

ENERGY MANAGEMENT TOOL (EMT)

Frequently Asked Questions

General

Q- What is Local Authority Services Limited?

LAS is a wholly owned subsidiary company of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. LAS' mandate is to provide innovative programs and services to Ontario municipalities and the broader public sector that leverage economies of scale, resulting in increased revenues or decreased costs for these organizations

Q- What is the EMT?

EMT - the Energy Management Tool is a web-based software application offered by LAS that enables municipalities to: benchmark and compare facility energy performance, reduce operational costs and improve processes, measure and verify savings from energy conservation projects, and meet corporate environmental stewardship goals including Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reductions.

Q- Why is LAS offering the EMT to Ontario municipalities?

LAS decided to offer the EMT as it is compatible with our existing suite of energy programs and services, as well as our mandate of providing unique programs and services to municipalities that increase staff capacity and reduce the need to duplicate services across the sector.

Q- Why should my municipality use the EMT? What is the value?

The EMT enables municipalities to track energy costs and consumption, benchmark facility energy performance, track GHG emissions, as well as verify energy savings realized by operational changes or facility retrofits – this is important information in seeking out government or utility incentives.

The EMT also enables corporate environmental stewardship by allowing for the development of custom reports by municipal users or by LAS staff (for users). The distribution of reports can be scheduled so that information is always in the hands of the staff that need it most – i.e. cost reports to finance, consumption reports to operations, and trend analysis reports to senior administration. In short, the EMT allows municipalities to take charge of their energy use by better understanding and tracking all related components.

Q- Can I see the EMT in action?

LAS offers regular webinar demonstrations of the EMT. A regularly updated schedule of webinar times is available at the [LAS website](#) – under Events. After you attend a webinar you can request a demo login for the EMT so you can look around and review some reports.

Q- Is my municipality too small to benefit from the EMT?

No municipality is too small for the EMT! Regulations related to the *Green Energy Act* will require all public sector agencies (including municipalities) to prepare energy plans including annual progress updates, which will be publicly available. The EMT can make

the development and ongoing revision of these reports easier for municipalities as the required information can be pulled out of EMT in easy to read reports.

Aside from regulatory requirements, every municipality has at least one large energy consuming facility (i.e. town hall, arena, waste water treatment facility, etc.) that would benefit from close tracking of energy costs, consumption, and usage patterns. It is easy to realize energy (and cost) savings if these items are closely monitored, and this can be easily facilitated with the EMT.

Q- How will the EMT benefit medium/large sized municipalities?

The EMT allows municipalities to meet the future requirements related to the *Green Energy Act* requiring all public sector agencies (including municipalities) to prepare energy plans including annual progress updates.

In addition, the EMT can foster the development of corporate energy management strategies by encouraging environmental stewardship vis-à-vis easy access to facility benchmarking, GHG emissions tracking, baseline reporting, analysis of energy consumption, as well as a planned ability to report on facility attributes. EMT functionality also allows for multi-variable reports, QUSUM analyses, and the real-time interrogation of interval meters (at hourly intervals).

Q- How can the EMT help my municipality secure CDM grants and incentives related to energy management projects?

The EMT allows you to show consumption patterns over time, and using a variety of intervals. Given that much of the funding available from senior levels of government and local utilities related to energy retrofit projects is contingent upon the demonstration of energy savings, the EMT makes it easy to quickly demonstrate ongoing savings from a determined energy baseline – often referred to as a QUSUM analysis.

Q- Can the EMT help my municipality satisfy the expected requirements of the Green Energy Act?

As noted above, the EMT can help municipality Regulations related to develop meaningful energy plans including annual progress updates as will be likely be required under the *Green Energy Act*. The EMT has the ability to track energy costs and consumption, GHG emissions, and other key performance indicators.

Interval Meters

Q- What are interval meters and what is the benefit?

The type of meter you have can determine how you are charged for electricity. Interval meters provide more granular data - hourly or more frequent, which provides flexibility in determining how you can be billed for energy usage (i.e. RPP or spot market rates).

Interval meter data can help municipalities manage their energy consumption by showing:

- when and how often you reach a demand peak, which determines your delivery charges for each billing period
- whether your energy use coincides with the most expensive times of the day
- how your electricity use varies by day, week, and month
- what your 'baseload' energy use is

(From the IESO)

Q- Does the EMT work with interval meters?

