



# Fossil Energy and Carbon Management Domestic Engagement Framework: Engaging Communities, Stakeholders, and Tribes in Clean Energy Technologies

## Our Vision

Creating a clean energy and industrial economy will reshape how we move around, power our factories, grow our food, and heat our homes. This transformation will also involve new uses of land, as well as new ways of doing things in our daily lives.

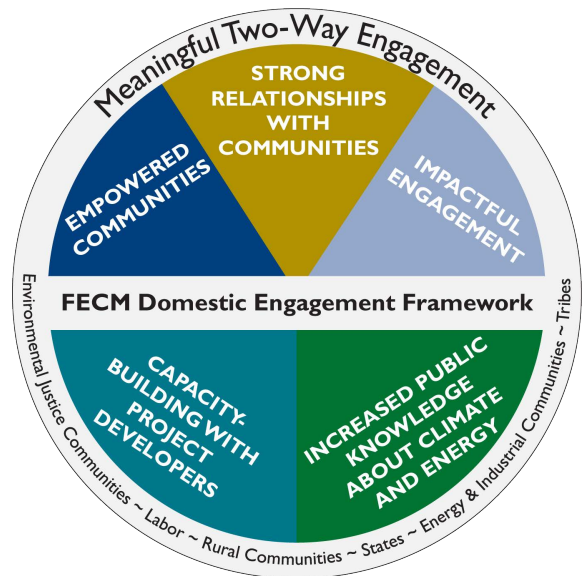
The new infrastructure needed for the clean energy economy holds the potential to drive new regional economic development, technological innovation, and high-wage employment for communities across the United States. At the same time, building this new infrastructure at the scale needed will impact communities, lands, and ecosystems that people live on or near, and from which they earn their livelihoods.

As a result, meaningful public involvement in how clean energy and industrial technologies and infrastructure are built is critical. Meaningful two-way engagement can help communities and stakeholders become project partners whose ideas and concerns can improve overall outcomes for project developers, while ensuring that tangible, environmental, economic, and social benefits flow to affected communities.

The Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management’s (FECM) vision for meaningful two-way engagement involves:

### I. Empowered communities.

*What success looks like:* Community members, stakeholders, and local officials have the information and tools they need to evaluate potential projects, represent themselves in the project development process, and negotiate community benefits agreements and other agreements with project developers.



*How we get there:* FECM can provide scientifically accurate information in a variety of formats and languages to communities about clean energy and industrial technologies, as well as information about how to participate in regulatory processes or project development opportunities. We can work to provide a database of existing informational materials around carbon management, critical minerals, and methane mitigation, and our analysis teams can also help create new materials for specific groups that can be used in engagement and in different geographies.

## **2. Capacity-Building for Project Developers**

*What success looks like:* Project developers have greater capacity and resources to conduct meaningful engagement that increases prospects for success.

*How we get there:* Developers of DOE-funded projects are required to create and implement engagement plans, and FECM can provide feedback on these and create information-sharing opportunities across projects.

## **3. Strong Relationships with Communities and Stakeholders**

*What success looks like:* Community organizations, environmental justice advocates, unions and labor organizations, Tribal governments, and other local stakeholders and officials know to come to FECM to get useful information and assistance, and to share information about their needs.

*How we get there:* FECM programs can use a suite of methods, from listening sessions to requests for information to themed workshops with organizations in our focus areas, to learn and share knowledge.

## **4. Increased Public Knowledge about Climate Change, Energy, and U.S. Long-Term Climate Strategy**

*What success looks like:* Communities, stakeholders, and members of the public have an understanding of the complex tradeoffs involving different applications of technologies and infrastructure. The topics we work on, from hydrogen to methane mitigation to carbon management and carbon removal, need to be understood in the broader context of long-term climate and energy strategy.

*How we get there:* Simply providing information about the need for carbon management, carbon removal, or critical minerals for the energy transition is insufficient. With our expertise, FECM can create user-friendly tools for exploring various technology pathways and conduct engagement activities with community-based partners to allow them to explore those pathways on their own. Programs like [Intermountain West](#) (I-WEST) and [Communities Local Energy Action Program](#) (Communities LEAP), along with the [Regional Initiatives](#), can provide information and technical assistance on these topics.

## 5. Engagement with Impact

*What success looks like:* Engagement activities have shaped project design and development to reflect the priorities of communities, Tribes, and stakeholders.

*How we get there:* All of the above. FECM's [Societal Considerations and Impacts framework](#) is a first step to ensuring that projects we fund include meaningful engagement. By prioritizing strong relationships and empowered communities, and by working to build capacity within the projects we fund, we are enabling projects that deliver what communities want and need—and which have much greater prospects for successful implementation and ultimately achieving the levels of technology and infrastructure deployment required to meet our climate goals.

