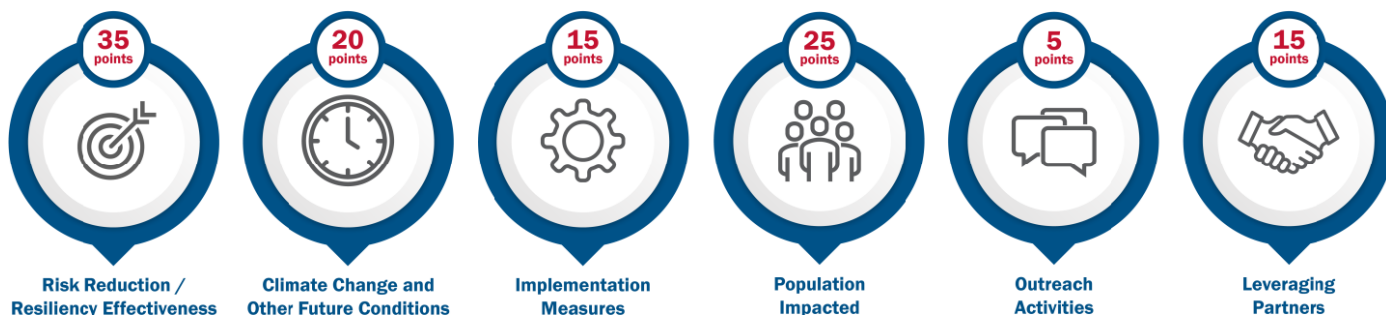


BRIC Qualitative Criteria

This program support material provides detailed information about the six qualitative evaluation criteria that will be used in the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) national competition. Information to both guide applicants and subapplicants in the development of their subapplications and to assist panelists in the qualitative review of projects is described below. Additionally, application instructions are included for each respective criterion to guide information submission in FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO).



BRIC National Competition Qualitative Criteria and Point Values

Background

As described in the BRIC Notice of Funding Opportunity FEMA will convene a National Review Panel to score subapplications submitted to the national competition based on a qualitative review. The BRIC national competition National Review Panel will include FEMA Regional Office and Headquarters staff, as well as representatives from state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments and other federal agencies. As referenced in the Notice of Funding Opportunity:

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 qualitative evaluation panel.

FEMA will ensure that at least one eligible subapplication from each applicant will be sent to the qualitative evaluation panel for review.

In order to increase transparency in decision-making while building capability and partnerships, FEMA will convene a National Review Panel to score subapplications based on qualitative evaluation criteria.



FEMA

The qualitative criteria are narrative submissions to allow subapplicants the flexibility to fully explain the strengths of the proposed project. Qualitative evaluation criteria have graded scales of point scoring.

FEMA developed the qualitative evaluation criteria based upon comments received through stakeholder engagement efforts. For example, comments indicated support for holistic project evaluation beyond economic metrics alone as well as for incentivizing partnerships and high-quality community engagement.

In accordance with the BRIC program's guiding principle of promoting equity and in implementing the Justice40 Initiative, the BRIC program is prioritizing assistance that benefits disadvantaged communities as referenced in Executive Order 14008.

A disadvantaged community may be characterized by variables including, but not limited to: low income, high and/or persistent poverty, high unemployment and underemployment, racial and ethnic segregation, linguistic isolation, high housing cost burden and substandard housing, distressed neighborhoods, high transportation cost burden and/or low transportation access, disproportionate environmental burden and high cumulative impacts, limited water and sanitation access and affordability, disproportionate climate impacts, high energy cost burden and low energy access, and all geographic areas within Tribal jurisdictions.

Four of the six BRIC qualitative evaluation criteria reflect the need for subapplications to speak to how the project will benefit disadvantaged communities: (1) Risk Reduction/Resiliency Effectiveness, (2) Population Impacted, (3) Outreach Activities, and (4) Leveraging Partners. Point allocation and criteria content have evolved to be more inclusive of the proposed subapplication benefits to disadvantaged communities.

More information on stakeholder engagement efforts can be found on the [FEMA BRIC webpage](#).

Evaluation Process and Scoring

The panelists will leverage their mitigation experience and expertise during the review to assess the degree to which subapplications meet the six BRIC qualitative evaluation criteria (based on the scoring in Table 1). The subapplication's final qualitative score will be calculated by averaging the qualitative scores from each panelist. The six criteria include the following: (1) Risk Reduction/Resiliency Effectiveness, (2) Climate Change and Future Conditions, (3) Implementation Measures, (4) Population Impacted, (5) Outreach Activities, and (6) Leveraging Partners.

