

Introduction to



The Next Generation of Policy Insight

Welcome

Welcome to PI⁺, the next generation of Policy Insight! This guide is intended to assist Policy Insight users moving to PI⁺. New users should refer to the “Getting Started with PI⁺” guide.

Introduction

The most significant difference between Policy Insight and PI⁺ is the user interface. The changes are extensive, but they are not merely “change for the sake of change.” They are intended to achieve specific improvements in:

- Usability – Providing a results-oriented approach that lets you focus on your work, instead of how the software works
- Capability – Exposing the power that is already present in Policy Insight, making advanced features more accessible for experienced and casual users alike
- Extensibility – Creating a framework for adding new features in an organized and logical fashion

To accomplish these goals, the new design:

- Incorporates a ribbon approach instead of traditional menus
- Integrates a study guide within the structure of the software
- Includes a workbook manager
- Expands the functionality of the results viewer

The following sections describe these aspects of PI⁺, and how operation of PI⁺ resembles and differs from Policy Insight.

The Ribbon

PI⁺ uses a “ribbon” design, created by Microsoft®, and first used for the 2007 release of the Microsoft Office System. Context-sensitive ribbons replace the drop-down menus and toolbar buttons used in Policy Insight.



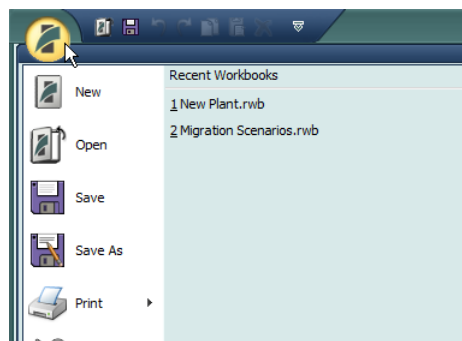
Some of the advantages of the ribbon approach for PI⁺ include:

- Only commands related to the current task are shown
- Functions are easy to identify, with labels and detailed pop-up descriptions
- Features are immediately apparent, rather than “buried” in a fixed menu structure.

Many users will find features they didn’t know were already in Policy Insight, right alongside the new capabilities of PI⁺.

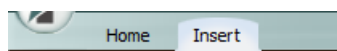
Application Button

The Application Button is used for accessing application-wide options such as Save, Open, and Print. It is similar to the File menu in Policy Insight.



Ribbon Tabs

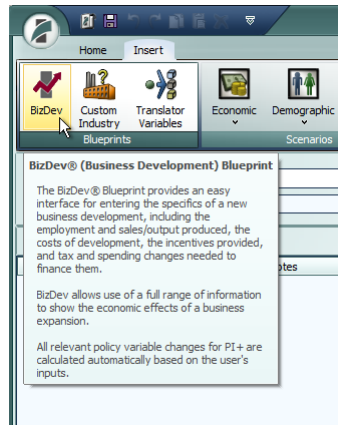
PI⁺ features are accessed from multiple ribbon tabs. The Home tab lets you create new forecasts, and switch between existing forecasts. It is always available. Other tabs have features related to specific tasks and views, and are only available when certain information is being displayed.



When a new view is opened, the appropriate tab usually appears automatically. If you move away from this view and come back later, you may need to manually select the tab.

ScreenTips

Many ribbon buttons will display detailed descriptions when you “hover” over them with the mouse cursor.



Integrated Study Guide

The study guide integration provides a “best practices” approach to assist in the analysis of general and specialized scenarios. There are several methods for policy variable selection, which provide varying levels of detail and assistance.



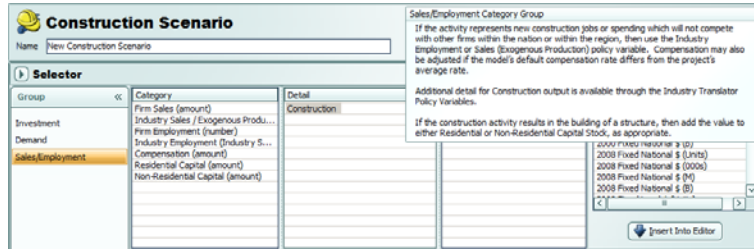
Blueprints are fully interactive, guided interfaces:

- BizDev®
- Custom Industry
- Translator Variables

Scenarios present suggested policy variables for a specific type of analysis or project:

- Construction
- Employment & Sales
- Farm Industry
- Government Industry
- International Markets
- Productivity
- Sales Tax
- Labor Force
- Migration
- Natural Growth
- Special Population
- Base Realignment and Closure
- Cap and Trade
- Higher Education

Policy variable concepts are grouped together in a meaningful way, with detailed text explanations and tips visible on each window.



Lists provide the traditional Policy Insight grouping by economic concept and the five blocks in the model's design:

- Topics (such as Business Costs)
- Model Blocks (such as Output and Demand)
- Economic, Demographic, and Full Alphabetical Lists

Workbook Files

Policy Insight and PI⁺ both store your work in “REMI Workbook” files, which have **.RWB** as the filename extension. Policy Insight used workbooks as *databases*; new work was always added to the same workbook file unless you chose to open a different one. This made it all too easy to have a large number of forecasts in the same file, which can lead to several problems – confusion about the purpose of each forecast, accidental modification of forecasts, or lost work due to a damaged file.

