

# BRIC Technical Evaluation Criteria

This Program Support Material (PSM) provides detailed information about the seven technical evaluation criteria to be used in the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) national competition. The conditions that must be met to receive the point allotment for each criterion are described below. Generally, projects either receive the specified points allotted or zero points for each criterion. Additionally, application instructions are included for each respective criterion to guide information submission in FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO).

## BRIC Technical Evaluation Criteria



# FEMA

## Background

As described in the BRIC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), FEMA will use technical evaluation criteria to score subapplications submitted to the national competition. As referenced in the NOFO:

*If needed, based on the number of subapplications submitted to the BRIC program, FEMA will use the technical evaluation criteria scoring as a program priority screening tool for the qualitative evaluation review. FEMA will send subapplications valued at twice the amount of available funding to the BRIC National Review Panel.*

*At least one eligible subapplication from each applicant will be sent to the National Review Panel.*

*The technical evaluation criteria offer incentives for elements valued by FEMA. In order to ensure transparency and efficiency in competition project selection, technical evaluation criteria are binary point awards (with the exception of the tiered building codes and CDC SVI/EDRC designation criteria). Projects either receive the full points allotted or zero points for each criterion.*

FEMA developed several of the technical evaluation criteria based upon factors it is required to consider by statute in addition to comments received during the development of the BRIC program. For example, comments indicated that stakeholders strongly support prioritizing projects that integrate nature-based solutions, incentivizing building code improvements, and promoting previous Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) efforts.

To achieve maximum points, applicants/subapplicants are encouraged to describe clearly and completely the following criteria for the project:

- Infrastructure Project
- Incorporation of Nature-Based Solutions for Hazard Mitigation
- Applicant has Mandatory Tribal-, Territory-, or State-Wide Building Code Adoption Requirement
- Subapplicant has Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) Rating of 1 to 5
- Subapplication Generated from a Previous Qualifying Award
- Increased Non-Federal Cost Share
- Designation as Underserved and/or Disadvantaged, including Economically Disadvantaged Rural Communities (EDRC) and Federally Recognized Tribal Governments

### Technical Evaluation Criterion 1: Infrastructure Project (20 points)

To receive the point allotment for this criterion, the subapplication must explain how the project mitigates natural hazard risk to critical physical structures, facilities, and systems that provide support to a community, its population, and its economy. This includes natural systems. The following are examples of statements that a community might submit in a subapplication to describe how its project is an infrastructure project:

The following information is intended for guidance only and is not a request for information. The following template is only intended to help the reader understand the grant application process.

- Through the proposed nature-based solution to reduce risk from high-intensity rainfall events, we will provide enhanced protection to our water treatment plant, which supplies fresh water to our community of 30,000 people.
- Retrofitting our food bank to have stronger structural integrity and the ability to operate off-grid will ensure a critical service in our community can remain operational following an earthquake.

Applicants/subapplicants should include a statement describing the infrastructure project in the Scope of Work Section of FEMA GO.

## Technical Evaluation Criterion 2: Incorporation of Nature-Based Solutions for Hazard Mitigation (10 points)

To receive the point allotment for this criterion, the subapplication must indicate and describe how the project incorporates one or more nature-based solutions, which are sustainable environmental management practices that restore, mimic, and/or enhance nature and natural systems or processes and support natural hazard risk mitigation as well as economic, environmental, and social resilience efforts. Nature-based solutions use approaches that include, but are not limited to, restoration of grasslands, rivers, floodplains, wetlands, dunes, and reefs; living shorelines; soil stabilization; aquifer storage and recovery; and bioretention systems.

More information on nature-based solutions can be found on [FEMA's Nature-Based Solutions webpage](#), in FEMA's [Building Community Resilience with Nature-Based Solutions: A Guide for Local Communities](#) and the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Digital Coast Natural Infrastructure](#) webpage.

Applicants/subapplicants should include a description of how the project incorporates a nature-based solution in the Scope of Work Section and Cost Effectiveness Section of FEMA GO.

