

# CUSTOMER-DRIVEN ENERGY FUTURES ASSESSMENT

Evaluating Current Customer Engagement to Identify Gaps and Opportunities for a Sustainable Energy Future



## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- Gather and analyze energy customer feedback to help energy utilities reduce planning and execution risks, to minimize costly cancellations through early engagement.
- Leverage EPRI's foundational research and expertise to support energy utilities in effective energy customer engagement strategies.
- Infuse company activities with crucial energy customer insights for a successful energy future.
- Help foster public awareness, deepen relationships, and build trust, benefiting infrastructure planning and energy customer engagement efforts.

## Background, Objectives, and New Learnings

EPRI's research indicates that energy utilities prioritize long-term viability for a stable energy future. This project is designed to support energy utilities by gathering and analyzing energy customer feedback that can inform project planning and execution, to reduce risks of project delay (Figure 1). Ongoing engagement with energy company stakeholders can help identify win-win opportunities, support project execution, and create opportunities for continuous two-way dialogue to deliver long-term benefits to both the company and energy customers.

Project cancellations result in average sunk costs of more than \$2 million for solar, and more than \$7.5 million for wind.

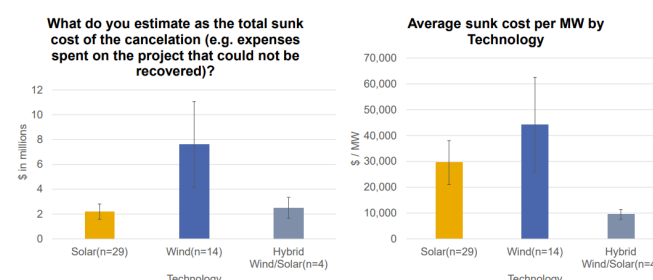


Figure 1. Nilson, et al. (2024) "Survey of Utility-Scale Wind and Solar Developers Report," Lawrence Berkley National Laboratory. [Wind and Solar Developer Survey \(lbl.gov\)](https://www.lbl.gov/developments/energy/customer-engagement/)

EPRI has supported foundational research to evaluate [leading practices of energy customer engagement](#), and applies and hones these findings through individual projects that inform additional collaborative research. EPRI researchers bring expertise in energy customer engagement, objective evaluation, and energy industry operations to analyze customer feedback and deliver short-, medium-, and long-term risk-reduction strategies.

This project aims to empower companies with analysis and actions, and to identify customer-identified obstacles and opportunities for energy projects. This project can benefit companies that are planning energy infrastructure, engaging with energy customers, and seeking to build robust relationships with local organizations.

## Benefits

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- Applying foundational knowledge and identifying emerging leading practices
- Assessing current customer engagement efforts in a specific area
- Providing opportunities, risks, and blind spots related to energy project execution from the customer perspective – organized by short-, medium-, and long-term considerations
- Based on customer input, developing pathways for strategic and tactical company actions to help reduce the risk of project delay.

## Project Approach and Summary

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The structure of this project is designed for customization based on the specific funder's interests. However, the foundational methodology follows the approach articulated below:

- **Evaluation:** An in-depth evaluation of internal and external resources to define project resources, indicators, and leading practices to be leveraged. It will be determined which area/locality will be engaged throughout the project at this stage.
- **Engagement:** Engagement planning and execution will occur in collaboration with the company and project team to represent broad perspectives from the customer base. These engagements will be customized based on local needs and company preferences to ensure the engagement sessions are appropriate and accessible.
- **Analysis:** Customer/local input is organized thematically and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.
- **Deliver:** A final project briefing and technical report for company use to relay high-level findings to local residents, company personnel, and/or necessary stakeholders, to display how customer/local input was used.

## Deliverables

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1. **Initial Evaluation and Project Check-ins:** Virtual evaluation and additional follow-up meetings between EPRI and company staff to discuss the project schedule and other relevant project information.
2. **High-Level Engagement Takeaways Deck:** A PowerPoint deck after feedback sessions are completed to delineate high-level takeaways and themes from these sessions.

3. **Technical Report:** A technical report characterizing the findings from engagement sessions and analyzing customer/local input, including short, medium, and long-term strategic activities to support relationship and trust building between the company and energy customers
4. **Final Project Brief:** A one-hour, virtual final project brief including a PowerPoint deck with key findings from the project.

## Price of Project

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\$85,000 per company to complete the outlined deliverables (subject to customized scope).

## Project Schedule

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This project is expected to take 12 months to complete.

## Who Should Join

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This project aims to benefit companies that maintain energy infrastructure, plan and site new infrastructure, engage with residents and energy customers, seek relationships with local organizations, and/or aspire to mitigate project delays or cancellations. It may also appeal to companies interested in assessing engagement processes or companies with specific residents who must be engaged when considering energy infrastructure.

## Contact Information

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For more information, contact the EPRI Customer Assistance Center at 800.313.3774 ([askepri@epri.com](mailto:askepri@epri.com)).

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