

**DOE Sustainability Dashboard**  
**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**  
November 2021 - Volume I

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**Background:** The following questions and comments were addressed during the DOE FY 2022 Sustainability Reporting Kick Off Meeting and Open Line Help Calls.

The calls are organized and managed by the Sustainability Performance Division (SPD) to assist with annual DOE sustainability reporting and the DOE Sustainability Dashboard. The Open Line Help Calls are held every Wednesday from 2-3 pm (EST) until December 1, 2021. Please visit the Dashboard’s homepage for call-in details: [sustainabilitydashboard.doe.gov](https://sustainabilitydashboard.doe.gov). Note, information addressed in the Site Sustainability Plan Guidance and associated workbooks, Dashboard User Guide, and Dashboard Schedule are not included in this FAQ.

**Contact Information:** Please direct questions and requests to SPD at [sustainability@hq.doe.gov](mailto:sustainability@hq.doe.gov).

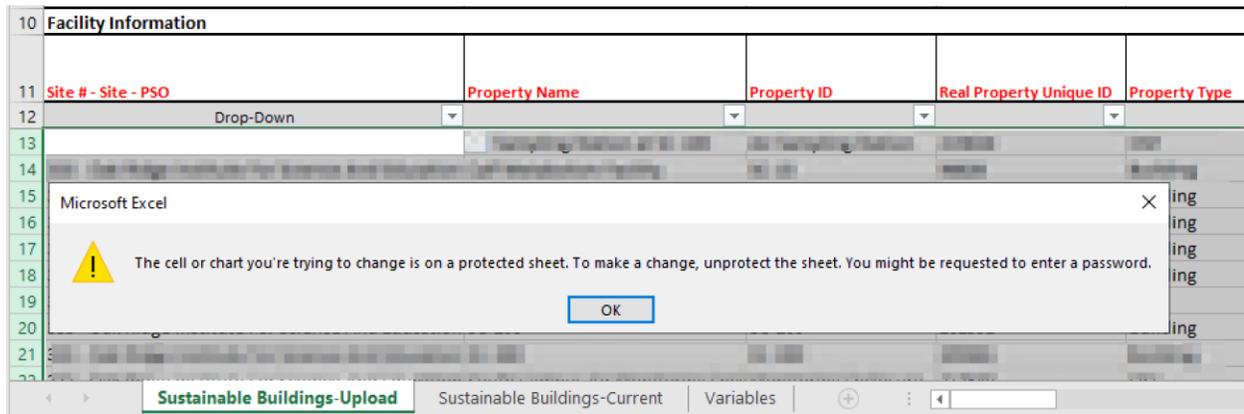
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## General Dashboard

**Question:** The upload template has a “Current” tab which contains data that I need to copy into the “Upload” tab. When I paste, I receive an error stating the sheet is protected. How do I copy and paste data from previous years for upload?

**Answer:** Within the “Current” tab of your upload template, click into the first and last cell that you wish to copy. Once you have copied the data, you can paste it into the “Upload” tab. You cannot copy the data by clicking on the first and last rows of data. Doing so will result in an error.



**Question:** How do I address the flagged data notification on the Dashboard’s homepage?

**Answer:** The Dashboard automatically flags historical data anomalies. Click on the review link to access flagged requests and select “Launch QA/QC” to see a graph depicting year over year changes. Note, SPD sets the threshold for flagging. Please work on reviewing flags and prioritize correcting current FY and baseline years (e.g., 2003, 2007, 2008). The flagging process is new, and SPD continue to improve the process to assist with automation of data quality checks.

## SSP Module

**Question:** In the Dashboard SSP module, why do the bullets differ from the SSP Guidance?

**Answer:** The SSP Guidance lists priority bullets, whereas the Dashboard’s SSP module includes all relevant bullets. If applicable, address the additional bullets in the SSP module. Sites can also download the *FY 2022 SSP Guidance - Dashboard Additional Bullets* document from the Supporting Resources section of the Dashboard. This document includes the bullets from the SSP guidance as well as the additional bullets (in bold).