## Technical Evaluation Criterion 3: Applicant has Mandatory Tribal-, Territory-, or State-Wide Building Code Adoption Requirement (10 points or 20 points)

To receive the point allotment for this criterion, the applicant must have adopted mandatory tribal-, territory-, or state-wide building codes based on versions listed below of both the **International Building Code (IBC)** and the **International Residential Code (IRC)** model codes published by the International Code Council (ICC). The following adoption status combinations are the only ones that qualify for the specified point allotment:

- 2015 version of both the IBC and IRC (10 points)
- 2018 version of both the IBC and IRC (20 points)
- 2021 version of both the IBC and IRC (20 points)
- 2015 version of the IBC and 2018 version of the IRC (10 points)
- 2018 version of the IBC and 2015 version of the IRC (10 points)

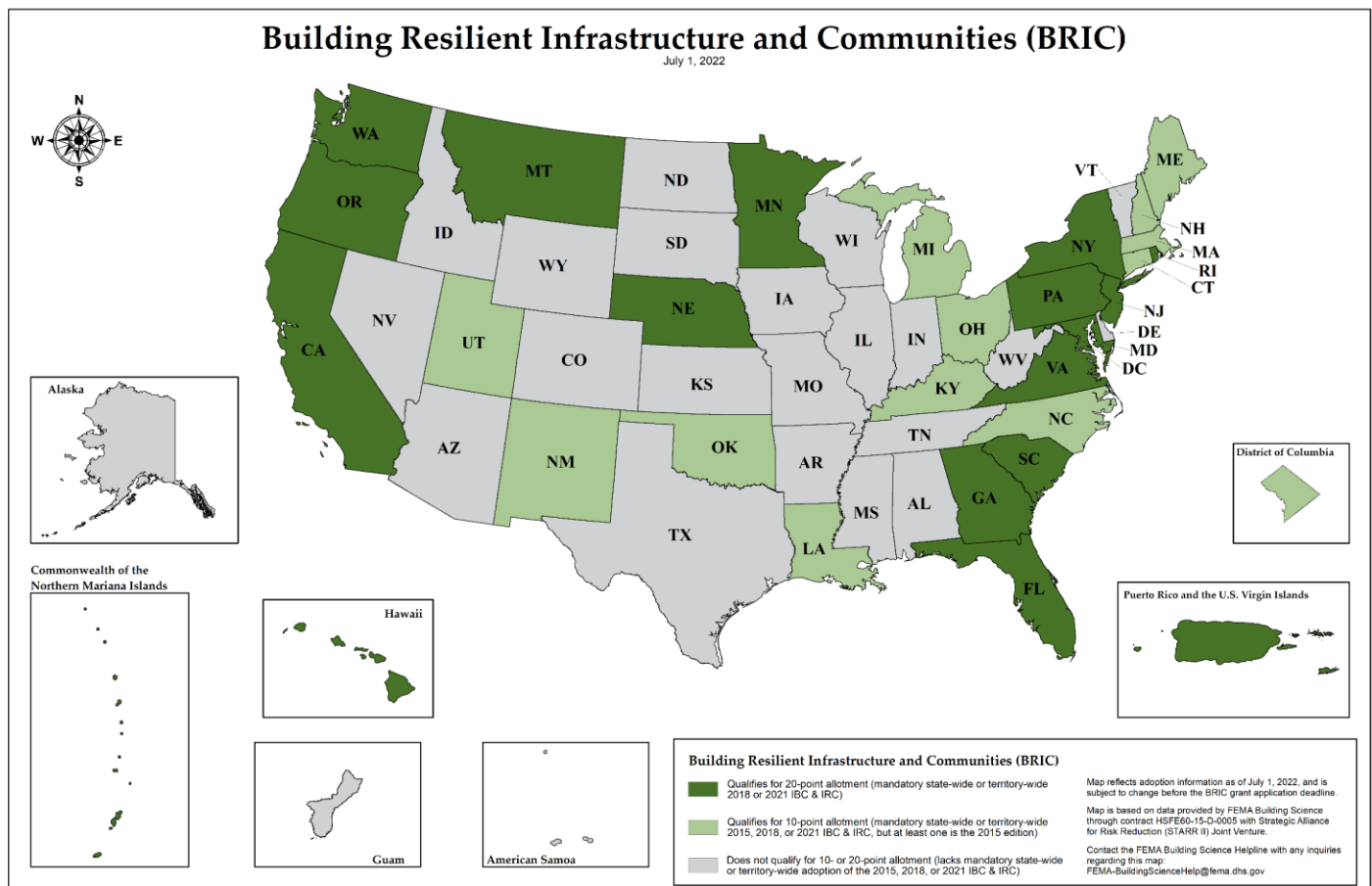
The following information is intended for guidance only and is not a request for information. The following template is only intended to help the reader understand the grant application process.

