



Think | BIG

Behavior Integration Guidance

Set Targets

www.thinkbigonline.org

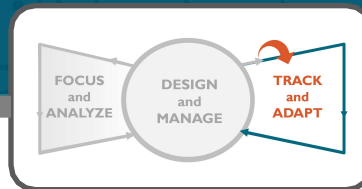


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OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

This tool is designed to help you set realistic targets for the changes in behavior you are promoting. A target is the specific, planned amount of change to be achieved within a defined timeframe. Having clear behavioral and factor-level targets allows you to measure progress over time and notice when adjustments are needed.

Specific and achievable targets:

- Help managers and teams focus on what needs to happen to succeed;
- Help determine if progress is being made according to expectations;
- Help adjust expectations, especially if actual data are significantly different than your target;
- Help identify the need for changes to activities, budgets, and timelines;
- Should be set before any data reporting takes place, but may be set once baselines are established from initial reporting; and
- Should be reviewed and, as appropriate, adjusted, as indicator data are received.

INTENDED USERS

Anyone seeking to monitor progress toward behavior change objectives can use this guidance.

HOW THIS FITS INTO THINK | BIG

As shown in Figure 1, setting targets is part of Step 3 of Think | BIG: Track and Adapt.

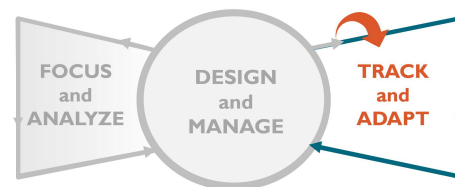


Figure 1: Set Targets is part of “Track and Adapt,” the third step of Think | BIG

INFORMATION AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- Indicators for the behavior and for factors as appropriate, as established in [Focus and Analyze](#)
- A PIRS for each indicator, if available
- National, regional, or local data (such as heat maps) on the indicators (as found in Part 1.3 below and at https://thinkbigonline.org/priority_countries, for example)
- Trend data for the indicators (also as found at https://thinkbigonline.org/priority_countries)
- Any appropriate research, such as trend data (as shown below in Part 1.1), that can support the estimated pace of change in the behavior or factor

ESTIMATED TIME NEEDED

5-20 minutes per indicator once the indicators have been selected and the necessary data gathered. The time needed to gather information will depend on the availability of the appropriate data.

TEMPLATES INCLUDED

- Appendix: Indicator Tracking Table

ADDITIONAL HELPFUL RESOURCES

- Target-setting guidance from the USAID Monitoring Toolkit: [Performance Indicator Targets](#)

- Thinkbigonline.org has an online tool for setting targets for select behaviors, accessible once you have logged in and completed a Behavior Profile for one or more of 18 priority maternal and child health behaviors and three HIV/AIDS behaviors in select countries
- Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) [STATCompiler](https://dhsprogram.com/data/STATcompiler.cfm) (<https://dhsprogram.com/data/STATcompiler.cfm>)
- USAID Journey to Self Reliance data sources, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/J2SR_Fact_Sheet.pdf
- Other data sources relevant for your topic

INSTRUCTIONS

PART I: REVIEW BACKGROUND DATA¹

You will have already identified priority behaviors that will have the greatest impact on your goals and selected indicators for measuring their progress. (If you have not, please use the [online or offline Prioritize and Behavior Profile tools](#) and [indicator guidance](#) at <https://thinkbigonline.org/tools> to do so before proceeding.) Now you will set targets to meet over the life of the strategy, activity, or project.

Technical experts and M&E staff should collaborate to set targets.

To prepare to set targets for the selected behaviors and factors:

1. **Review historical trends.** How has practice of the behavior increased and decreased in the past? Figure 2 provides an example of a trend graph. Find and examine historical trend data for your indicator or similar indicators in databases and reports such as DHS reports, [DHS STATCompiler](#), [Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys \(MICS\)](#), [Malaria Indicator Surveys \(MIS\)](#), [World Bank Open Data](#), the country's information systems (e.g., DHIS2), or other data sources in your technical area. Past trends do not predict the future, but knowing if the indicator is on an upward or downward trajectory or if it fluctuates widely from season to season can help suggest an initial target.

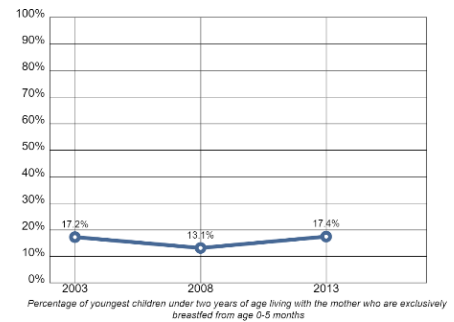


Figure 2: Graph showing historical datatrend

Data for 18 priority maternal and child health behaviors and three HIV/AIDS behaviors in select countries at https://thinkbigonline.org/priority_countries is automatically updated from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) Program Application Programming Interface (API), <http://api.dhsprogram.com/#!/index.html>, which includes datasets from DHS surveys, MIS, and MICS, among others.

