



Categorical Exclusions

ConnectMT is required to use NTIA's Environmental Screening and Permitting Tracking Tool (ESAPTT) to determine which Categorical Exclusions apply to your BEAD-funded project, if applicable. To efficiently and accurately document all relevant project details, please provide responses to the following ESAPTT questions. Your answers will be used to complete the ESAPTT submission for your project.¹

Section 1:

1. Does the proposed project include the construction of buried and/or aerial telecommunications lines, cables, and related facilities?
 - 1.1. Will fiber be added to transmission structures and/or buried in existing Rights of Way?

Section 2:

2. Will new or existing communications systems be acquired, installed, operated, or removed for the proposed project?
 - 2.1. Will system instruments be retrofitted, upgraded, repaired, or replaced?
 - 2.2. Will the activities described in this section impact a structure that is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places?

Section 3:

3. Select all infrastructure elements and related activities that are included in the proposed project scope and answer associated questions:
 - (3.1) Towers and directly related structures
 - (3.2) New construction upon or improvement of land and/or non-tower structures
 - (3.3) Modification of existing fiber optic cable
 - (3.4) Existing buildings, roads, airfields, grounds, equipment, and other facility modifications

¹ "Environmental Screening & Permitting Tracking Tool (ESAPTT) Portal – User Guide," NTIA, https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/sites/default/files/2025-09/NTIA_ESAPTT_User_Guide_090825.pdf.



3.1. Towers and directly related structures:

3.1.1. Select all actions applicable to the proposed project:

- Siting
- Construction/installation
- Operation/maintenance
- Retrofitting

3.1.2. Will the proposed tower actions require new ground disturbance?

3.1.2.1. What is the area of the ground disturbance?

3.1.2.2. Will the ground disturbance be located in a previously disturbed area?

3.1.3. Will the total height of any tower structure exceed 199'?

3.1.4. Will any tower structure require guy wires?

3.1.5. Will the actions selected in 3.1.1 impact any National Register of Historic Places eligible structure?

3.1.6. Will the construction of any tower structure trigger an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement by another Federal Agency?

3.2. New construction upon or improvement of land and/or non-tower structures:

3.2.1. Select all actions applicable with the proposed project scope:

Construction or modification of aerial or buried utility, or communication systems that use existing Rights of Way, easements, grants of license, distribution systems, facilities, or similar arrangements

New construction in developed area or on previously disturbed site



Land improvement in developed area or on previously disturbed site

Construction or improvement of operations or support facilities, switching stations, maintenance facilities, other non-tower structures on previously disturbed ground

Construction or improvement of new temporary buildings or experimental equipment on previously disturbed ground

Construction, land improvement, or modification of structures in an undeveloped area or on a pristine (undisturbed) site

3.2.2. Will any of the actions listed in 3.2.1 require new ground disturbance?

3.2.2.1. What is the area of ground disturbance for land improvements and non-tower structures?

3.2.2.2. Will the ground disturbance be located in a previously disturbed area?

3.2.3. Will any of the actions listed in 3.2.1 require ground disturbance in an undeveloped area or on a pristine (undisturbed) site?

3.2.4. Will all construction or improvement be compatible with local planning, zoning, and Coastal Zone Management Programs?

3.2.5. Will the site and scale of construction or improvement be consistent with the scale of existing, adjacent, or nearby buildings?

3.2.6. Does any construction or improvement require new local infrastructure (e.g., roads)?

3.3. Modification of existing fiber optic cable:



3.3.1. Select all actions applicable with the proposed project scope:

Modifications, changes, or upgrades of existing telecommunication lines, transmission lines, or aerial or buried utility or communication systems

Pole replacement

Rebuilding existing power or telecommunication lines

3.3.2. Will pole replacements:

3.3.2.1. Exceed 20% of the original pole quantity?

3.3.2.2. Be of similar appearance to the original pole structure(s)?

3.3.2.3. Be in or near the original pole location(s) ?

3.3.2.4. Occur within the existing Right of Way?

3.3.3. Will any of the actions listed in 3.3.1 take place outside Rights of Way?

3.3.3.1. If outside Rights of Way, will action(s) be adjacent to Right of Way, new road, or easement?

3.4. Existing buildings, roads, airfields, grounds, equipment, and other facility modifications:

3.4.1. Select all actions applicable with the proposed project scope:

Exterior renovation, addition, repair, alteration, or demolition Internal renovations or additions and/or additions

Purchase, lease, or use of existing facilities (or a portion thereof) Conducting new activities or operations in existing structures

Installing, operating, maintaining, retrofitting, upgrading, repairing, removing, and/or replacing instruments Collocating equipment on instruments, structures, or buildings

Changes to existing telecommunication facilities (including upgrades, changes, or additions)

Acquisition, installation, operation, and/or removal of communication systems



Close facilities, decommission equipment, or temporarily discontinue use of facilities or equipment

Phase or voltage conversions, reconductoring, or upgrading of existing electric distribution lines or telecommunications facilities

3.4.2. Will the actions listed in 3.4.1 result in a change in the functional use or operations of real property?

3.4.3. Will changes to the telecommunications sites and structures require new physical disturbance of less than an acre?

3.4.4. Will the actions selected above impact any National Register of Historic Places eligible structures?

3.4.5. Will hazardous waste be disposed of at approved sites in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and requirements?