Table 1: To what degree does the subapplication meet the criterion?

Scoring Option	Description
Not at all	The subapplication does not address the criterion at all, or minimal references to the criterion are made that include no substantive information.
Minimally	The subapplication addresses the criterion, but information in the subapplication may be confusing, unclear, and/or incorrect. The degree to which the subapplication demonstrates the criterion has been met is weak.
Partially	The subapplication addresses the criterion, but the subapplication may lack clarity and/or strong support, have some minor inconsistencies, or not address all components

Scoring Option	Description
	of the criterion. The degree to which the subapplication demonstrates the criterion has been met is mediocre.
Mostly	Although the subapplication may include a few minor inconsistencies or areas that need more clarity, there is strong support for most components of the criterion. The degree to which the subapplication demonstrates the criterion has been met is acceptable.
Entirely	The subapplication is clear, concise, and complete; provides examples; and is supported by data. It addresses all components of the criterion and may have a particularly compelling narrative. The degree to which the subapplication demonstrates the criterion has been met is excellent.
Exceeds	In addition to addressing all components of the criterion and being clear, concise, complete, and supported by data, the subapplication articulates the impact of the project in catalyzing broader efforts (such as legislative action) as they relate to the criterion. The degree to which the subapplication demonstrates the criterion has been met is beyond excellent.

The National Review Panel will apply the scoring options listed in Table 1 to all six qualitative criteria. However, point values associated with each scoring option vary among criteria, depending on the total possible points for each criterion. The graded scoring and point scales for each criterion are included below.

Application instructions are included below for each respective criterion to guide information submission in FEMA GO. More information on navigating the new FEMA GO system and the full application process can be found on the [Grants Guidance](#) webpage on FEMA.gov.

Prompts are outlined for each qualitative criterion to serve as a helpful starting point for applicants and subapplicants. These prompts are designed to clarify terms and provide guiding questions for applicants and subapplicants to consider as they write the subapplication. This information will be provided to panelists to foster a common frame of reference. Please note that answering every question, while informative, will not necessarily guarantee an “Exceeds” score. Finally, prompts included here are by no means mutually exclusive or exhaustive; any additional information to support the merit of the subapplication is welcome. This information supplements the information regarding qualitative evaluation criteria that can be found in the BRIC Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Qualitative Criterion 1: Risk Reduction/Resiliency Effectiveness (35 possible points)

The subapplication details the following elements: (1) effective risk reduction; (2) effective increase to resilience; (3) provides ancillary benefits; and (4) leverages innovation. Ancillary benefits could include how this project will address inequities and provide the greatest support to those with greatest need.

Not at all	Minimally	Partially	Mostly	Entirely	Exceeds
0	7	14	21	28	35

Applicants and subapplicants should include Risk Reduction/Resiliency Effectiveness information in the Scope of Work Section of FEMA GO.

Prompts for Risk Reduction/Resiliency Effectiveness Criterion

1. Interpreting Responses to Effective Risk Reduction

Details how the project will reduce risk. The details should identify the risk being reduced and state what action will reduce the identified risk. The details are clear and reasonable. The benefits calculated through the BCA toolkit are suitable. However, we do not limit evaluation of risk-reduction to those quantifiable. We encourage alternative explanations of risk-reduction here. How will the proposed project reduce risk(s) and to what level?

For example, a proposed project could be designed to provide 100-year-level flood protection to a neighborhood with 250 people, 135 homes, 15 publicly owned structures that support several Community Lifelines, and a variety of cultural, historic, and environmental resources. Additionally, subapplicants may have high Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) scores that show a commitment to reducing risk through strong building code adoption and enforcement activities.

2. Interpreting Responses to Increases in Resilience

Resilience refers to the ability to prepare for anticipated hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruption.¹ How will the proposed project improve resilience?

For example, a project designed to retrofit a library to serve as a tornado shelter could include tornado (and other hazards) preparedness, resilience, and mitigation information. This could enhance the community's resilience by educating the public about the natural hazard risks they face, as well as build a culture of preparedness.

Details how the project will increase resilience. The details should identify the aspects of resilience being increased and state what action will increase the identified resilience. The details are clear and reasonable.

3. Interpreting Responses to Ancillary Benefits

Ancillary benefits refer to benefits other than the project's primary risk reduction objective, which should be identified in the Scope of Work and BCA, if applicable. Ancillary benefits are benefits related to water/air quality, habitat creation, energy efficiency, economic opportunity, reduced social vulnerability, cultural resources, public health, mental health, etc.

What ancillary benefits will the project provide and how? Does the project consider multiple hazards (e.g., wind/storm surge, wildfire/mudslides) to address risks beyond the proposal's primary risk reduction objective? Ancillary benefits should include how a project will lead to equitable outcomes and provide the greatest support to those with greatest need. Ancillary benefits could also address climate-related benefits.

¹ This definition is used by the [National Institute of Standards and Technology](#).

4. Interpreting Responses to Leveraging Innovation

Innovation in one community can look very different from innovation in another community. How does the project leverage or demonstrate innovation for your community? What new ideas or approaches is the project incorporating?

For example, a proposed project in a rural community that has seen an increase in development and impervious surface might include nature-based solutions that have not previously been used. Details how the project will leverage innovation. The details should identify the aspects of innovation being leveraged and state what project aspects incorporate this element. The details are clear and reasonable.

Qualitative Criterion 2: Climate Change and Other Future Conditions (20 possible points)

The subapplication describes how the project will (1) enhance climate adaption, (2) details how the project is being responsive to the effects of climate change² (such as sea level rise³), (3) details how the project is being responsive to the effects of other future conditions (population/demographic/land use, etc.), and (4) cites data sources, assumptions, and models.

Not at all	Minimally	Partially	Mostly	Entirely	Exceeds
0	4	8	12	16	20

Applicants and subapplicants should include Future Conditions information in the Evaluation Section of FEMA GO.

Prompts for Climate Change and Other Future Conditions Criterion

What anticipated future conditions are relevant for the project? Examples of future conditions include, but are not limited to, the following: expected population changes, land use and development shifts, aging population, shifts in income or employment, changes in housing needs, increasing temperatures, increased wildfire risk, sea level rise, more frequent high tide flooding, more intense rainfall events, increasing storm frequency, persistent and prolonged droughts, changing groundwater tables, etc.

How is the project responsive to any identified anticipated changes? Does the project integrate the consideration of future conditions into design, planning, and operations workflows?

How was the project informed by, or connected to, plans and planning efforts and their assessment of future conditions? Relevant plans may include Hazard Mitigation Plans, Comprehensive Plans, Climate Adaptation Plans, Long-Range Transportation Plans, Small Area Plans, Coastal Zone Management Plans, Capital Improvement Plans, etc.

What data sources and assumptions are used to guide the project? For example, when citing a sea level rise projection, what time period and what scenario of sea level rise are assumed?

References to any data sources used must be documented.

Qualitative Criterion 3: Implementation Measures (15 possible points)

The subapplication adequately describes: how (1) the costs will be managed; (2) how the schedule will be managed, (3) how the project will be successfully implemented, and how innovative techniques to facilitate implementation will be incorporated; (4) the project's Scope of Work identifies sufficient technical and managerial staff and resources to successfully implement this project.

Not at all	Minimally	Partially	Mostly	Entirely	Exceeds
0	3	6	9	12	15

Applicants and subapplicants should include Implementation Measures information in the Scope of Work Section of FEMA GO.

Prompts for Implementation Measures Criterion

Does the application inspire confidence that the project can be completed successfully as designed, given the stated implementation measures?

What potential implementation challenges and obstacles are identified (e.g., technical, political, financial, public support, environmental/permitting, constructability) and what implementation solutions are proposed to address these challenges?

Are the proposed project costs and schedule realistic? How do project cost estimates and the schedule identify and properly address potential challenges and obstacles?

What pre- and post-implementation monitoring strategies are proposed for the project? What specific evaluation elements are proposed to measure progress and ensure the project is executed as designed?

What technical and managerial staff and resources are available to successfully implement the project? How will anticipated staff and resource gaps be filled?

Are examples of successfully completed projects included to demonstrate effective implementation measures?

Qualitative Criterion 4: Population Impacted (25 possible points)

The subapplication demonstrates: (1) community-wide benefits (2) the proportion of the population that will be impacted, including a description of the disadvantaged communities as referenced in EO 14008; (3) how the project was selected and designed to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts to any disadvantaged populations as referenced in EO 14008.; (4) the proposed project is clearly benefiting a disadvantaged community.

