

Setting A Baseline From Scratch

Frequently asked questions

Q: How much data do I need before I can set a baseline?

A: Everything varies, including performance. The trick to setting a sensible and useful baseline is to use enough performance measure values to calculate it, and not use any more than you need. The minimum number of performance measure values you'll need is 5. Sometimes you need more than that, if the KPI's variation is a little chaotic. For example: if your objective is to reduce your fuel consumption, we advise to first collect 5 months of data.

Q: Five? Why not use last' months data as the baseline?

A: This is wrong because a single performance measure value (in this case: 1 month) is too subject to random variability to be representative of the KPI's true level of performance.

Q: I have collected the data five times. What's next?

A: Don't create a baseline until you have a good feel for the frequency of calculation for your measure, and you have enough data for five measure values. Then average those measure values to set your baseline. For example, you want to set a baseline for the monthly fuel consumption of your 4x4 vehicles:

Month	Results (liters per 100 km)
January	11,1
February	11,4
March	11,0
April	11,3
May	10,6
Average of 5 months = baseline	11,08 (rounded = 11)

Q: Can I also take the average of 12 months of data?

A: We do not recommend that because over a 12-month period, there can be many shifts and changes in performance that are different to where performance is now.

Q: Should I capture data for all my objectives at once?

A: The most important point in developing a baseline is not to be too ambitious. **Start with what can be realistically done or else failure is guaranteed.** If, at this moment in time you do not collect any baseline data, we recommend that you start with collecting the data for one of your objectives. Once you made (management of) data collection part of your monthly tasks you can work on setting baselines for your other objectives.

Q: Is a baseline the same as a target?

A: No, they are different things. The target is where we want performance to be, but a baseline is where performance is now.

Example: Let's assume that you want to improve road safety. One of the things you want to reduce is speeding events with 70% (compared to your baseline) before the end of the year.

Week	Results (speeding events per week)
1	50
2	45
3	55
4	70
5	20
Average of 5 weeks = baseline	48

Your baseline is 48. Your target is 14,4 (48-70%), to be reached by the end of the year.

Q: My organisation does not have a fleet management system. How should I capture this data?

A: You can use an excel spreadsheet to collect the data. On the [Fleet Forum Knowledge Platform](#) you can find an example of a data spreadsheet that you can start using.