baselines [like any other data](#) . For example, if you do a baseline survey for an indicator in 2018 Q1, enter the baseline for that indicator in 2018 Q1.

## How are baselines used?

You can view/download a table of your site's baseline values by going to administration > custom queries, then selecting "Complete Baselines Export". The report includes all indicators defined as "indicator has baseline values". The report shows the date, activity, geographic place, and disaggregations for each baseline value.

These baselines are included in [IATI exports](#) .

When you [create a Pito report](#) of indicator results over time, baseline values are the first values displayed per activity, per place, per disaggregation (for indicators with baselines). Soon we'll add the ability to show baselines in a separate column of a report.

## Why is there no separate field for baselines?

Baselines can be too complex to capture in a single field.

- Different activities might begin reporting on an indicator at different times, in which case each activity would have its own baseline at a separate time.
- A single activity might begin reporting on an indicator in different places at different times, so each place would also have its own baseline, per activity.
- It might even be the case that different disaggregations have different baselines. For example, you could roll out a program to girls one year and boys the following year, so the baselines would be recorded in separate years for each gender.

To capture this complexity, baselines must be entered like every other observation for that indicator so that comparisons are valid and contextualized between activities, time periods, places, and disaggregations.

Here's an example that demonstrates how this complexity arises. In this example:

- Activity 1 measured their baseline for both regions and both genders in 2015.
- Activity 2 measured their baseline for Region A in 2016 and Region C in 2017
- Activity 3 measured their baseline for Females in 2015 and Males in 2017.

		2015		2016		2017		2018	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Activity 1	Region A	127	304	137	323	153	336	161	342
	Region B	119	327	144	337	153	344	180	355
Activity 2	Region A			215	109	226	117	249	123
	Region C					398	334	432	355
Activity 3	Region D		359		378	32	392	52	414
	Region E		325		336	374	351	380	356

The baselines are shaded in green. As you can see, a single field for defining an indicator's baseline isn't enough -- we have to capture baselines at different times for different activities, different time periods, and different disaggregations.

Didn't answer your question? Please email us at [help@devresults.com](mailto:help@devresults.com).

---

## Related Articles

---