**Question:** What are the baseline years for each goal category?

**Answer:** The baseline years for tracking sustainability progress are the same as last year and can be found on the Dashboard’s *Comprehensive Scorecard* page.

**Question:** Why are the sustainability targets in the Executive Summary Table more generic (e.g., reduce usage)? Are there specific goals?

**Answer:** Sites are still expected to make year-over-year progress. While we wait for targets from this administration, please continue to strive for improvements in each goal area. Once SPD has more information on targets, we will update the “Comprehensive Scorecard” descriptions and scoring; these will impact FY 2022 reporting.

**Question:** Can you download the projections data entered into the SSP narrative module?

**Answer:** Yes, projections can be downloaded using the “Create a Report” function. Select your desired parameters and within the “CEDR Selection” menu choose “Other SSP Projections”.

**Question:** Where should I upload supplemental documents?

**Answer:** There are multiple areas to upload supplemental documents:

- Sites can upload SSP supporting documents (i.e., workbooks, acronym lists, signature pages) within each category in the SSP module. For example, the Sustainable Acquisitions Contracts Workbook and Biobased Product Purchases Workbook should be uploaded to the Acquisition & Procurement section of the SSP module. The Metering Workbook should be uploaded to the Energy Management section of the SSP module. Acronym lists and signature pages can be uploaded to the Executive Summary category.
- All *Site-level Policy Tracker* pages act as a hub for all policies and plans related to any given category. These pages are particularly useful for uploading documents that do not change frequently. For instance, completed site Vulnerability Assessment and Resilience Plans (VARPs) should be uploaded to the *Resilience Site-level Policy Tracker*. Most *Data Entry* pages have the option to include supplemental documents. For example, evaluation findings for specific buildings can be uploaded to the *EISA S432 – Evaluation* page.

**Question:** Which SSP categories require projections?

**Answer:** Large sites are required to provide projection data for Energy, Water, Waste, Clean & Renewable Energy, and Sustainable Buildings categories. Within these SSP categories, sites can “Add Projected Performance Data” and create a graph depicting future trends. Small sites are encouraged to provide the information. These charts can be copied and pasted in the Plans and Projection Performance comment box or can be added to the SSP appendix by clicking on the “Include in the Appendix” check box.

Add Projected Performance Data

**Projected Performance Data**

If available, please provide estimated and forecasted annual data at a minimum for the current Fiscal Year (FY) along with the next 5 years. If you like to provide data for a longer period, there is flexibility to do so. Once you select data type, starting fiscal year, and forecast period from the picklists below a table with unit information will be built. Enter your data in the table and select “Generate Graph.” To include the graph in the body of your SSP category, copy and paste the graph where you’d like it to display in the SSP. Alternatively, you could elect to have the information be part of an auto generated SSP appendix by checking the “Include in Appendix” box.

Data type:	-- Select --
Starting Fiscal Year:	-- Select --
Forecast Period:	-- Select --

Include in Appendix

**Question:** If we have previously provided projection data, do we need to re-enter the data?

**Answer:** Sites can roll over projection data from last year, and update fields as needed. Within the SSP module, select the 2021 reporting year, then select the “gear” button to roll over previous performance data. Click within that SSP category to adjust the projection data or add a new entry.



## Metering

**Question:** How should I prioritize completing the Metering Workbook?

**Answer:** Leverage last year’s Metering Workbook and prioritize the *Meter Info* tab which focuses on existing/installed meters. Using the FIMS Building Report, add or delete facilities as needed. Then focus on the larger energy consuming facilities (e.g., covered facilities under EISA S432) in the *Asset Info* tab. Finally, if time allows, tackle the other assets. Note, the cells are not locked, and you can use formulas and copy/paste values to complete the workbook. When using formulas in cells with drop-down menus, be sure to uncheck the *Error Alert* box under the *Data Validation* within Excel’s *Data tab*.