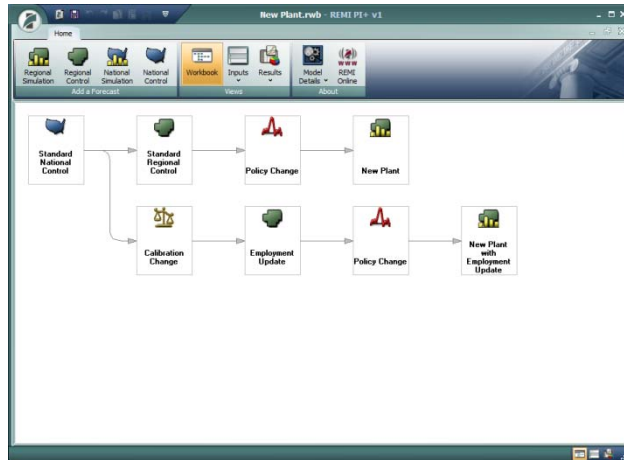
Workbooks in PI⁺ are more easily treated as *documents*, rather than a single “big bucket” for all of your work. When PI⁺ is opened, it starts with an empty workbook called Untitled.rwb. When you save your work, you are prompted to save to a new workbook file.

Although you may run and save several new forecasts within the same workbook, we advise you to use multiple workbooks instead. You should only save forecasts in a single workbook when you want to compare them to each other.

The application button lists workbooks you have recently created or opened, allowing you to easily switch between them. The most recently used workbooks will be at the top of the list. There is also a backup feature that allows you to quickly save a copy of the current workbook to an alternate location, such as a network or portable drive.

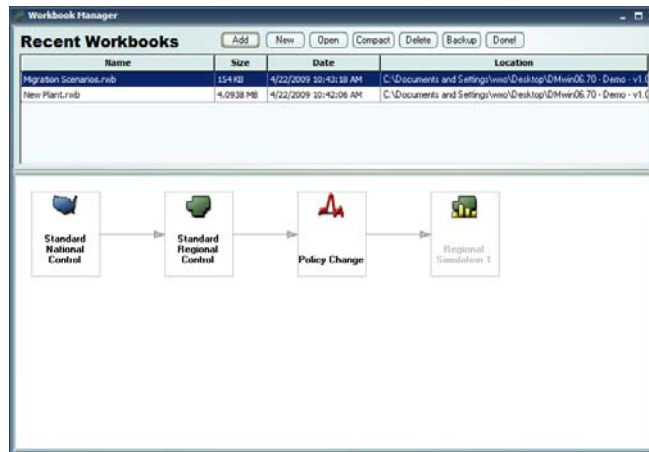
Diagram View

The Diagram view replaces the previous Project Manager. It shows a more detailed view of the forecasts in the current workbook, and the relationships between them.



Workbook Manager

The Workbook Manager helps to preview, copy, and make backups of workbooks for different projects and runs of PI⁺.



Forecast Views

The tabbed interface for forecasts in Policy Insight has been replaced by several “views.”

Inputs List

This view contains all of the inputs and settings for the simulation. It combines the functions of several tabs into a single display.



From here, you can add inputs to the forecast by choosing items from the Insert ribbon. The Blueprints are interactive, guided interfaces for specific types of simulations. Each will create a group of inputs on the list. Scenarios, Topics and Lists bring up specific variable groups in the Policy Variable Selector described below.

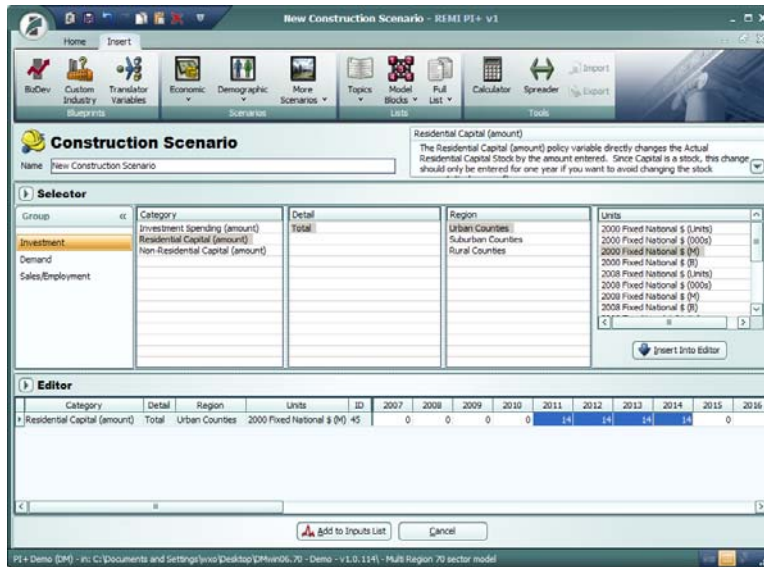
When you have created all of the necessary inputs for the forecast, click “Run Now” to generate the results. The Results Browser will be displayed when the run is completed.