2. **Know your context.** The context where you are working will affect what you can achieve. Know the population that you are trying to affect and the operational context in which you are working. For example, what is the socio-political context? Historically, has it been more

¹* This section was adapted from USAID Monitoring Toolkit: [Performance Indicator Targets](#).

challenging for some cultural groups to obtain appropriate health care from trained providers for political or social reasons? How well does the health system function? Will areas with less infrastructure reduce the overall progress that can be made in the time available? In setting your targets, take into account how such issues will affect the amount of progress you can realistically make.

3. **Separate your data into its components.** Disaggregating indicator data, as seen in the heat map in Figure 3, is useful for target setting if you expect that an intervention is likely to affect some populations more than others or have a greater effect in some geographic areas or subgroups than in others. Disaggregating your data also helps if the current uptake is drastically different in different geographic locations or subgroups. It might help to set targets for each disaggregated group separately and then aggregate them to develop a more robust overall target. For example, while nationally, appropriate treatment was sought for 66% of children under age five with fever, you are only working in the two regions where uptake was lowest, at 26.1% and 33.8%. You might:

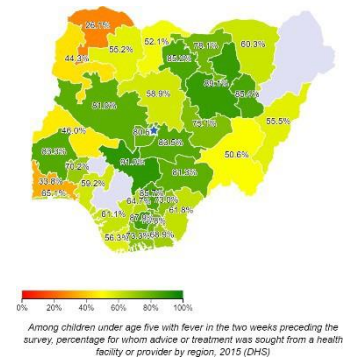


Figure 3: Example of a heatmap

- Choose to set an overall target based on the average uptake (30%) in these two regions;
- Decide on a percentage change for both regions (e.g., 15% increase overall);
- Decide on a percentage change for each region separately (e.g. 15% increase in Region 1 and 20% increase in Region 2);
- Decide on a percentage change for each region separately and then average them (e.g. 15% increase in Region 1 and 20% increase in Region 2, for an average increase of 17.5%); or
- Decide on a numerical increase for each separately (e.g., from 33.8% to 50% in Region 1 and from 26.1% to 40% in Region 2).

While this example focuses on geographic disaggregation, consider other disaggregation options (e.g., sex, socio-economic status, religion, and others) that can help identify major differences that could impact your target. USAID requires disaggregation by sex when measuring person-level data.

4. **Know your interventions.** Setting targets requires understanding how and why an intervention is expected to produce results. This includes knowing what resources will be available, the timeline and seasonal cycles of interventions, and how long it will take for outputs to translate into outcomes. Base your thinking on these if you are developing targets at the program or activity level. If you are developing targets at the strategy level, i.e., without delineating specific interventions, base your thinking on the illustrative strategies from your Behavior Profiles.
5. **Consult with stakeholders and experts.** Technical experts with programmatic experience can provide helpful information about what is realistic with respect to the outcomes that can be achieved with a particular type of intervention. Local stakeholders, including end users and beneficiaries, can also provide valuable insights about what might be possible to achieve in their particular context in a given period of time.

6. **Review evidence from similar programs or research.** Past programming (your own, or that of other organizations) can provide evidence to help inform target setting. Impact evaluations are particularly helpful as they attempt to estimate the size of the effect of the program over a specific timeframe.

PART 2: REVIEW YOUR SPECIFICS

1. Begin by looking at the indicator used to measure changes in the behavior. This is the behavioral outcome.

For example:

Behavior: Caregivers complete a full course of timely vaccinations for infants and children under 2 years

Behavioral Outcome: Percentage of children 12-23 months who had received all 8 basic vaccinations



Figure 4: Example of a behavior and its outcome indicator

2. Note the current status of the behavioral outcome. Be aware that if the last survey was done several years ago, your indicators might have changed by the time you are looking at them. If you cannot find more recent data, factor the time lag and intervening events that might have affected practice of the behavior into your choice of a target.

As noted above, data for 18 priority maternal and child health behaviors and three HIV/AIDS behaviors in select countries are available at

https://thinkbigonline.org/priority_countries

3. Look closely at trends over time, usually on a graph such as that in Figure 5 (or at https://thinkbigonline.org/priority_countries), for each behavioral outcome, if available. Is the indicator increasing or decreasing? By how much at each measured interval?

Percentage of pregnant women who slept under an insecticide-treated net (ITN) the night before the survey

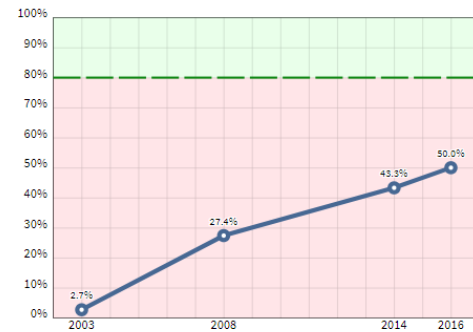
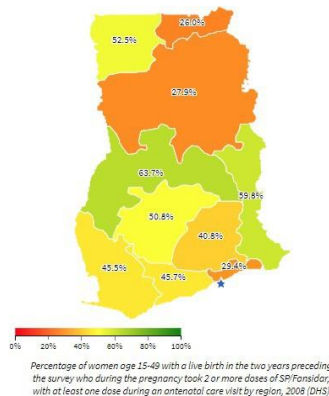


Figure 5: Graph showing historical data trend



4. Look at subnational data (often on a heat map, such as that on the left or at https://thinkbigonline.org/priority_countries) for each behavioral outcome, if available. Is the indicator better or worse in the area(s) where you plan to work? If you are not working in every region, consider choosing different targets for each region in which you are working, and choose your overall target based on the indicators in the relevant regions. Do the same for any subgroups of interest.