**Question:** How do I fill out the “Utility Use/Source Info” columns within the *Asset Info* tab?

**Answer:** For each asset listed in the *Asset Info* tab, identify if the asset uses the energy or water type listed (Electricity, Natural Gas, Steam Chilled Water, etc.) and whether the source is on-site or not. For example, if chilled water is generated by an on-site chiller, select on-site. For water, if pumping up water from a well or harvesting rainwater select on-site.

Note, alternative water is water not obtained from a surface water source, ground water source, or purchased reclaimed water from a third party. Alternative water can include rainwater harvested on site, sump pump water harvesting, gray water, air cooling condensate, reject water from water purification systems, water reclaimed on site, or water derived from other water reuse strategies.

**Question:** What is the difference between fully vs. partially metered in the *Asset Info* tab of the Metering workbook?

**Answer:** An asset (e.g., a building) is *Fully Metered* if every utility serving the asset is metered. For example, a building uses water, steam, and electricity and all of these are metered. An asset is *Partially Metered* if only some of the utilities serving it are metered. For example, the building uses water, steam, and electricity but only water and electricity are metered. Keep in mind, this is agnostic of Federal requirements and is simply based on utilities served and utilities metered.

**Question:** What is the cutoff for “de minimis” use?

**Answer:** The current Federal guidance provides the following requirements for de minimis with a note that if it is cost-effective and beneficial to meter, then the building should be considered for metering regardless of these requirements:

- Energy is by square feet:
  - Food Service/Sales < 1,000 sq. ft.
  - Warehouses < 25,000 sq. ft.
  - All other building functions < 5,000 sq. ft. (Note, draft guidance which is not yet final has 10,000 sq. ft.)

- Water is by consumption and square feet:
  - Large water using process consumption < 1,000 gal/day
  - Irrigated land area < 25,000 sq. ft.
  - All building functions consumption < 1,000 gal/day or < 5,000 sq. ft. (Note, draft guidance which is not yet final has 10,000 sq. ft.)

**Question:** How should we indicate that a meter covers more than one asset?

**Answer:** Ensure that all assets that are covered by a meter are listed under column F, the “Associated Asset ID(s) (RPUID)” column in the *Meter Info* tab.

**Question:** Does energy generated by the building need to be metered?

**Answer:** No. For example, a building that uses fuel oil to generate steam and then circulates the steam for winter heating and uses electricity to generate chilled water for summer cooling. For the building to be considered *Fully Metered*, the fuel oil and the electricity must both be metered while the steam (generated by the building’s boilers) and the chilled water (generated by the building’s chillers) does not.

**Question:** Should the *Meter Info* tab include utility-owned meters, or only customer-owned (i.e., DOE/site-owned) meters?

**Answer:** Both utility-owned and customer owned meters can be included in the *Meter Info* tab. Note, sites cannot count main site/campus utility-owned meters towards compliance but can count it if at the asset/individual building level.

**Question:** Does energy generated on-site, for example by a central plant, need to be metered at the building for which the energy is consumed?

**Answer:** Yes. It is important to meter the energy coming into a building. This is a good practice for benchmarking and estimating losses. For example, if a central plant uses electricity to generate chilled water and distributes that chilled water to another building, the central plant should be metered for the electricity it uses. The client buildings should be metered for the chilled water that they receive from the central plant.

**Question:** Within the “Year Installed/Renewed” column of the *Meter Info* tab, do you want the year when the current meter was installed or when the asset had its first meter installed?

**Answer:** Please enter the latest/current year the meter was installed or enter “unknown” if the information is not available.

**Question:** In the Metering workbook, is the “Real Property Unique ID” found in column C of the *Asset Info* tab, the same as the “Associated Asset ID(s) (RPUID)” found within column F of the *Meter Info* tab?

**Answer:** Yes, these IDs should be the same.

Provide all meter detail information and be sure to map the meter to an asset using the FIMS Real Property Unique ID. Provide asset-level information in

Meter Details							
Metering ID (Set by Site)	Utility Metered	Meter Ty	Meter Connection	Year Installed/ Renewed	Associated Asset ID(s) (RPUID)	Date Correct Function Was Verified	Meter Functionality Status

Facility information has been pre-populated based on FIMS data. Complete all asset level information using the picklists. Provide metering details and mappin

Facility Information		Metering Overview			Utility Use/Source Overview	
Property Name	Property ID	Real Property Unique ID	Metering Status	Installation prioritization, if not metere	Electricity	Natural Ga

**Question:** If a building is metered but the data is inaccurate (i.e., not working properly), how can we note this within the Metering Workbook?

