
U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Electricity
RECORD OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

Beyond-the-Meter: Energy Storage Integration Prize

PROPOSED ACTION: The Department of Energy (DOE) proposes to award two cash prizes, at up to \$100,000 each, to selected competitors through an American-Made Challenge prize competition focused on energy storage integration. The Beyond-the-Meter: Energy Storage Integration Prize (BTM Prize) is focused on the grid edge, or where buildings, industry, transportation, renewable energies, storage, and the electric grid come together. Grid edge is a leading area of the electricity evolution, where electricity changes from being a one-way grid to a two-way grid with homeowners and business owners storing and transmitting energy from behind-the-meter. To have a smooth energy transition, the many new and emerging components of the grid must work together. This prize will highlight grid-edge technology solutions around energy storage systems that enable different technologies to integrate and operate together, contributing to a more resilient, efficient, and sustainable energy ecosystem. Moreover, the BTM Prize, as part of the DOE Grid Resource Integration Technologies (GRIT) Prize Series, will catalyze partnerships to enable higher integration of grid-edge technologies, improving the overall efficiency and reliability of the power system.

Prize winners will (1) share how their behind-the-meter grid-edge technology solution supports improved integration with different energy systems and vendors in the grid; (2) outline a plan to partner and integrate with grid-edge technology vendors; and (3) describe their approach to demonstrate their technology and plans to collaborate with other grid industry leaders at DISTRIBUTECH 2025. Additionally, the prize winners will showcase their technology at DISTRIBUTECH 2025 on March 25, 2025, in Dallas, Texas. Prize winners will also participate in a DOE-hosted panel and other DOE-hosted events.

Prize winners are selected, in part, based on work that has already been completed (prior to selection) (e.g., the competitors for the prize must provide proof of an existing product ready for the DISTRIBUTECH 2025 showcase). Additionally, competitors must also describe and demonstrate that their proposed solution has a path to becoming a fully integrated, consumer-ready beyond-the-meter solution, including a viable customer base and funding. The cash prize award does not have restrictions on its use; however, the Official Prize Rules encourage winners to apply the cash award to fund DISTRIBUTECH 2025-related expenses.

All activities would comply with existing federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Any work proposed to be conducted at a federal facility may be subject to additional NEPA review by the cognizant federal official and must meet the applicable health and safety requirements of the facility.

Based on a review of the BTM Prize Official Rules, a description of anticipated activities, and the prize winners' proposed solutions, DOE has considered the scale, duration, and nature of proposed activities to determine potential impacts on resources, including those of an ecological, historical, cultural, and socioeconomic nature. DOE does not anticipate impacts on these resources which would be considered significant or require DOE to consult with other agencies or stakeholders as a result of the BTM Prize activities.

CX TO BE APPLIED: The elements identified above fit within classes of action listed in Appendices A and B to Subpart D, of 10 CFR Part 1021. These appendices list DOE's categorical exclusions. Specifically:

U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Electricity
RECORD OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

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.)

B3.6 Small-scale research and development, laboratory operations, and pilot projects

Siting, construction, modification, operation, and decommissioning of facilities for small-scale research and development projects; conventional laboratory operations (such as preparation of chemical standards and sample analysis); and small-scale pilot projects (generally less than 2 years) frequently conducted to verify a concept before demonstration actions, provided that construction or modification would be within or contiguous to a previously disturbed or developed area (where active utilities and currently used roads are readily accessible). Not included in this category are demonstration actions, meaning actions that are undertaken at a scale to show whether a technology would be viable on a larger scale and suitable for commercial deployment.

10 C.F.R. Part 1021, App. A and B to Subpart D, §§ A9 and B3.6.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENT: The proposed action fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D. 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.

Authorizing the proposed action will not (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, including DOE and/or Executive orders; (2) require siting of new facilities or expansion of existing facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants; (4) adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources; or (5) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species.

DETERMINATION: Based on my review of the above information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Policy 451.1), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class of actions, other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

Signature: _____
Caitlin A. Callaghan, PhD/JD
NEPA Compliance Officer
Office of Electricity

Date: _____