The EMT allows for the near real-time connection and monitoring of interval meters – the lag is only 15 minutes depending on the meter. Using the EMT, municipalities can closely monitor consumption and facility demand as well as power quality factors via their interval meter. This level of monitoring can help municipalities to manage demand control schemes such as load shedding, peak shaving, or on-site generation, among other factors.

Q- Will LAS work with me to connect an existing interval meter to the EMT?

LAS IT staff will work closely with enrolled municipalities and their municipal IT departments to connect existing interval meters to our EMT system.

Q- Does LAS offer a program to purchase and install interval meters that are compatible with the EMT?

Yes. LAS is pleased to partner with Schneider Canada to provide municipalities with cost effective access to a series of ION interval meters. LAS' collaboration with Schneider also includes the ability to help facilitate a consistent meter installation process for any interested municipality.

Enrollment

Q- How do I sign up to use the EMT? What are the steps?

Visit the LAS website or contact LAS staff to receive an information package for the EMT. If you are interested in learning more, participate in a webinar session to see the tool in action. [When is the next EMT webinars scheduled?](#)

Once your municipality has determined that you would like to use the EMT, request a service agreement and enrollment package from LAS by contacting the undersigned. Once all materials are submitted LAS will work with your municipality to get all accounts enrolled, source names created, and data inputted into the system.

Q- Can we access sample data and test the EMT software?

A "Demo" municipality login is available for municipal staff that want to try the EMT. The login is provided only to municipalities that have taken part in a webinar session as these sessions assist users in finding their way around the EMT.

Q- What EMT service levels are available?

The EMT is designed for municipalities who want access to a robust and current software tool but wish to enter all data, and generate reports themselves – this is our “self serve” option.

The EMT also offers a “full serve” option to municipalities who would rather have data inputted and reports generated by LAS and exported to the municipal user(s) on a regular basis. The details of both service offerings and related fee schedules are addressed in the [EMT Information Sheet](#).

Q- What are the costs related to using the EMT?

There is a one-time initial setup cost for each municipality enrolling with the EMT (based on number of enrolled accounts) as well as an optional cost related to the acquisition and uploading of historic data for all enrolled accounts. Secondly, ongoing fees for the EMT include a monthly account-based subscription fee for all users, as well as other optional costs related to data acquisition and upload. In addition, there is an “account management” fee for users that subscribe to the full serve option.

The fees charged by LAS are to recover the costs associated with providing this service to Ontario municipalities.

Q- Is there a tool available to help my municipality determine the approximate cost of utilizing the EMT?

LAS has developed a [Service Options Calculator Tool](#) which will help municipalities determine all start-up and ongoing costs they can expect from using the EMT. The tool allows municipalities to play with a number of different service options – i.e. number of accounts to enroll, data input vs. third party data gathering, Full vs. Self Serve, how much historic data to input, etc.

Q- Is there a term commitment related to using the EMT?

There is no minimum time commitment for the EMT but due to the large amount of up-front work completed by the municipality and LAS to get historical data into the EMT, it is sensible to look at the EMT as a multi-year project; the more data inputted into the software and the longer the period covered, the more meaningful the outputs can be for your municipality.

Q- What staff capacity is required to administer the self-serve option?

For any municipality that already tracks energy cost or consumption data across all accounts, the self serve option should not be overwhelming. This option is premised on the basis that the municipality will use the tool as though it is their own, and will generate desired reports and comparisons in-house and distribute them to the affected users. This approach does require a sizeable amount of staff time.

Self serve users can choose to input their own invoice data into the EMT or have LAS complete this task at an additional cost.

Q- What training will be provided to EMT users – at enrollment and ongoing?

As municipalities enroll with the EMT, user guides and other printed materials will be provided and webinar trainings scheduled. This will provide the user(s) with an introduction to the EMT. LAS will also offer regional workshops (at least annually, but more frequently as enrollment warrants) so that users can come together to learn more about the tool.

Q- Is there a user guide for the EMT?

A user guide and other self-training materials will be provided to all municipalities as they enroll with the EMT.

Q- Can I switch between self and full service options after I have enrolled?

Yes. As your municipality develops its energy management capacity and you wish to take greater control over your usage of the EMT, you can switch to a different service EMT service level. Conversely if you feel that you could benefit from additional LAS assistance related to energy management options (i.e. full serve), you can switch service levels.

Q- How will LAS invoice me for preliminary costs to get involved with the EMT and also for ongoing costs?