**Answer:** Using the pick list in Column H, Meter Functionality Status, of the *Meter Info* tab, you can indicate whether a meter “Needs Repair or Calibration” or “Needs to be Replaced”. Also note when the meter is scheduled to be fixed in Column I, Repair/Replace Prioritization.

**Question:** For the *Facility Goal Category* module, if the metering column and benchmarking columns are not correct, what do we do?

**Answer:** Metering cannot be corrected on the Dashboard until we receive the site metering workbooks. SPD is working on testing the benchmarking page and importing data from Portfolio Manager. This should automatically fix the field.

## General Facility

**Question:** What is the “Download FIMS Building” Report button used for?

[Download FIMS Building Report](#)

**Answer:** This report provides an overview of asset inventory changes (new or deleted) and updates to remaining assets, such as changes in facility names, gross/rentable sq. ft., and excess status. Be sure to use this report to identify which assets were added and complete the necessary data elements in the Dashboard (e.g., goal subject sq. ft., excluded sq. ft., covered status).

**Question:** The goal subject sq. ft. in the Dashboard does not match FIMS, how do we rectify this?

**Answer:** The only information captured in FIMS is Gross/Rentable sq. ft. (GSF), while goal subject, excluded, and non-energy consuming sq. ft. are captured in the Dashboard. Below is an explanation of the data flow and how to review the data in the Dashboard.

1. SPD downloads select FIMS data fields and uploads them to the Dashboard manually. The data that SPD uploads from FIMS is under “Facility Information” and includes GSF. FIMS does not collect goal or excluded sq. ft.; these are fields in the Dashboard that need to be updated if the GSF has changed.
2. While the GSF will be updated if there have been any changes in FIMS (only after the FIMS upload), the split of the GSF in the adjacent columns will continue to show historical data until it has been manually updated by the site user or SPD.

Select Column(s):  
 Facility Information  Energy Usage Intensity (EUI) & Water Usage Intensity (WUI) Goal  EISA §432 Status  Net Zero Plans

Page: 1 of 1 Go Page size: 10 Change Item 0 to 0 of 0

Facility Information					Energy Usage Intensity (EUI) & Water Usage Intensity (WUI) Goal					
Property Name ▲	Property ID	Real Property Unique ID	Property Type	Ownership	Outgrant Indicator	Gross/Rentable SqFt	Goal Subject SqFt	Excluded SqFt	Non-Energy Consuming SqFt	Non-Water Consuming SqFt

3. When summed, the Goal Subject, Excluded, and Non-Energy Consuming sq. ft. categories should equal the GSF. If these are not equivalent, then the site user must manually adjust the Goal Subject, Excluded, and Non-Energy Consuming sq. ft.
4. As a resource, sites can download the “Download FIMS Building Report” to view what buildings have been deleted, changed, or remain unchanged in FIMS from the previous year.

Facility Goal Category

PSO: NNSA  Count OSF  Count Outgrant

Site: Albuquerque Complex Property Type: All

Site #: 102 Ownership: All

Fiscal Year: 2021 Outgrant Indicator: All

Search Property Name:

Search Property ID:

[Download FIMS Building Report](#) [Update Search Filter](#)

**Question:** How should the Excluded Buildings List and Excluded Building Self-Certification Letter submitted?

**Answer:** Upload both documents to the 'Completion Status' page on the Dashboard. A sample Certification Letter can be downloaded from the "Completion Status" page and the list of excluded buildings can be downloaded from the "Standard Reports" page. Note the two documents need to be combined into one prior to uploading the document to the "Completion Status" page.