Figure 6: Heat map

PART 3: ESTABLISH YOUR TARGETS

- Based on the data available and the considerations in Part I above, establish targets for each of your priority behavioral outcomes. What is a reasonable amount of change to expect during the time period with which you are working? In Figure 6 below, the target looks reasonable based on trend data, as described to the right of the graph. Figure 7 shows an unreasonable target based on trend data.

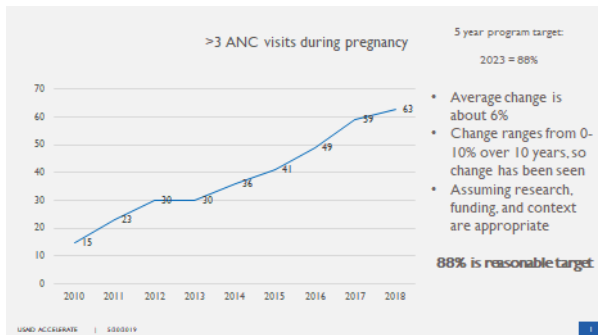


Figure 8: Reasonable target based on trend data

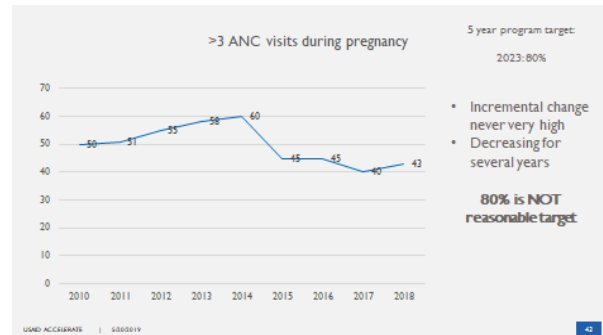


Figure 7: Unreasonable target based on trend data

- You can decide to create interim targets (annual, or for a planned midline evaluation, for example) in addition to final targets. To do this, consider, “To be on track to reach our target in 5 years, how much progress do we need to have made in 3 years?”
- Establish targets in a similar fashion for any factor-level indicators you have established

PART 4 (OPTIONAL): CALCULATE THE PERCENT CHANGE TO EXPRESS YOUR TARGET OR HELP DETERMINE IF YOUR TARGET IS REASONABLE

From 5 people to 10 people is a 100% increase (change) in the number of people. A positive change is expressed as an increase (i.e., 100% increase) while a negative change (-25%) is expressed as a decrease (25% decrease).

If you want to set your target as a percent change or be able to show or discuss progress from the current outcome to the target as a percent change (increase or decrease), use the formula below to calculate it.

Target Value (V_2) minus Current Value (V_1), divided by Current Value (V_1), multiplied by 100 = the percentage change, or:

$$\frac{V_2 - V_1}{V_1} \times 100 = ?$$

Several web sites can do this calculation for you. Search for “calculate percent change.”

PART 5: INSERT YOUR TARGETS INTO AN INDICATOR TRACKER

1. Create an indicator tracking table or use an online dashboard to list and track the behavioral and factor-level indicators that you plan to achieve and the year that you plan to achieve the targets. The appended Indicator Tracking Table contains a template you can use or adapt.
2. As you track your targets (typically using monitoring and evaluation data, including surveys), be sure to update your tracking table and use the findings to make decisions about what to change or leave in place. Find guidance on adaptive management in the Adapt section of the Think | **BIG Track and Adapt** tab.

PART 6: FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. The data at https://thinkbigonline.org/priority_countries are from the DHS API <http://api.dhsprogram.com/#!/index.html>. The source and indicators were chosen for ease of displaying the same indicator data in selected countries, and because it can be updated automatically. The data may not be available on a timely-enough basis to be useful for adaptive management and other decision-making.
2. **STATCompiler** (<https://dhsprogram.com/data/STATcompiler.cfm>) is a fairly easy way to access DHS data.
3. There might be more timely, valid, reliable, and precise data available in-country.
4. USAID M&E guidance and protocols should be followed when using the data for USAID-funded activities.

Appendix: Behavioral Outcome and Factor-level Indicator Tracking Table

| Think BIG Indicator Tracking Table | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Indicators | Desired Direction of Change (+ or -) | Baseline | | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | | Year 4 | | | Year 5 | | |
| | | Date | Actual | Target | Actual | Change | Target | Actual | Change | Target | Actual | Change | Target | Actual | Change | Target | Actual | Change |
| Goal: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Impact Indicator: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Behavioral Outcome Indicator 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Factor-level Indicators | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Behavioral Outcome Indicator 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Factor-level Indicators | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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