Note that:

- Variable values are displayed for reference, but are not editable. Values are entered and edited using other views, such as Blueprints and the Policy Variable Editor.
- Instead of having the variables in one long list, they are in labeled groups, to help identify their source and purpose.
- You can enable and disable individual inputs, to quickly see their separate effects.

Policy Variable Editor

This view is a combination of the former Policy Variable Selection and Policy Variable Value tabs. You can select multiple variables for multiple regions, and edit their values, all in a single display.



There are three components to this view:

Description

Here you can give the variable group a name, and see the current Scenario, Topic or List. It also provides descriptions and “best practices” information as scenarios and variables are selected.

Selector

Here you select the variables, regions, and units you want to use. Multiple details and regions can be selected at once by holding down the Shift or Ctrl key. When you have made your selection, click “Insert Into Editor” to add them to the list below.

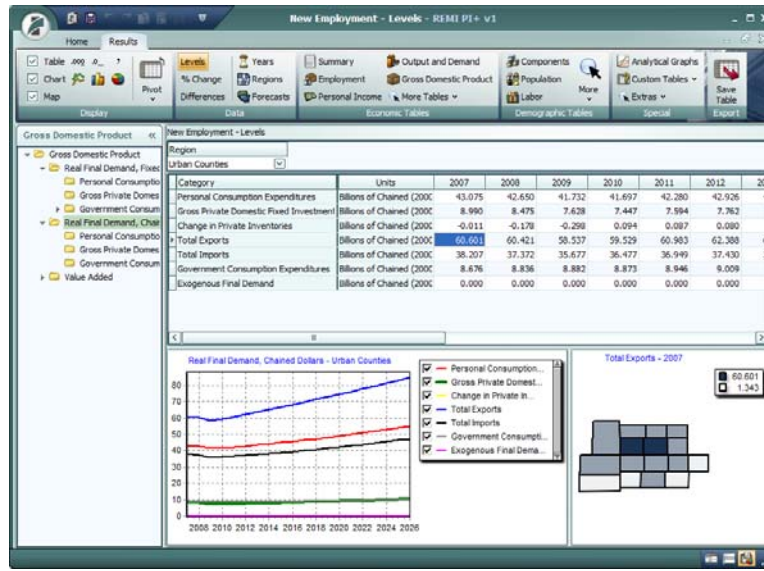
Editor

Here you can enter the values for the selected variables. There are calculator and spreader tools to help edit multiple values at once. You can also sort by region or variable category, making it easier to deal with large numbers of variables or regions.

When you have finished creating your inputs, click “Add to Inputs List.” This returns you to the Inputs List view, which will show a new group containing the policy variables you just created.

Results Browser

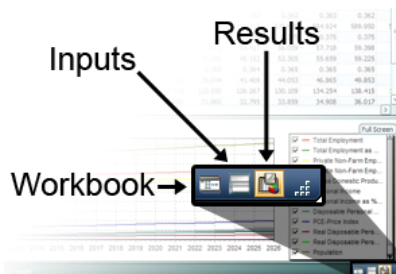
The expanded functionality of the results grid allows seamless pivoting of dimensions and views.



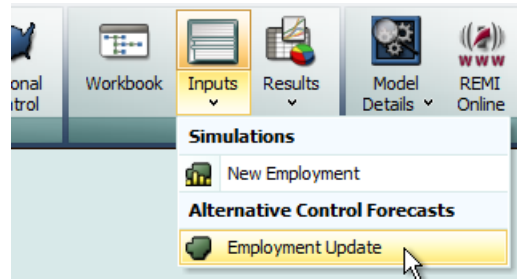
Results are flexible and easy to navigate, with grouping by concept and numerous sorting, filtering and pivoting options. Multiple chart types are available, and tables, charts and maps can be viewed simultaneously.

Switching Between Views

The view buttons on the status bar allow you to toggle between the inputs and results for a single forecast. You can also switch back to the diagram view.



If you want to see other forecasts in the workbook, use the Inputs and Results drop-down lists on the Home ribbon, or double-click an icon in the diagram view.



If you want to see multiple views at once, you can use the “restore” button:



Click this same button in any of the views to return to a single “maximized” view.

Other Changes

In addition to the user interface, there are changes to the economic model itself. Please refer to “PI+ v1 - Changes from PI v9.5” for more information.

Resources

Further assistance is available by accessing:

Documentation

For a more complete example of the simulation process, see the “Getting Started with PI⁺” user guide. It also contains information about additional features, and tips for best usage of PI⁺.

Online Information

The REMI website at www.remi.com has additional and updated documentation, Frequently Asked Questions, a glossary, and other support resources.

Technical Support

REMI’s support staff is available by phone at 413-549-1169, and by email at support@remi.com.