



Background

It is critical to understand and address the societal consideration and impacts of the projects that will build the clean energy economy—at local, regional, and global levels—as the innovations of the clean energy economy will create new infrastructure that holds the potential to drive new regional economic development, technological innovation, and high-wage employment for communities across the United States.

Accordingly, projects funded by the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management will develop plans to address societal considerations and impacts, including community and stakeholder engagement; environmental justice and the Justice40 Initiative; diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA); and quality jobs.

Project Selection Scoring

Merit reviewers, who are both subject matter experts and federal employees, generally review project applications according to several criteria and assign scores based upon strengths and weaknesses.

For carbon management projects, for example, past criteria have included project readiness (including addressing issues with the site and issues identified in stakeholder analysis), scientific and technical merit (including if the project is based on sound scientific and engineering principles), and technical and management capabilities.

The societal considerations and impacts (SCI) plans are now the focus of one of these scored merit review criteria. For funding opportunity announcements funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, SCI considerations are expected to be roughly 20% of the merit review criteria.

Scoring Factors for SCI Plans

DOE will look at the following elements to assess a societal considerations and impacts plan:

- **Quality:** Is the plan thorough, and does it include measurable actions?
- **Support:** Are impacted communities appropriately included as core partners in the project and/or do they affirm support?
- **SCI Team and Resources:** Are the proposed team and resources capable of implementing the plans?
- **Integration:** Are societal considerations and impacts integrated throughout project management documents?
- **Influence:** Do the plans and project management documents provide mechanisms for societal considerations and impacts findings to influence the direction of the project?
- **Above and Beyond:** Does the project go above and beyond the analysis, development, and/or engagement efforts required for technical, analytical, performance, or regulatory compliance?
- **Previous Efforts / Lessons Learned:** Does the project incorporate previous lessons learned in justice, engagement, and DEIA work, documenting them and building upon them?
- **Quality Jobs:** Will the project create or retain high-quality jobs and support workforce development? Will the project provide workforce opportunities in low- and moderate-income communities or communities that have lost jobs due to fossil energy displacement? Does the project support inclusive recruitment and training objectives, including workforce opportunities for underrepresented groups and members of disadvantaged communities?

Other Scoring Factors

In addition to merit review criteria, DOE often includes Program Policy Factors in application review. These criteria can include factors such as encouraging geographic and/or technical diversity of projects selected, non-carbon dioxide environmental impacts of projects, and other social criteria that DOE can use to make selections when it receives many qualified applications.

For detailed SCI plan guidance documents and other informational resources, visit the [Justice & Engagement: Planning for Societal Considerations & Impacts in FECM Projects webpage](#).