FEMA Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) Toolkit 6.0 Release Notes

System requirements

- Microsoft Office 2013 or newer; or internet connectivity to access Excel Online

What's new

- Excel-based platform
- Compatible with both Windows and Macintosh operating systems
- Streamlined user interface and improved user experience
- Reduction in number of manual-input data fields
- Improved help content
- Improved report formatting
- Google Maps-based address lookup and standardization

Major differences from Version 5.3

- Version 5.3 has the Damage Frequency Assessment (DFA) methodology as a separate module. In Version 6.0, the DFA methodology is built into all the hazard modules.
- Version 6.0 does not allow the user to attach files within the Toolkit or alert the user that required documentation for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant applications is missing.
- Version 5.3 saves all the user's projects in one location. Version 6.0 saves projects within the .xlsx file, allowing the user to define their own file management protocol.
- For more information, please see the BCA Toolkit 6.0 User Guide.

Important notes

- Users should continue to use Version 5.3 for seismic building retrofit projects (structural and non-structural). Seismic retrofit projects for non-buildings (i.e. utilities or roads/bridges) or other seismic retrofit projects performed using either the Historical or Professional Expected Damages approach may be analyzed in Version 6.0. An update to Version 6.0 is planned for release later in 2019 that will include an improved methodology for seismic building retrofit BCAs.
- There is no way to import or export projects between Versions 5.3 and 6.0.
- Exports from Version 6.0 are encrypted .zip files. There is no need to unzip the file when importing.
- Version 6.0 is not recommended for use on iOS devices.

Known issues

- Standard benefits for seismic structural and non-structural retrofit projects do not calculate correctly. As noted above, users should continue to utilize Version 5.3 to evaluate these projects.
- The Export Projects and Print Report functions do not work properly in Excel for Mac. As a workaround, users may take screenshots of the add-in window.
- When using Version 6.0 in Excel Online, once the add-in window is closed, saved projects will not reappear. The projects are still saved in the file and may be accessed using the desktop version of Excel. Alternatively, projects may be exported and saved locally, and then imported if the user wishes to reopen the project in Excel Online.
- When using Version 6.0 on iOS devices, projects may not save.
- Fixes for the above issues are planned for the next release.

Download, installation, and launch

- Please see www.fema.gov/benefit-cost-analysis or the BCA Toolkit 6.0 User Guide for download, installation, and launch instructions.

Technical assistance

- FEMA's BCA Helpline is available to provide assistance using the BCA Toolkit.
- The BCA Helpline cannot review or perform BCAs. Assistance requests in reviewing or performing BCA and eligibility or policy questions should be directed to the local State Hazard Mitigation Officer.
- The Helpline's hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (EST) Monday through Friday. Questions to the BCA Helpline can be directed to bchelpline@fema.dhs.gov or by calling toll free at 1-855-540-6744.