## Who We Will Engage: Strategic Focus Areas

### 1. Energy and Industrial Communities

Unabated fossil fuel extraction, refining, and use generate pollution, resulting in climate change and negative health impacts, especially for underserved communities, while also creating high-wage jobs and economic benefits for many communities that often have few or no similar opportunities. Workers in fossil fuel and other GHG-intensive industries face a changing landscape that can result in job losses and a reduced tax base. Engagement with fossil-dependent, industrial, and manufacturing communities can help us learn how to maximize the benefits of new technologies, minimize negative impacts, and repair past harms. In recent listening sessions with energy communities, nearly all stakeholders expressed a desire for direct federal engagement with local communities, which could demonstrate that the federal government's commitment is real and can lead to tangible investments ([Initial Report to the President on Empowering Workers Through Revitalizing Energy Communities, Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization, NETL 2021](#)).

### 2. Tribes and Alaska Native Communities

FECM should foster engagement with and provide technical assistance to Tribes and Alaska Native communities on energy access and development and climate-resilient infrastructure that seeks to maximize benefits and minimize negative impacts from energy and infrastructure projects that Tribes and Alaska Native communities decide to host.

### 3. Environmental Justice Communities

FECM's strategic vision prioritizes meaningful engagement with disadvantaged communities. When it comes to carbon management, carbon removal, and critical minerals project development, we are committed to supporting new models for relationships between communities and projects.

#### **4. Labor**

Engagement with labor stakeholders and labor unions is essential for supporting diversified economies and accelerating the growth of good-paying jobs. Engaging with labor can help communities identify job and economic opportunities in carbon management, hydrogen, critical materials, and methane mitigation. Through engagement, FECM can also learn about workforce needs and opportunities to enhance workforce development, including labor apprenticeships.

#### **5. States**

Many facets of FECM's work take place on the state level and are governed by states. States often have dedicated people with local geological and technical experience in their geologic surveys, universities, and agencies who are often responsible for important project work and regulatory and permitting decisions, and they can be critical partners in place-based engagement.

#### **6. Rural Communities**

Much of FECM's work takes place in rural communities. Many projects represent important opportunities for rural development, especially when guided by the people who live and work there, which includes farmers and ranchers, farmworkers, local businesspeople, and other members of rural communities.

### **How We Will Engage: Guiding Principles**

Our work with the above groups will be guided by the following principles:

#### **1. Two-Way Engagement**

Two-way engagement refers to a dialogue where there is back-and-forth, open, and equal exchange. While in some instances there is need for one-way communication (i.e., where one party is transmitting information), focusing on two-way engagement and structuring engagement activities in this way allows the people researching, developing, and deploying clean energy technologies to be responsive to social needs and priorities.

#### **2. Proactive, Early Engagement with Full Range of Stakeholders**

Going forward, FECM will proactively engage with a variety of communities both early in project development and early in the research, development, and demonstration of new technologies.

#### **3. Place-Based Engagement**

Place-based energy solutions are ones that consider the unique circumstances, geographies, resources, and priorities and desires of the people living there. Developing place-based strategies requires engagement tailored to the regions and communities where projects are most likely to emerge.

#### 4. Community-Based Knowledge

Communities want to not just be able to see the data, but to verify it and in some cases participate in collecting it. Community-based monitoring and science can help ensure that communities benefit from projects and contribute to project success. Technical assistance in terms of energy planning and understanding energy transition scenarios is another area of engagement, and FECM can work with other DOE offices and national labs to develop tools and practices for this.

#### 5. Engagement that Scales

The scale of clean energy and industrial technology and infrastructure deployment required to meet our climate goals call for far more community engagement, participation, and support than FECM or even DOE alone can foster. We will pursue capacity-building opportunities that help others scale their engagement activities, including working with universities, non-profits, and other federal agencies.

*What might these principles look like in practice?*

The table below offers some examples. More detailed information about what these activities are and how to do them can be found in the “[Best Practices for Engagement](#)” documentation.

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Examples of Practices</b>
<i>Two-way engagement</i>	<i>Engagement activities like listening sessions or deliberative mapping; co-producing engagement activities with community groups</i>
<i>Proactive, early engagement</i>	<i>Conducting a social characterization analysis at the project proposal stage; reaching out to communities for dialogue before project characteristics are set; inviting a community advisory board</i>
<i>Place-based engagement</i>	<i>Participatory mapping with community members to understand what is unique about their community, including existing burdens and areas of cultural importance that may not be mapped; on-site engagements</i>
<i>Community-based knowledge</i>	<i>Engaging with communities to assess data needs and data generation opportunities; working with local educational and community-based organizations to gather and analyze data; providing modeling tools and conducting participatory modeling to understand mitigation and carbon removal pathways and community designed scenarios</i>
<i>Build engagement capacity</i>	<i>Creating technically accurate materials that community organizations and others can use when conducting engagement; sharing information on regulatory and other engagement opportunities; sharing best practices on engagement for project teams; helping to build state and regional networks of people who do engagement and facilitation work</i>