SoCalEarth.org
Community First, Climate First
Project Analysis Tool

What project are you analyzing?

Project: _____

Create your project analysis by rating each criteria along a sliding 1 - 5 scale, to the best of your ability and knowledge. Project ratings reveal how the project can improve.

- Take notes in the spaces below each factor.
- An average rating of below 3 means the project should be improved, reconsidered, changed, or discontinued.
- An average rating of 3 or above means that some aspects of a project may be considered socio-ecologically beneficial.
- Consider the detriments of project construction and hidden carbon costs as well as the long-term impacts once projects are complete.
- Each individual question can guide you toward specific areas for improvement.
- Exclude from your analysis any criteria you find irrelevant or unclear in your project context.
- Use the online project analysis tool, sign the call to action, and learn more at https://socalearth.org/community-first-climate-first/

I. FOUNDATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

First, think about the project's foundational frameworks. What ways of thinking inform this project or idea?

1. Change Paradigm: Which type of decision-making guides this project?

Business As Usual Thinking	*Transformative Thinking*
Continues a problematic, outdated, or exclusionary system without accounting for climate, community, and environmental concerns.	Creates a different path, vision, and process due to climate, community, and environmental concerns.

1	2	3	4	5

2. Solution Orientation: In which direction does this project approach the problems it attempts to address?

Downstream
The offered solutions tackle the symptoms instead of treating the root cause of the problem.

Upstream
The offered solutions tackle the problem at the source, rather than only treating symptoms.

1   2   3   4   5

3. Benefit Timeframe: Does the project create benefit in the long-term, or only in the short-term?

Short-term benefits
Does not value history or consider intergenerational timeframes or long term consequences of decision-making and projects on vulnerable communities or ecosystems.

Long-term benefits
Values history, considers intergenerational timeframes and consequences of decision-making. Highest rated projects create short- and long-term benefits.

1   2   3   4   5

4. Context & Hidden Impacts: Does the project consider prior or upcoming projects and potential hidden consequences?

Non-Contextualized
Does not account for the impact of related or upcoming projects, ignores broader context, and overlooks potential hidden consequences or ripple effects.

Holistic
Explicitly considers prior and future projects, understands interconnectedness of decisions, and actively identifies hidden consequences over the long-term.

1   2   3   4   5

II. ECOSYSTEMS HEALTH
Now, we turn to how the project relates to ecosystems, biological and human diversity. To be ranked highly, the project must recognize the interdependency of humans with the biosphere.

5. Natural Resource Use: Does the project's use of resources dominate, or integrate, with ecological systems?

Extractive	*Regenerative*
Predominantly taking from ecological systems. Resource use does not consider impact on communities or the environment. Views open space, working lands, green space and habitat health as expendable resources.	Working in tandem with ecological systems. Resource use is deeply integrated with communities and environment. Values open space, working lands, green space and habitat health as vital to multi-generational wellbeing.

1	2	3	4	5

6. Biodiversity: Does the project create benefits for multiple people and species?

Monocultural	*Biodiverse*
Emphasizes singular cultures or perspectives at the expense of other people, cultures, or species. Does not value multi-species perspectives or human diversity.	Protects sensitive species, communities, and ecosystems; sees multi-species and human diversity as a strength.

1	2	3	4	5

7. Human Health: Does the project impact human health and lifespans positively or negatively?

Detrimental	*Beneficial*
Damages the health of humans.	Supports the health of humans.

1	2	3	4	5

8. Climate Resilience: Does the project exhibit and enhance climate resilience or does it increase local vulnerability?

Vulnerability	*Resilience*
Decreases ability of systems, people, and ecosystems to bounce back from stressors, vulnerable to pressure.	Increases ability of systems and people to bounce back from stressors; resilient to pressure.

1	2	3	4	5

III. ECONOMICS SYSTEMS

Next, we look at the project's economic objectives and the systems that drive them. Does the project embrace sustainability and resource stewardship over traditional monetary goals that often lead to waste and inequity?

