FEMA Program Support Material

FY21 BRIC Project Application Tips

This program support material (PSM) provides tips for submitting mitigation projects through the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program. The information below includes an overview of eligibility and completeness, project scoring prioritization, and technical feasibility and cost-effectiveness.

Eligibility and Completeness

The first step of BRIC subapplication reviews is determining whether the subapplication meets FEMA's eligibility and completeness standards. This includes items such as providing all required forms, confirming that your local hazard mitigation plan as well as state/territory/tribal plans are up-to-date and that your project aligns with those plans, and demonstrating that you are an eligible applicant/subapplicant. Subapplicants should ensure that all necessary documentation is provided with a clear naming convention to confirm eligibility and completeness. FEMA is not able to consider or fund a project that is ineligible or incomplete.

Using project scoping funds or phasing projects may help develop competitive subapplications when there is an absence of data or other information needed to submit a complete project subapplication.

Overview Checklist:

- ☐ Project subapplication meets all eligibility criteria as outlined in the BRIC FY21 NOFO and Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance.
- ☐ Project subapplication aligns with updated hazard mitigation plans.
- ☐ Project subapplication is complete and all supporting documentation is provided.
- ☐ Project subapplication and relevant documentation aligns with the BRIC scoring system.
- ☐ Project subapplication demonstrates the ability to reduce the risk to individuals and property from natural hazards.
- ☐ Project subapplication demonstrates cost-effectiveness by producing a passing benefit-cost analysis with supporting documentation, or by applying precalculated benefits.

Project Scoring Prioritization

The BRIC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) includes information on the scoring system used to rank BRIC competitive project subapplications. The scoring system helps prioritize projects that are meeting other programmatic goals, such as encouraging resilience through building codes and nature-based solutions. To help your project achieve the highest score possible, provide detailed descriptions and relevant documentation to demonstrate how your project is meeting both sets of BRIC scoring criteria: Qualitative Criteria and Technical Criteria. Considering BRIC scoring categories within these sets of criteria can also help applicants and subapplicants prioritize which applications to develop and submit. During fiscal year (FY) 2020 BRIC reviews, trends showed that 100 percent of selected projects received points in these categories: lifeline, infrastructure, building code adoption, building code effectiveness grading schedule (BCEGS), and future conditions. Other key categories included nature-based points and increased non-federal share. In general, risk reduction, population impacted, implementation measures, and leveraging partners were trends of selected projects. Communities that do not receive points for building codes and BCEGS should identify ways to make up for those points in other technical and qualitative criteria. The score a competitive subapplication receives

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may change to the next application period as FEMA modifies points within the BRIC scoring criteria. Please see BRIC Qualitative Criteria and the BRIC Technical Criteria for program scoring, including an emphasis on disadvantaged communities.

Technical Feasibility and Cost Effectiveness

To be considered for funding, applicants and subapplicants must show that their project is cost-effective and technically feasible, meaning the project is designed to increase resilience and public safety; reduce injuries and loss of life; and reduce damage and destruction to property, critical services, facilities, and infrastructure from natural hazards.

Technical feasibility should be confirmed by demonstrating how the project will be executed and how existing risk to people and property will be mitigated by this project. Avoid the following trends that result in ineligibility:

- Incomplete scope of work, or a scope of work that conflicts with industry standards: While it is not expected that the final design is complete and part of the application, the scope of work should be clear and consistent to prove feasibility.
- Conflicting before- and after-mitigation damages: The existing risk and the residual risk should be identified.
- Insufficient documentation: Documentation can include stamped and sealed reports, design documents, technical drawings, surveys and studies, project site maps, historical data, etc.
- Inconsistencies across the application: This can include items such as varying information about the design level of protection or using inconsistent project costs.

The majority of projects use FEMA's Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) Toolkit to demonstrate cost-effectiveness unless the project qualifies for precalculated benefits. Avoid these trends in BCA ineligibility:

- Lack of documentation for basis of estimating damages: Subapplicants should consider the benefitting project area and document the existing building and infrastructure present within that area boundary. Information about building(s), infrastructure, capacity, and/or population served may be appropriate depending on the project type. In general, damages should align with event severity.
- Recurrence intervals (RI): RIs represent the likelihood of a disaster event of a certain magnitude to occur and should increase with event severity. Documentation should show the source of the RIs. If the RIs are unknown, the unknown frequency calculator in the BCA Toolkit can be used for three or more historic events.
- Unsupported BCA inputs: Every value entered in the BCA Toolkit should be supported with an explanation and documentation unless it is a FEMA standard or default value.

Additional Information and Resources

Hazard Mitigation Officers for States and Territories: https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/state-contacts

BRIC NOFO: https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/fy2021-nofo

Benefit-Cost Analysis Helpline: BCHelpline@fema.dhs.gov or call toll-free at 1-855-540-6744

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance: https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation