

CASE STUDY

Software Tools Use Case Evaluation and Gap Analysis for Austin Energy T&D System Planning and Related Functions

EPE was engaged by a utility company in Texas to conduct an independent assessment of T&D System planning processes and modeling tools. The utility was seeking to identify and implement solutions to expand existing technology and incorporate distributed energy resources to improve the efficiency, accuracy, and cost-effectiveness of their modeling, studies, and recommendations.

CHALLENGE

The utility had been experiencing significant pressure on T&D system planning, management and operating processes. Rapid changes as a result of new technology, load growth in major cities, and climate change created significant challenges in planning and operating the distribution system. This led the utility to seek out partners to serve as an extension of their existing team to support new planning methodologies and tools.



SOLUTION

Our team began by meeting with key planning and operations stakeholders to conduct a full review of existing processes, tools, data sources and identified needs, and to help direct future goals and forthcoming challenges. This provided a complete inventory of the utility's priorities and immediate needs.

Then, EPE identified stretch use cases which captured potential future planning study and operational needs.

It ensured the resulting investments and process changes prepared the utility for future challenges.

Based on our assessment, we recommended a suite of software, tools, and processes that would empower the utility company's T&D planners to make modifications to existing technology and leverage new technology to help them manage their assets more efficiently and make better planning decisions.

RESULTS

The implementation of our recommendations has helped the utility to leverage new data sources, new study capabilities, and faster execution to reduce planning study costs, improve DER interconnection study timelines, improve reliability, and better optimize system investments and equipment operations. EPE is proud to have had a part in the success of this team and we look forward to continuing to support them in their T&D efforts in the future.