

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
NEPA DETERMINATION



RECIPIENT: Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

STATE: MP

PROJECT TITLE: 150KW Governor's Executive Building Solar PV Installation and Battery Energy Storage System Project

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
	DE-EE0010092	GFO-0010092-001	

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Policy 451.1), I have made the following determination:

CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:

Description:

- | | |
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| A9 Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination | Information gathering (including, but not limited to, literature surveys, inventories, site visits, and audits), data analysis (including, but not limited to, computer modeling), document preparation (including, but not limited to, conceptual design, feasibility studies, and analytical energy supply and demand studies), and information dissemination (including, but not limited to, document publication and distribution, and classroom training and informational programs), but not including site characterization or environmental monitoring. (See also B3.1 of appendix B to this subpart.) |
| B5.16 Solar photovoltaic systems | The installation, modification, operation, and removal of commercially available solar photovoltaic systems located on a building or other structure (such as rooftop, parking lot or facility, and mounted to signage, lighting, gates, or fences), or if located on land, generally comprising less than 10 acres within a previously disturbed or developed area. Covered actions would be in accordance with applicable requirements (such as local land use and zoning requirements) in the proposed project area and would incorporate appropriate control technologies and best management practices. |

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Energy Division with the Department of Public Works for the installation of a 150kW rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) and an approximate 750kWh battery energy storage system (BESS). The proposed project would be located at the Juan A. Sablan Memorial Building at 12306 Rota Place, Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Funding from the US Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs' Energizing Insular Communities Program would also contribute to the cost of this project.

Project activities would consist of structural reinforcement of the roof to accommodate the 375 modules with four inverters and optimizers. Additionally, electrical modifications would be required to connect the PV panels and the BESS, including upgrading the electric panel. Two locations are under consideration for the BESS: either inside the building in the electrical room, or outside the building. If the BESS is placed outside the building, a 20'x20' concrete structure would be installed on the grass, between the parking lot and the road. Approximately 40' of trenching, 2' deep for underground conduit would be required to connect the BESS to the electrical panel on the building. No trees would be removed for the installation, but three small shrubs would be eliminated for the outdoor location of the BESS.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website identifies a mammal (Mariana Fruit Bat), three birds (Mariana Swiftlet, Micronesian Megapode, and Nightingale Reed Warbler), a snail (Humped Tree Snail), an insect (Mariana Eight-spot Butterfly), and a flowering plant (Berenghenas Halomtano) that may occur in the project area. Migratory birds may be in the area, but survey data is not available according to IPaC. The habitat of the Mariana Fruit Bat is native forest. The Mariana Swiftlet forages over a variety of habitats including grasslands, limestone forest, ravine forest, and coconut groves, and roosts exclusively in caves. The Micronesian Megapode is generally a bird of the forest, particularly limestone forest. The Nightingale Reed-Warbler is commonly found in upland and wetland habitats in Saipan. The Humped Tree Snail prefers cool, shaded forest habitat. The Mariana Eight-spot Butterfly can be found in limestone forest habitat and known host plant populations on undeveloped, rugged karst terrain or the cliff-edges of limestone plateaus. The habitat type for the last observed individual of Berenghenas Halomtano was forest with limestone soils and limestone karst. Habitat for all the species listed do not occur at the site of the proposed BESS installation, other than the Mariana Swiftlet, which may be present at the project location, but no effects to this species is anticipated. Because of the nature and location of the project (i.e. installation of equipment on regularly disturbed ground from mowing) it is unlikely that any of the species of concern would be present in the project area. Additionally, the proposed project site is outside of the critical habitat of all listed species. Accordingly, DOE has determined there would be no effect on federally listed threatened or endangered species. Further, DOE does not anticipate adverse impacts to migratory bird species.

The project site is not located within the 100-year floodplain.

The recipient is working directly with their State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to ensure protection of cultural resources during the course of project activities, per their historic preservation programmatic agreement with DOE and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands SHPO.

Installation of the proposed project may involve the use of heavy equipment and working with electricity. Potential hazards would be mitigated through adherence to established institutional health and safety policies and procedures. The sub-recipient and their partners would adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local health, safety, and environmental regulations.

Any changes to the project activities or locations are subject to additional NEPA review by DOE and are not authorized for federal funding unless and until the Contracting Officer provides written authorization on those additions or modifications.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

Notes:

Office of State and Community Energy Programs – State Energy Programs
(State Energy Program Transformation & Planning)
NEPA review completed by Diana Heyder, 5/15/24

FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATIONS

The proposed action (or the part of the proposal defined in the Rationale above) fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D. To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposed action has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:

 Electronically Signed By: Matthew Blevins
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 5/15/2024

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

- Field Office Manager review not required
- Field Office Manager review required

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature: _____
Field Office Manager

Date: _____