

International Council on Systems Engineering

Los Angeles Chapter

Abstract

Advantages of Early Consideration of Environmental Compliance and Public Perception

All major projects with Federal funding must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, and must do it early in the project's life cycle. The NEPA process can also build a framework for real decision making for the project, if given appropriate consideration. Early, pro-active consideration of public perceptions of a project, particularly when the project could have controversial elements, can both enhance the reputation of the project and organization with the public and the media, and minimize any potential legal or political issues. NASA and JPL's experience has shown the benefits of system engineering for NEPA compliance and external communications for potentially controversial projects. We have learned that early identification of any safety, environmental or health issues, both actual and perceived, and the implementation of detailed plans to deal with these issues, results in a smoother path to project implementation, with fewer 'surprises' along the way.