If a population impacted as demonstrated by the subapplication does not include a disadvantaged community, then the highest point allotment available is Partially.

Subapplication(s) that clearly state that the proposed project is benefiting a disadvantaged community can score Mostly or higher. Subapplications that demonstrate a direct positive impact to a disadvantaged community will receive a score of Mostly, and subapplications which thoroughly demonstrate the population impacted including a high positive impact on a disadvantaged community will merit a score of Entirely or Exceeds.

Not at all	Minimally	Partially	Mostly	Entirely	Exceeds
0	5	10	15	20	25

Applicants and subapplicants should include the Population Impacted information in the Scope of Work Section of FEMA GO.

Prompts for Population Impacted Criterion

Community size, scale, and definition can look very different in different local contexts. What does “community-wide” mean in the context of the proposed project?

What quantity (e.g., percent) of the population will directly benefit from the project (i.e., experience direct community-wide benefits)? How is this estimate calculated? The subapplication should include percentages of the community’s population that will directly and indirectly benefit from the project.

What is the extent of the project’s expected direct and indirect impacts benefit a disadvantaged community? How will the project reduce cascading impacts to Community Lifelines, residents, businesses, public services, infrastructure, and natural systems?

Who are the most vulnerable members of the community where the project is proposed? How will the project minimize negative impacts to disadvantaged members of the community? How will the project maximize positive impacts to disadvantaged members of the community? Impacts can be directly related to the risk reduction activity or indirectly related, such as with ancillary impacts (i.e., social, environmental, economic impacts).

For example, a roadway flooding mitigation project near a hospital and a police station could reduce the flooding hazard impact to the subapplicant’s Transportation, Health and Medical, and Safety and Security Lifelines. The project could also be sited in an area that is economically disadvantaged that depends on these critical services.

Qualitative Criterion 5: Outreach Activities (5 possible points)

The subapplication describes: (1) the outreach strategy and supporting activities appropriate to the project and advancing community mitigation; (2) the types of community planning processes leveraged; (3) and describes how input from a diverse range of stakeholders, including people from disadvantaged communities, was gathered and incorporated into project conception and design.

Not at all	Minimally	Partially	Mostly	Entirely	Exceeds
0	1	2	3	4	5

Applicants and subapplicants should also include information about their Outreach Activities in the Scope of Work Section of FEMA GO.

Prompts for Outreach Activities Criterion

To what extent did stakeholders and/or stakeholder groups contribute to this project? What stakeholder collaboration activities occurred?

What planning processes were leveraged during the development of the project proposal to advance mitigation? How did the project planning process ensure that the disadvantaged in the community were involved in the planning and decision-making processes?

What information (e.g., resiliency goals and outcomes, partnership opportunities, project implementation progress) will be shared with the public? What public outreach and engagement strategies will be used to disseminate project information to and gather feedback from stakeholders and members of the community?

What support or conflicts emerged through the project planning process? How will conflicts be resolved as the project is implemented?

What are the connections between your hazard mitigation plan and local land use requirements and how does the linkage make your community more resilient?

Qualitative Criterion 6: Leveraging Partners (15 possible points)

The project subapplication incorporates: (1) partnerships (e.g., state, territory, tribal, private, district, local community) that will ensure the project meets community needs, (2) an explanation on how these partnerships benefit disadvantaged communities, and (3) an explanation on the anticipated outcome of those partnerships (e.g., leveraging resources such as financial, material, and educational resources, coordinating multi-jurisdictional projects, heightened focus on equity related issues).

Not at all	Minimally	Partially	Mostly	Entirely	Exceeds
0	3	6	9	12	15

Applicants and subapplicants should include information about Leveraging Partners in the Evaluation Section of FEMA GO.

Prompts for Leveraging Partners Criterion

Partnerships can take many different forms. For example, partners may contribute financially, support and promote the proposed project, help generate community-wide awareness of the risks the proposal is designed to address, etc. What partners were involved in the project design? How did partners contribute to the application? What partners will contribute to the implementation of the project?

To what extent were non-governmental organizations, including those organizations that represent disadvantaged groups, universities, or other government entities consulted for advice or assistance? How has collaboration with surrounding jurisdictions supported project development?

To what extent have other federal programs or funding sources been leveraged for the project? To what extent have partners provided funding that increases the non-federal cost share?

How have partnerships been used to increase community resiliency? What community groups will participate in this project? What potential exists for partnerships to continue beyond implementation of the project?