## Sustainable Buildings

**Question:** The Sustainable Buildings page will be locked for data entry on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Do we need to get approvals by October 22<sup>nd</sup>, or can we go through the normal November 19<sup>th</sup> Dashboard data approval?

**Answer:** Approvals for Sustainable Buildings data can be completed via the normal approval process by November 19, 2021.

**Question:** In the *Sustainable Buildings* module, where does the FRPP status field come from?

**Answer:** The FRPP Status field is auto-generated based on entry in other fields in the Sustainable Building module. In FIMS, the equivalent sustainability field has a pick list that is consistent with the FRPP Status field in the Dashboard. FRPP status is not pulled from FIMS into the Dashboard. The goal is to have the Dashboard communicate with FIMS to ensure consistency and accuracy in both systems. SPD is aware that there are a few issues with the code for the auto generated status and is working on a fix. Furthermore, FIMS remains the official place of record for reporting FRPP status on the sustainable building.

## Acquisition & Procurement

**Question:** When should I use the Sustainable Acquisition Contracts Workbook?

**Answer:** All service and construction contract actions that cannot be reported in the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) should be reported in this workbook (do not submit duplicative data). Please work with your site's Contracting Officer to ensure FPDS is not already being utilized. Note, sites are only reporting whether sustainability clauses are included in the contract(s) and which type of sustainability clause(s), this does not involve what was actually received/purchased.

**Question:** What if the contract doesn't have an opportunity to include sustainability?

**Answer:** If the site has a contract that does not contain the opportunity for sustainable acquisition, please describe the type of contract(s) and provide the number without "opportunity" for sustainable acquisition in the Sustainable Acquisition Contracts Workbook. Sites must still report the "eligible" data as this is required by OMB and CEQ. Please follow the instructions in the Sustainable Acquisition Contracts Workbook. Note, even for contracts that appear to have no opportunity for sustainability, sites should include clauses requiring the use of 30 percent post-consumer recycled content copy paper and energy efficient electronic equipment. Particularly, if they include the use of paper and electronic equipment in the performance of the contract.

**Question:** Who reports into SAM?

**Answer:** The vendor or contractor responsible for the purchase of the biobased product(s) must report the purchases in SAM.

**Question:** When should I use the Biobased Product Purchases Workbook?

**Answer:** All biobased product purchases that originate from service and construction contracts that cannot be reported in SAM should be reported in this workbook (see the FAQ tab on the workbook for more information and do not submit duplicative data). Please work with your site's Contracting Officer to ensure SAM is not already being utilized.

**Question:** How do I report a biobased product if it doesn't fit in a "category"?

**Answer:** Confirm that the product is listed in the [USDA BioPreferred catalog](#). If not on this list, it is not an approved biobased product by USDA. The Biobased Product Purchases Workbook was updated for FY 2021 reporting and aligns with the latest categories/product types in the BioPreferred list. Any product(s) that does not fit in a specific category should be included as "miscellaneous". If "miscellaneous" is selected, a description of the product(s) must be included.

**Question:** Why can our site not report in SAM?

**Answer:** To report the biobased product purchases, the original contract(s) must be reported in FPDS and have the "Recovered Materials/Sustainability" field coded for any of the available options that include the wording "bio-based" (with the ultimate code selection being dependent upon which other sustainability clauses are applicable). SAM pulls contract information from FPDS and if the contract is coded incorrectly in FPDS then SAM will not allow/request data entry. Note, sites should code the corresponding "Recovered Materials/Sustainability" dropdown selection in FPDS depending on what is written in the contract (all applicable sustainability clauses should be included in the contract).

View the FPDS Guidance tab on either the [Biobased Product Purchases Workbook](#) or [Sustainable Acquisition Contracts Workbook](#) for a list of FPDS codes and their definitions. Note, the Contracting Officer or whoever has access to FPDS for the site will need to fix this coding.

**Question:** Is there a reporting threshold for biobased product purchases?

**Answer:** Yes, sites should report products that originate from a contract with a value equal to or greater than \$10,000. If the site is using SAM for reporting, the contact responsible for the account(s) will automatically receive a notification that the site either does or does not need to submit "BioPreferred Report Information" via SAM. If your site's contract value is below this threshold or purchases are very minimal, please specify in your SSP narrative. Note, contracts must be entered/coded for biobased in FPDS to allow for reporting in SAM (see the workbook for more details).