- 2015 version of the IBC and 2021 version of the IRC (10 points)
- 2021 version of the IBC and 2015 version of the IRC (10 points)
- 2018 version of the IBC and 2021 version of the IRC (20 points)
- 2021 version of the IBC and 2018 version of the IRC (20 points)

If a federally recognized Tribal government has not adopted the code as listed above, the tribe must demonstrate alternative compliance with IBC and IRC (versions listed above) or be covered under another jurisdiction's (state or territory) code adoption status in order to receive the point allotment.

FEMA acknowledges the importance of using the latest building codes at the state, local, tribal, and territorial levels. Accordingly, in future BRIC grant cycles, FEMA will increase its emphasis on building codes criteria.

Information about applicant adoption status may be found in the following map provided by FEMA Building Science or in documentation of state, territory, or tribal legislation or code that demonstrates adoption status. Applicants should include details on their building code adoption status in the Evaluation Section of FEMA GO. Additionally, subapplications should attach documentation verifying code adoption status of the applicant. Federally recognized Tribal government code adoption status will be determined for tribal applicants after application close.



The following information is intended for guidance only and is not a request for information. The following template is only intended to help the reader understand the grant application process.

## Technical Evaluation Criterion 4: Subapplicant has Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule Rating of 1 to 5 (20 points)

The BCEGS is an independent assessment of a community's building code adoption and enforcement activities, resulting in a score of 1 (best) to 5. This criterion applies to subapplicants only. As discussed in criterion 3, for more information regarding an applicant's code adoption status, please visit FEMA's Nationwide Building Code Adoption Tracking website at: <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/risk-management/building-science/bcat>.

To receive the point allotment for this criterion, a subapplicant at the local level (including those located in territories) must have a BCEGS rating between 1 and 5 (considered by FEMA as a disaster-resistant code) when the application is submitted. To receive the point allotment for this criterion, a state or territory acting as a subapplicant must:

- Have a class ranking between 1 and 5 on both the Commercial and Residential BCEGS State Averages as indicated in the 2020 State Averages as published on ISO's website at <https://www.isomitigation.com/bcegs/facts-and-figures/>; or
- Submit a BCEGS score provided by ISO (for territories and the District of Columbia).

Subapplicants at the state or territory level may submit documentation verified by ISO that provides more updated information on their BCEGS rating, if applicable. BCEGS scores for tribal applicants/subapplicants are required but can depend on the relationship between the local municipality and the tribal entity that determines how building code requirements are managed.

The best source for relevant information at the community level is the local building inspector or code enforcement office.

### BUREAU STATES

Bureau states have their own insurance rating organization that is not part of ISO. To receive the point allotment for this criterion, a subapplicant at the state or territory level for the five Bureau states not included in ISO's *National Building Code Assessment Report – Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule* (2019 Edition) must provide a state-verified BCEGS score at the state level. For subapplicants at the local level within Bureau states, BCEGS scores should be provided by the state. BCEGS Bureau state contact information is as follows:

**Hawaii Insurance Bureau, Inc.**  
715 South King Street, Suite 320  
Honolulu, HI 96813-4118  
808-531-2771

**Idaho Surveying and Rating Bureau, Inc.**  
5440 Franklin Road, Suite 101  
P.O. Box 6430  
Boise, ID 83707  
208-343-5483

The following information is intended for guidance only and is not a request for information. The following template is only intended to help the reader understand the grant application process.

**Property Insurance Association of Louisiana**

433 Metairie Road, Suite 400  
Metairie, LA 70005  
504-831-6930

**Mississippi State Rating Bureau**

2685 Insurance Center Drive  
Jackson, MS 39216-5231  
or  
P.O. Box 5231  
Jackson, MS 39296-5231  
601-981-2915

**Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau**

200 1st Avenue W, Suite 500  
Seattle, WA 98119-4219  
206-217-9772

If a subapplicant does not have a BCEGS score, a survey to obtain one can be requested. **BCEGS surveys are provided at no cost, do not negatively impact credit ratings, and can take 2 to 4 months to complete. Communities intending to apply for BRIC funding are encouraged to initiate the process as soon as possible.** To request a BCEGS survey, please refer to the submission instructions referenced on the [ISO Mitigation website](#). Questions about the BCEGS survey can be directed to [BCEGS\\_Info@verisk.com](mailto:BCEGS_Info@verisk.com).

