

PBA glossary guide - Northmore Gordon

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PBA

PBA stands for Project Based Activities. These are more complex energy efficiency activities that warrant investigation beyond prescribed standards, particularly within the Victorian Energy Upgrades scheme. Project-based activities typically require a deeper level of assessment and documentation than standard prescribed measures, involving detailed feasibility analysis, custom measurement approaches, and individualized verification of outcomes. Organizations considering project-based activities should engage with assessors experienced in scheme requirements to ensure appropriate scoping and evidence gathering from project inception.

Related guidance

Carbon advisory

Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions

Certificates

Government schemes

Certificate trading

Measurement and verification

What does PBA stand for?

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How do Project Based Activities differ from prescribed measures in energy efficiency schemes?

Project-based activities are more complex than prescribed measures and require investigation beyond standard specifications. While prescribed measures follow set requirements and streamlined processes, PBAs demand custom assessment, feasibility studies, and tailored measurement plans. The Victorian Energy Upgrades scheme distinguishes these categories because PBAs involve unique circumstances, equipment combinations, or operating conditions that cannot be adequately addressed through standard pathways. This distinction affects timeline, evidence requirements, cost estimation, and the expertise needed to develop a credible investment case and verification framework for the project.

What types of energy projects typically qualify as Project Based Activities?

Project-based activities generally include complex energy improvements involving specialized equipment, unique operational requirements, or custom combinations of measures. These might encompass industrial process modifications, custom renewable energy installations, complex control system upgrades, or facility-specific efficiency improvements that don't fit standard measure definitions. Each PBA requires individual assessment to establish eligibility, measurement boundaries, baseline conditions, and savings calculation methodologies. Organizations should prepare detailed site information, operating data, and project descriptions when investigating whether their initiative qualifies as a PBA under the applicable scheme.

What preparation is needed before submitting a Project Based Activity for assessment?

A project brief documenting the site location, business problem, existing equipment, proposed intervention, operating constraints, and available evidence provides an effective starting point. Include energy bills, interval data, production records, and any existing studies. Define the decision required—feasibility, measurement plan, or funding assessment—and identify timing constraints. Prepare equipment summaries, operating schedules, and clarify entity and facility boundaries. Document any prior studies, quotes, or funding applications. This preparation allows assessors to scope appropriate investigation depth and identify evidence gaps early, supporting proportionate assessment and informed decision-making before significant investment.

Why is early measurement planning important for Project Based Activities?

Measurement planning at project inception establishes baseline conditions, defines what will be measured post-implementation, and identifies data quality requirements before work commences. For PBAs, early planning prevents measurement challenges later by clarifying operating variables, establishing metering needs, and documenting baseline procedures that independent verification professionals must deem appropriate. This approach preserves timing-sensitive funding options and ensures evidence can support outcome claims. Organizations should engage with M&V specialists during the feasibility stage rather than after completion, when measurement boundaries become harder to establish and opportunities for evidence gathering may be lost.

How does the investment case support Project Based Activity decisions?

An investment case synthesizes feasibility findings, capital costs, operating savings estimates, certificate revenue potential, and financial metrics to enable management decision-making. For PBAs, the business case should compare alternatives using consistent assumptions, distinguish verified outcomes from forecasts, and identify what could change the project's financial viability. It addresses operating requirements that must be maintained and clarifies dependencies on scheme eligibility, funding approval, or measurement results. A transparent early-stage case showing assumptions and sensitivities is more useful than a precise-looking return built from unverified inputs, supporting informed capital allocation decisions.

What role do environmental certificates play in Project Based Activity economics?

Environmental certificates—including energy-efficiency certificates, renewable attributes, or carbon credits—can contribute revenue to PBA economics but should not be assumed without scheme verification. Different certificate types (VEECs in Victoria, ESCs in NSW, ACCUs for carbon projects) have distinct eligibility pathways, calculation methodologies, and timing requirements. Certificate quantity, eligibility, verification cost, and sale price are separate variables requiring independent assessment. Organizations should develop base-case economics without unconfirmed incentives, then present certificate scenarios separately. Early scheme eligibility review ensures appropriate evidence gathering from project inception and prevents post-completion surprises about certificate viability or value.

Which Northmore Gordon services support Project Based Activity assessment and implementation?

Our relevant services include energy audits tailored to PBA complexity, measurement and verification planning and delivery, feasibility studies, investment case development, and environmental certificate support covering project registration, evidence gathering, and trading. We conduct site assessments to establish baseline conditions, develop measurement plans appropriate to scheme requirements, and provides ongoing performance monitoring. For complex projects, we can coordinate with funding pathway assessment specialists and scheme-compliance advisers. Organizations should specify their decision requirements—feasibility assessment, measurement planning, or post-implementation verification—when engaging to ensure appropriate service scope and expertise allocation.

How should timing be managed for Project Based Activities under energy schemes?

Project timing affects evidence preservation and funding eligibility significantly. Schemes have specific commencement and registration requirements; work performed before formal eligibility confirmation may not qualify for intended incentives. Early engagement with scheme specialists clarifies timing constraints before purchasing equipment or commencing work. Organizations should document the project chronology—studies, applications, nominations, commitments, equipment purchases, and physical work dates—to demonstrate compliance with scheme rules. Our project brief template and timing guidance help organizations understand scheme requirements and preserve options by establishing clear project stages and decision points before irreversible commitments occur.

What documentation should be maintained throughout a Project Based Activity?

Comprehensive project documentation should include the baseline measurement procedure and operating variables, implementation records showing what was installed and when it was commissioned, interval meter data and energy records, operating schedules and production information, scheme application and registration evidence, and verification calculations with assumptions clearly stated. A project file organized by decision stage—assessment, feasibility, approval, implementation, verification—provides the central repository for evidence. This documentation supports scheme compliance, enables independent verification, clarifies responsibilities between parties, and provides traceable evidence if disputes arise. Early organization of documentation reduces verification costs and strengthens certificate applications or outcome claims.