

Frequently Asked Questions

What is eProjectBuilder?

ePB is a secure, web-based data entry and tracking system for ESPC, UESC, ESA, ENABLE, and other energy projects (including non-financed ones). ePB is maintained by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory on behalf of the U.S. Department of Energy. It provides a standardized format for collecting and reporting energy project data. ePB also allows users to compare proposed projects against aggregate statistics from a database of historical ESPC projects.

What are the benefits of using ePB?

ePB enables contractors and their customers to maximize the value of their energy project data by:

- Standardizing data formats across different contractors (e.g., ESCOs, utilities, mechanical contractors, etc.) and market sectors
- Facilitating portfolio-level data tracking and reporting
- Generating standardized project financial schedules and portfolio-level reports
- Preserving project information, M&V data and uploaded documents in perpetuity
- Enabling robust data-driven analysis and decision-making
- Providing secure access to staff authorized to review project data
- Empowering customers by providing them access to data for their portfolio of projects

Streamlined and standardized energy project data collection and reporting

ePB provides authorized users with a secure platform for collecting and reporting their energy project data. Standardization enables authorized users to conduct robust tracking, analysis and reporting of their portfolio of projects – across contractors, regions and market sectors.

Preservation and access to project information in perpetuity

ePB enables contractors, customers and others that they authorize to preserve, and have ready access to, proposal, M&V and additional uploaded documents. Project access can be easily transferred in the event of staffing changes. ePB gives contractors and their customers instant access to project information that may be required for contracts and other reporting purposes – in perpetuity.

Is there a fee for using ePB?

No. The ePB system is fully supported by the U.S. Department of Energy and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, and will remain free to domestic users.

How do I register to use ePB?

To request an account, please visit <http://eprojectbuilder.lbl.gov> and click the "Request Account" link.

Am I required to use ePB?

Customers and contractors with projects awarded under DOE-FEMP's indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract and projects awarded under the FEMP ENABLE ESPC program are required to use ePB. [Executive Order 13834](#) encourages all federal agencies to use ePB to improve tracking and accuracy of data for projects implemented with ESPC, UESC, or appropriations. In addition, several state-level ESPC programs require that ESCOs enter project data into eProject Builder.

All other customers and contractors voluntarily use ePB to streamline the collection and reporting of energy projects.

Who can use ePB?

Any customer (federal agencies, states, cities, K-12 schools, higher education, private sector, others) and contractor that would like to use ePB to help facilitate and track energy projects (including ESPC, UESC, ESA, and others) is welcome to use the system free of charge. In addition, anyone may access aggregate statistics from historical ESPC projects on the ePB benchmarking page.

Who needs to register to use ePB?

Anyone who wishes to use ePB to initiate, enter or access individual project data must request an account at eprojectbuilder.lbl.gov. No registration is required to access the Help/Documentation page and the aggregate benchmarking statistics.

What projects can I enter in ePB?

ePB can accommodate a variety of energy project types, including ESPC, UESC, ENABLE, ESA, and others. ePB accepts public and private sector projects.

What are the typical user roles in ePB?

ePB users can choose from several different account types when registering, including customer, ESCO, third party facilitator, utility engaging in UESC, and other. In addition to these different account types (which are requested and assigned upon registration), users can be assigned one of three different roles for a given project -- project initiator (PI), project builder (PB), and project viewer (PV). ePB was designed to be flexible in order to accommodate user needs. Any of the ePB account types can be assigned to any of the three roles (PI, PB, or PV) on a project in ePB, though typically customers play the PI role and contractors act as PBs.

PIs, PBs, and PVs have different capabilities and see different screens and prompts as they navigate through ePB. PIs initiate and approve projects in the system. PBs are responsible for entering and submitting the project data for the PI's review. PIs are responsible for reviewing and approving submitted projects, as well as unlocking projects for revision. PVs have read-only access to already approved projects. A single ePB user could be a PI on one ePB project, a PB on another,

and a PV on yet another. Additionally, users who will be responsible for initiating, entering data for, and approving a single project – such as a long-since-awarded “legacy” project – can be assigned both the PI and PB roles.

Is ePB secure?

LBNL has extensive experience protecting business-sensitive information provided by contractors and their customers. From the very beginning, ePB was designed to protect information using state-of-the-art security features and access restrictions including, but not limited to, encrypted communication protocols, multifactor user authentication, and regular — as well as randomly occurring — vulnerability testing and remediation. LBNL’s systems are certified under NIST 800-53. ePB security features include:

- Encrypted communication protocol: Communication protocol encrypted by transport layer security (i.e., https)
- Multi-factor user authentication: Two-step authentication required with every session log-in, similar to high-security e-commerce websites
- Restricted access: By default each project is initially accessible by only one customer account and one contractor account. Other individuals may be granted read-only access to a project by the customer or contractor account holder.
- Ongoing vulnerability testing and remediation: Regular security scans include ones by LBNL IT department and a third-party government cyber security firm. ePB has maintained a total Rapid 7 Nexpose risk score of zero since 2015.

