# Results: represent more than quantitative data

**Note:** This suggestion addresses Principle 1 from a consultation driven by Monitoring and Evaluation experts from UK CSOs Jan – Mar 2017 – see <http://discuss.iatistandard.org/t/results-discussion-space-and-tag-2016-17-path/502/> (specific text relating to Principle 1 copied below as justification). Technical suggestions were devised by technology specialists at the Nethope Athens conference March 2017.

Technical suggestion:

1. Add a “qualitative” code to the *IndicatorMeasure* Codelist
2. Make the *value* attribute optional for
	1. result/indicator/baseline
	2. result/indicator/period/target
	3. result/indicator/period/actual

to allow:

* 1. qualitative results to be expressed in narrative only
	2. distinction between an value of zero versus no value recorded (alternative: use xsi:nil but this may cause complications for csv based tools that do not have the same capability)
1. In order to link documents
* Preferred suggestion:

To be consistent with iati-activity/location element (where location is defined once and referenced in results) add *document-link* (0..\*) to:

* + 1. result/indicator/baseline
		2. result/indicator/period/target
		3. result/indicator/period/actual

with:

* + 1. ref attribute to link to iati-activity/document-link
		2. optional free-text to describe how the document is relevant to the results or indicator
		3. *sub-ref* element (0..\*) to allow free-text reference to a particular area/section/graph/table etc. of a document acknowledging that often only part(s) of a document will be relevant to a given result or indicator.

and add ref attribute to iati-activity/document-link

* Alternative suggestion a:

add *document-link* element (0..\*) (per iati-activity/document-link) to:

* + 1. result/indicator/baseline
		2. result/indicator/period/target
		3. result/indicator/period/actual
* Alternative suggestion b: (If modification <http://discuss.iatistandard.org/t/results-use-of-narrative-elements/746> is not accepted (i.e. use narrative type attribute))

Any document URLs to be included directly as part of existing *narrative* elements.

Justification:

* **Issue:** Currently, only quantitative indicators (units or percentages) may be represented using the IATI standard.
* **Why is this a problem?:** <https://www.bond.org.uk/resources/publishing-results-to-iati> : “There are many interventions in international development where quantitative measures are not relevant or meaningful, for example in relation to much policy-influencing work, and in some forms of capacity-development and empowerment interventions. These are common areas of work for civil society organisations. If there is not scope to report such results, at best CSOs will try to play the game and produce “sausage numbers” (taste nice, but you’d be horrified if you looked into what went into making them), and at worst it incentivises organisations to do more of the measurable work and less of the hard-to-measure work, even if the latter is vital… [T]he focus on these types of results can be reductive, and has been criticised from a number of quarters ranging from the UK’s Independent Commission for Aid Impact (<http://icai.independent.gov.uk/report/dfids-approach-to-delivering-impact/>) to the “Big Push Forward” initiative (<http://www.ids.ac.uk/publication/the-politics-of-evidence-and-results-in-international-development-playing-the-game-to-change-the-rules> and <http://bigpushforward.net/>).”
* **Suggestions:** While some quantitative indicators can provide direct sources of learning (for example: percentage of patients that responded positively to drug X) they cannot reflect the qualitative context that is often necessary for learning and accountability. We suggest that attempting to codify the complexity and shear diversity in projects and their latent learning opportunities could over complicate the results standard and would fail to represent our work. Instead results should be enhanced to allow an optional link(s) to relevant documents/data files (and parts thereof) in addition to the existing narrative to provide the rich context and sustainability considerations that are often required. The specification of values should also be amended to draw a distinction between a 0 versus no data collection. However, even with these suggestions it should be recognised that it is often impossible to record and represent the full range of our activities and resulting impact. We suggest these limitations are clearly documented and included in the standard (see Principle 8 of <>).