Applicants/subapplicants should include their BCEGS score, or for Bureau states a state-verified BCEGS score at the state level, in the Evaluation Section of FEMA GO.

## **Technical Criterion 5: Subapplication Generated from a Previous Qualifying Award (10 points)**

To receive the point allotment for this criterion, a subapplicant must demonstrate the subapplication was generated from one of the following programs<sup>1</sup>:

- FEMA HMA Project Scoping award
- Any other federal grant award; or

---

<sup>1</sup> To receive the points for an application being generated from one of the previous qualifying awards listed please answer “Yes” to the question in FEMA GO that asks “Was this created from a previous FEMA HMA /Project Scoping award?” and attach a PDF of the award letter to the application. Also, provide the name of the attached file in the free text field that asks, “If yes, please provide the project identifier.”



- The subapplicant is a past recipient of BRIC non-financial Direct Technical Assistance
- The subapplication must provide documentation to support this criterion. HMA Project Scoping provides applicants and subapplicants with resources to develop mitigation strategies and obtain data to prioritize, select, and develop complete applications in a timely manner that result in either an improvement in the capability to identify appropriate mitigation projects or in the development of an application-ready mitigation project for BRIC or another funding opportunity.<sup>2</sup> This FEMA HMA grant may have been awarded through the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), or BRIC grant program. FEMA HMA grants that are not Project Scoping do not qualify for this point allotment.

Subapplicants should include information on their previous award in the Evaluation Section of FEMA GO.

### Technical Criterion 6: Increased Non-Federal Cost Share (5 points)

To receive the point allotment for this criterion, a subapplicant must demonstrate that it can provide a non-federal cost share<sup>3</sup> of at least 30% (or, for Economically Disadvantaged Rural Communities as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 5133(a) as small impoverished communities, a non-federal cost share of at least 12%). To receive the full points, the federal share requested can be no more than 70% (or 88% for qualified EDRCs).

Subapplicants should include cost share documentation in the Budget Section of FEMA GO.

### Technical Criterion 7: Designation as and/or Disadvantaged, including EDRC and Federally Recognized Tribal Governments (15 points or 30 points)

To receive the full point allotment for this criterion, subapplicants must document their designation as an EDRC (as referenced in 42 U.S.C. § 5133(a) as a small impoverished community) or a community with a [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Social Vulnerability Index \(SVI\)](#) of .8 or higher (30 points). An EDRC is a community of 3,000 or fewer individuals, as identified and validated by the applicant in the project subapplication, that is economically disadvantaged, meaning that residents have an average per capita annual income that does not exceed 80 percent of the national per capita income, based on best available data.<sup>4</sup> A state, territory, or federally recognized Tribal government serving as a subapplicant must document the EDRC status of the community in which

---

<sup>2</sup> This definition is derived from the Advance Assistance description on page 22 of the *Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance* (HMA Guidance; 2015), which is available at <https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/hazard-mitigation-assistance-guidance-and-addendum-fy15>.

<sup>3</sup> For more information about cost share, refer to Section C.4 Cost Share or Match of this NOFO and the HMA Cost Share Guide at [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/fema\\_hma\\_cost-share-guide.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/fema_hma_cost-share-guide.pdf). This does not include 5% subrecipient management costs (which are funded at 100%).

<sup>4</sup> This definition is derived from the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended by the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018.

The following information is intended for guidance only and is not a request for information. The following template is only intended to help the reader understand the grant application process.

the project is planned to receive the point allotment for this criterion. Any community with a CDC SVI between .6 and .79 will receive partial points (15 points).

Population information can be referenced through the U.S. Census, American Community Survey (ACS) website, see [Explore Census Data](#). Per capita income can be found after inputting a location into the Explore Census Data search, then under the *Per Capita Income By Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin, Total Population, and Mean Income (Dollars)* column. Supporting documentation for population and per capita income should include an exported U.S. Census Bureau ACS data report in PDF format, indicating the most recent information. Subapplicants should include documentation of their status as an EDRC in the Budget Section in FEMA GO and attach required supporting documentation.