Who will be able to see my project information?

By default, only the contractor/PB and customer/PI can view individual project data, when a project is first initiated. However, these authorized ePB accounts have the ability to designate PVs at their own discretion. A small team of ePB administrators have the ability to access projects and provide technical assistance in order to ensure that the system functions properly and meets user needs. **No other individuals or authorities have access to project-level data in ePB.**

Will other contractors be able to see my project financial information?

No — other contractors must be invited to view a project by the contractor or customer. Contractors and customers should discuss who they wish to invite to view their project information on ePB.

What if the customer or contractor has a personnel change?

If a customer or contractor organization has a personnel change, a request can be made to epb-support@lbl.gov to reassign the project account (PI or PB) to the appropriate individual. Customers/PIs and contractors/PBs have the ability to remove and add PVs for their individual projects in ePB as needed.

What type of benchmarking information is available?

Aggregate statistics, based on ~6,500 historic ESPC projects, are available at eprojectbuilder.lbl.gov/home/#/benchmark. Statistics immediately available include typical project investment levels, annual savings information, and payback time. Potential future updates to ePB

include the ability to view dynamically generated statistics from projects hosted on ePB in real time. System safeguards ensure that information about individual projects is protected from unauthorized users.

How do ePB users input project data?

Customers/Pis must first initiate a project in the system. After the project has been initiated, contractors/PBs are responsible for data entry and can do so by (1) entering information directly in the ePB user interface or (2) uploading a filled-in Microsoft Excel template (available [here](#)). The latter is more common and easier.

How can I enter my project information?

Project information can be entered either through the user interface, or by populating the latest version of the ePB data upload template, available [here](#). Users may also first upload project data via the data template and continue to add and revise inputs through the ePB user interface.

Do I have to fill out all of the ePB data fields?

Requirements to complete ePB data fields depend on whether users choose to enter project data in “calculating” or override mode. If users choose to enter project data -- either through the ePB website or by using the calculating, or “default,” template), the PB is required to complete a set of pre-determined data fields prior to submitting the project for customer approval. If users do not have the time or resources (or just prefer not) to complete this required information, they can choose to enter project data via the “override” (non-calculating) template. In this case, calculations (except for the simplest column and row summing) are not performed by the ePB system, no fields are required, and users can enter as much (or as little) data as they choose prior to submitting a project for PI approval.

How do I modify or update my project data?

Project data that have not yet been submitted to the database for customer/PI approval can be edited via the online user interface. A contractor/PB may also re-upload project data from the data template. However, it is important to note that uploading from the data template overwrites all project data previously entered in the system (other than project and customer name, project market segment, and contract type).

Project data that have been submitted to the database may only be unlocked for editing by the customer/PI. When a project needs to be modified, the contractor/PB should contact the customer/PI and request that she log in to the system and unlock the project for editing. Once unlocked, the contractor/PB will be able to make changes and re-submit the project for customer/PI review and approval.

How do I export project data?

Users may generate project schedules from the project dashboard, which can be downloaded as a .pdf file. Users can also download their entire portfolio of projects in ePB in a .csv file.

How do I interpret the benchmarking statistics information?

The benchmarking statistics are derived from roughly 6,500 projects that LBNL has collected in collaboration with the National Association of Energy Service Companies (NAESCO) over the past 15 years. The benchmarking statistics contain median values and inter-quintile ranges for annual savings, project investment levels, and simple paybacks — without identifying individual projects. When comparing the figures to your proposed project(s), remember that each project is unique and that the benchmarking information is very coarse. For example, a “major HVAC” project may involve a one-for-one chiller replacement or a substantial chiller plant design. Consequently, it is best to use the statistics as a discussion point with your contractor about why the proposed project might be different than a “typical” project.

Who can I contact if I have a question?

ePB administrators can be reached at 510-486-7442 or via email: epb-support@lbl.gov.

How do I provide feedback on the design of ePB?

Contact the LBNL administrators at the phone number or email above.

What are the software requirements to use ePB?

ePB supports Mozilla Firefox version 10.0.7 or higher, Google Chrome version 30 or higher, Internet Explorer 11, and Safari 9. Users must also have installed Microsoft Excel 14.0 (2010/2011) or higher to be able to use the upload template functionality.