9. Economic Objectives: Does the project favor traditional monetary gains or a sustainable growth model?

Conventional

Zero-sum game with clear winners and losers, prioritization of select economic gain despite harm to ecosystems, local economies, and select communities. Continuation of limited constructs such as GDP with emphasis on continuing unquestioned, linear trajectories that value traditional components. Focuses on dependency and global trade.

Sustainable

Non-zero-sum game that creates win-win situations for ecosystems, economy, and community. Inclusive rethinking of economic values and expansion of concepts such as GDP. Emphasis on circularity, donut, regenerative economies that value previously ignored components. Focuses on self-reliance and relocalization.

1	2	3	4	5

10. Clean Energy: What is the project's approach to a just transition away from fossil fuels?

Static

Project ignores fossil fuel dependence or worsens it.

Active

Project actively works to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and transition away from dirty energy sources.

1	2	3	4	5

11. Emissions & Waste: How does the project handle the pollution and waste typical of infrastructure projects?

Generates

Generates waste that is then discarded without reference to natural systems and processes, creating problems for human communities and ecosystems.

Eliminates

Creates a closed-loop system where waste is reabsorbed, not expanded, to create benefits for human communities and ecosystems.

1	2	3	4	5

12. Permeability: How does this project approach precipitation, water accumulation, and regional water shortfalls?

Impermeable
Building of surfaces (rooftops and pavement) over large swaths of land where water cannot percolate. Treating water as waste and threat, takes away open space and increases heat.

Permeable
Maximizes utilization of permeable surfaces, open green spaces, plants that cool. Facilitates water usage, storage, and renewal as opposed to water waste.

1	2	3	4	5

IV. EQUITY & JUSTICE

Last let's examine how the project addresses equity and justice. With frontline communities disproportionately affected by climate challenges, it's crucial to center both community and climate.

13. Equity: Does the project improve equity and justice in impacted communities? Or does it worsen them?

Inequitable
The project creates disproportionate impacts to already impacted communities and ecosystems, furthering vulnerability.

Equitable
The project strives to help members of vulnerable communities and ecosystems, promoting climate resilience and equity.

1	2	3	4	5

14. Process Accessibility: Are the use of data and decision-making processes inclusive and transparent?

Not Transparent
Technical experts control data, process, and information about local decisions, including financial influences that remain undisclosed. Technical experts do not share raw data or ownership of information.

Transparent
Community members know where data comes from and have ownership of data produced by/about them. Data, process, and financial exchanges are transparent to communities and constituencies.

1	2	3	4	5

15. Stakeholder Priority: Are project leaders responsive to the input and needs of residents, or of developers and corporations?

Profit-centered
Loyalty to outside developers and corporate profit instead of residents. Public input is box checking and does not influence decision-making. Undervaluation and harm to unique local ecological resources.

Community-centered
Resident, place-based, and eco-resource loyalty. Recognizes and protects unique local ecological resources. Public comment is a meaningful process that can influence project decisions.

1	2	3	4	5

16. Indigenous Insights: Does the project account for Indigenous peoples and perspectives?

Not considered
Threat, destruction, or damage to sacred sites, native ecosystems, and landscapes of importance to tribal communities. Exclusion of tribal communities and principles in decision-making if relevant.

Respected
Protection of sacred sites, native ecosystems, and landscapes of importance to tribal communities. Inclusion of tribal communities and principles in decision-making if relevant.

1	2	3	4	5

PROJECT ANALYSIS RESULT
Calculate your Community First, Climate First project average by dividing your total rating score by the number of questions you responded to.

Total Score: _____
Total Questions: _____
Project Average: _____

If your project average is:
- **Less than 2:** Climate, vulnerable communities, and planetary crisis were not considered in this project or decision.
- **Between 2 - 3:** Climate, vulnerable communities, and planetary crisis were not adequately considered in this project or decision.
- **Between 3 - 4:** Climate, vulnerable communities, and planetary crisis were generally considered in this project or decision.
- **Greater than 4:** Climate, vulnerable communities, and planetary crisis were a primary consideration in this project or decision.

Visit us and learn more at https://www.socalearth.org