**Question:** Is there a separate approval process for the biobased product purchases data?

**Answer:** This depends on the site/program. Sites may elect to download the Dashboard Data Accuracy Self-Certification Letter from the "Completion Status" page and specify that this letter is only approving the biobased product purchases data. Sites should upload this letter and the Biobased Product Purchases Workbook to the SSP module's *Acquisition & Procurement* section under "Supporting Documents" (due by October 22, but only needed if not using SAM).

**Question:** How are 'contracts' defined?

**Answer:** Office of Management and Budget's definition of contracts:

- New contracts, including blanket purchase agreements

- Solicitations for new contracts
- Modifications to existing contracts to add sustainable acquisition requirements
- Task orders under existing multi-year contracts
- Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ)
- Multiple Award Contracts
- Multiple Award Schedules

**Question:** How are contract ‘actions’ defined?

**Answer:** Per FAR 23.101 – “Contract action means any oral or written action that results in the purchase, rent, or lease of supplies or equipment, services, or construction using appropriated dollars, including purchases below the micro-purchase threshold.”

## Funding

**Question:** When should I use the new Performance Contracting Schedule Workbook?

**Answer:** If your site is actively pursuing a performance contract, utilize the Performance Contracting Tracking Schedule Workbook to report on current and estimated implementation schedule at each stage of the process. This workbook can be found in the *Supporting Resources* section of the Dashboard. Once complete, upload the completed workbook to the Efficiency & Conservation Measure Investments section of the Dashboard’s SSP module as a supporting document by November 19, 2021.

Performance Contracting Implementation Schedule														
ID #	Site Name	Project Champion	Site Designated Project ID	Facility Zip Code	Estimated Project Value	Contract Vehicle	Agency Develops Acquisition Plan/NOO		Agency Releases NOO		Agency Selects Contractor		Contractor Develops PA	
							Due Date	Actual	Due Date	Actual	Due Date	Actual	Due Date	Actual
1														
2														
3														
4														
5														

**Question:** What should we include in the *Appropriations and Direct Obligation* Table?

**Answer:** Complete the table by accounting for efficiency and conservation measures (ECMs) that are to be funded via appropriated/direct obligations.

**Question:** How should we enter ECM information this year?

**Answer:** The ECM Dashboard module is being revamped to ease the reporting burden and address changes need for reporting under Energy Act of 2020. Please hold on reporting this data until the page updates are completed. Also, please note SPD does not need the data until January 21, 2022.

**Question:** What is the Quarterly ECM snapshot? Is there a due date for all ECM data?

**Answer:** Quarterly data snapshots of EISA §432 and ECM modules are intended to promote, frequent, continual data entry. January 21, 2022 is the hard reporting deadline.

## Commute

**Question:** How should we report on employee teleworking?

**Answer:** SPD has added optional teleworking fields to the *Commute* data entry page in the Dashboard to better capture commuting data. These fields ask for avoided employee miles per day and average commute days per year. These optional fields will be used to better capture avoided greenhouse gas emissions in the future. No avoided emissions will be calculated at this time.

### **Electronics Stewardship**

**Question:** Do leased electronics need to meet EPEAT requirements?

**Answer:** Yes, FAR 23 requires the purchase and lease of EPEAT registered electronics under both the sustainable acquisition and electronics stewardship goals. These should all be reported in the Dashboard.

### **Resilience**

**Question:** What is the VARP requirement and how should sites submit a VARP?

**Answer:** Per the CARP, each site is required to complete a VARP by September 30, 2022. SPD has updated the site-level [VARP Guidance](#), which provides instructions on how to conduct and complete a VARP. Once complete, sites should upload the VARP to the Dashboard's *Resilience Site-Level Policy Tracker* section. Any site with a VARP that contains sensitive national security information, should submit a version with the sensitive information removed, if feasible.