

Why Use Cases?¹

Use Cases were initially developed in the Computer Software and Information Technology fields to help identify, clarify and organize high-level system requirements. Use Cases are generally vision documents that help clarify a goal or vision of a project or a solution. Increasingly, the Use Case model is being employed in many different fields, because it enables business analysts and product development teams to collaborate and determine the requirements of a project.

Energy Division Staff has proposed adopting the Use Case approach to help clarify Priority Scenarios for energy storage adoption. Use Cases provide a simple method and consistent format to decide and describe the purpose of a project – in this case, the application associated with energy storage.

Use Cases are documents that illustrate the context that allows us to easily picture where and how storage can be used in the utility system, thus promoting clearer decision-making.

At a minimum, Use Cases need to consider two concepts, and how they relate:

- the *actors*
- the *goals*

Actors are everyone and everything that will use energy storage for this particular application. Goals are what one, some, or all of the actors want to achieve. To be complete, every Use Case must describe a specific goal and the actors that will perform tasks to achieve that goal.

Additionally, Use Cases for storage match the major operating characteristics of a storage technology to meet the needs of specific identified applications, assess the relevant values and benefit streams of that application against its expected costs, and identify barriers that might hinder this use, while providing a strategy for how to overcome those barriers.

The purpose of describing Use Cases is not to fully specify the exact nature of each and every energy storage project and their relevant technologies (i.e., specifications of a particular device, how a particular project is designed, or how it is to be developed, financed and built).

Instead, Use Cases define goals and purpose: the problems we are trying to solve. Establishing these goals lays the foundation for the scope of analysis that will follow.

A well-constructed Use Case can be understood by all the stakeholders. It can also help in achieving a balanced approach, where policies are considered for the entire ecosystem, rather than one particular actor.

Use-case driven development is a mindset, as much as it is a technique. A solid early foundation of understanding among all concerned parties allows more rapid decision-making, and encourages a continual focus on the storage project's value.

In sum, Use Cases are illustrative documents that help with the understanding of how all pieces fit together

¹ This brief was adapted from: *What's the Problem?* Norm Carr & Tim Meehan, January 2005, on A List Apart website.