LAS will invoice all enrolled municipalities for the start-up costs after all municipal sources are created and all data is entered into the EMT. Subsequent to this monthly (ongoing) services will be billed to the municipality on a calendar month basis.

Functionality**Q- How do I (or other municipal staff) access our data in the EMT?**

The EMT is a web-based tool which is accessible through either the AMO or LAS websites. As a municipality signs up, they will determine a key user(s). This user can then request the addition of additional municipal users by advising LAS staff.

Q- How much historic data can/should be put into the EMT at time of enrollment?

This is to be determined by the municipality. LAS suggests that 24 months of historic data be inputted into the EMT to provide a sound baseline source of data, but individual municipalities can determine to input less (or more) data if desired. The only consideration related to data entry is the cost if the municipality is not inputting the invoice data themselves and is planning on using LAS' optional data acquisition methods.

Q- What is “on-going” data retrieval?

This is the ongoing month to month data for all enrolled utility accounts. LAS offers EMT users a number of options to get this data into the EMT, if bill copy entry is not desirable for the municipality. See options listed above.

Q- What options are available to get cost/consumption data (historic and ongoing) entered into the EMT?

The EMT is designed to allow users to enter their own data but LAS can also facilitate the input of data for enrolled municipalities as well.

Self Serve users can enter their own data into the EMT direct from bill copies if they have the resources to do this or the budget. In light of the limits of staff time, LAS has conceived a number of alternative ways to get both historic and ongoing data into the EMT. All services noted below have an associated cost that cover off LAS staff time/costs related to the service rendered – more details are available on the [Program Information Sheet](#).

- Data can be accessed from a third-party data provider
- LAS can upload data that the municipality acquires direct from the local utility or LDC – a specific format for all data must be followed
- Data can be imported from an existing energy software tool - a specific format for all data must be followed (this option would be relevant only for historic data)
- LAS can input data into the EMT for the municipality – the municipality would have to provide bill copies to LAS for all accounts and months.

Q- How many of my accounts should be enrolled in the EMT?

The number of accounts that should be enrolled with the EMT is dependent on municipal objectives: some municipalities enroll all accounts in order to maintain a corporate energy profile and to monitor Greenhouse Gas emissions, whereas other municipalities are more focused on energy reduction and choose other methods – i.e. the 80/20 rule. In this approach the municipality enrolls 20% of the accounts that represent approx. 80% of their total load.

Q- What types of commodity data can be loaded in the EMT?

Both Interval and non-interval data can be loaded into the EMT; the EMT is set up to accommodate energy, natural gas, propane, and water data.

Q- Does the EMT include weather data?

The EMT maintains an ongoing repository of weather data from a large number of Environment Canada weather stations across the province on an hourly basis. This data is available to all EMT users and can help municipalities develop reports that will normalize their consumption for weather.

Q- What is Utility Bill Verification and why should my municipality consider it?

Bill validation and verification includes reviewing energy account invoices to ensure that all rates, consumption values, and other distribution charges, are correctly applied on the invoice. Monitoring and verification of these items will help municipalities to ensure that they have been charged correctly by the local utility for their energy consumption.

Q- If my municipality participates in the LAS Electricity Procurement Program, can my consumption data be inputted into the EMT?

Yes, but the data will sometimes lag up to 2 months after the data is billed by the local utility/LDC.

Q- If my municipality participates in the LAS Natural Gas Procurement Program, will my consumption data be inputted into the EMT?

Unfortunately not. We are only able to get easy access to consumption data from the gas utilities on an annual basis.

Union Gas has however made it easy for municipalities to gain access to historical consumption data through their [Union MyAccount](#) website. Contact LAS to discuss how your municipality can use this tool to gather data for input into the EMT.

Enbridge Gas is expected to offer a web-based tool with similar functionality beginning in summer 2009.

Technical

Q- Where is the EMT software hosted?

The EMT system is hosted at LAS and is web accessible via the AMO or LAS website.

Q- Are there any security risk related to using EMT as it's an online software tool?

The only security concern involves the connection of interval meters to the system (if applicable), and the concern is minimal. LAS IT staff will walk each municipality through this process for any interval meters they may have at the time of EMT enrollment or in the future.

Q- Is there a licensing fee for the EMT?

LAS has negotiated a licensing arrangement with the software provider that is based at the program level – not borne by individual users at the account or user level. The licensing fee and other overhead costs are paid by LAS and are recovered via the monthly subscription fee charged to each user.

If you have any other questions please contact:

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