

Senior Research Associate, Modern Energy Cooking Services Programme

REQ200139

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.

Project Description

1.8 billion people have access to electricity but still cook with biomass. Load shedding, weak grids, affordability of electricity, accessibility of liquid petroleum gas (LPG), tradition, perceptions, and a lack of suitable cooking appliances all act as barriers to scaling up the use of electricity or gas for cooking – clean cooking. The Modern Energy Cooking Services Programme (MECS), is a £39.8 million, 5 year programme funded by UKAid through the Department for International Development, led by Loughborough University.

We already know that increasing access through renewable energy generation is becoming more affordable and opening new windows of opportunity. New business models and smart monitoring are improving the reliability of LPG distribution, appliances can be made more energy efficient but still cook favourite foods so they taste right, and cooking with electricity is becoming increasingly affordable with issues of reliability and sustainability being overcome. We want to build on these opportunities and the new knowledge emerging from the MECS programme to break out of business-as-usual approaches and rapidly accelerate the transition from biomass to clean cooking on a global scale. The MECS programme is organised into four core workstreams; UK universities and innovators, southern partners, a challenge fund and scale-up. These four workstreams come together to achieve the ultimate ambition of the programme which is to change the narrative on clean cooking.

The role of the Senior Research Associate will be to lead the southern partner workstream. MECS will be working in at least 15 countries, pre-dominantly in sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia. Within each country is a lead Southern Partner. These southern partners are a mix of NGOs, universities and research organisations. Each southern partner is developing and leading on research activities to accelerate the transition to clean cooking within their country. The role of the Senior Research Associate will be to act as the technical lead for research with the southern partners. They will also play a role in the strategic management of the programme, making sure that the southern partner workstream operates in a harmonised way with the other workstreams in order to facilitate changing the narrative on clean cooking.

The post-holder will work in close collaboration with the existing MECS Project Management team (the Principal Investigator, the Research Co-ordinator (Co-I), Project Manager and Challenge Fund Manager). The post holder will also engage in strategic partnership work with other organisations as required. The post holder will be required to travel to work with partners across the UK and overseas.

Job Description

Job Grade: Research, Teaching and Enterprise; Grade 7

Job Purpose

To lead the southern partner workstream. Acting as the technical lead for research with the southern partners, managing relationships between existing and new partners and ensuring that the southern partner workstream operates in a harmonised way with the other workstreams in order to facilitate changing the narrative on clean cooking.

Job Duties

Project Specific (management)

- Act as the technical lead and main point of contact for all southern partners, ensuring high quality of work and timely delivery of outputs.
- Co-ordinate the work of the anchor researchers
- Contribute to, present at, and collaborate in the organization of MECS events.
- Ensure progress of the project in line with the programmatic log frame and escalate problems to line management.
- Manage the budget of the southern partner workstream
- Provide technical and research support and mentoring to MECS Challenge Fund winners
- Contribute to programme management reports (quarterly and annual)
- Lead, attend and provide input at regular internal meetings and programme meetings.
- Liaise with new external Stakeholders
- Engage in public engagement activities.

Project Specific (research/strategic work)

- Lead on research collaborations with and between the southern partners, seeking opportunities to strengthen the quality and potential reach of the research and research outputs by working across different contexts and countries to build the evidence base for changing the narrative on clean cooking.
- Lead on the research to policy transition for the programme, working closely with external stakeholders to ensure that MECS policy recommendations are evidence based, appropriate to the context and understood by non-technical stakeholders.
- Ensure that the work under the southern partner workstream is closely aligned with the other workstreams
- Work with the Challenge Fund Manager to technically review the progress reports and deliverables submitted by winners of MECS open competitions.
- Develop detailed stakeholder maps and use them to support strategic planning of the southern partner work stream
- To assess, interpret and evaluate outcomes of research and develop their practical application, both in terms of implementation and policy change
- Develop innovative materials for knowledge transfer and networking to enhance the impact of the project.
- Identify areas of future collaborations with new MECS partners, developing concept notes, project outlines and funding applications as required
- Lead and co-author outcomes of research peer-reviewed publications for journals of highest international standing.
- To communicate complex and conceptual ideas to those with less technical knowledge and understanding, as well as to peers using high level skills and a range of media.
- Co-authoring and joint leadership of a REF Impact Case Study.

Other Related Activities and Functions

- Engage in training programmes in the University (or elsewhere) that are consistent with the needs and aspirations of the project and those of the School.
- Engage in relevant induction and training programmes as required.
- To work effectively with administrative, technical and academic colleagues across the University.
- To carry out specific administrative roles and functions as may be reasonably required.
- To engage fully with the annual Performance and Development Review (PDR) process.
- Undertake other duties as may be reasonably requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post.

Points to Note

The purpose of this job description is to indicate the general level of duties and responsibility of the post. The detailed duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character or level of responsibility entailed.

Special Conditions

All staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves, others and the environment and to prevent harm by their acts or omissions. All staff are therefore required to adhere to the University's Health, Safety and Environmental Policy & Procedures.

All staff should hold a duty and commitment to observing the University's Equality & Diversity policy and procedures at all times. Duties must be carried out in accordance with relevant Equality & Diversity legislation and University policies/procedures.

Successful completion of probation will be dependent on attendance at the University's mandatory courses which include Respecting Diversity and, where appropriate, Recruitment and Selection.

Organisational Responsibility

Reports to the MECS Principal Investigator, Professor Ed Brown

Person Specification

Your application will be reviewed against the essential and desirable criteria listed below. Applicants are strongly advised to explicitly state and evidence how they meet each of the essential (and desirable) criteria in their application. Stages of assessment are as follows:

- 1 – Application
- 2 – Test/Assessment Centre/Presentation
- 3 – Interview

Essential Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Significant experience of working in international development settings with partners from multiple countries	1,2,3
	Experience of developing strategic means of communicating academic research and knowledge to external partners	1,2,3
	Significant experience of research on clean cooking	1,2,3
	Proven experience of interfacing with government/industry/civil society and developing strong relationships with partners and stakeholders.	1,2,3
	Experience of publishing research outcomes	1,3
	Experience of managing external funding for research	1,3
	Experience of networking with organizations outside academia	1,3
	Substantial experience of writing a range of academic publications	1,3
	Experience of presenting work to academics and/or other stakeholders	1,2,3
	Experience of cross-disciplinary work and/or multi agency partnership work	1,2,3
	Experience of delivering training and/or workshops	1,3
Skills and abilities	Ability to manage own workload and the workload of others	1,3
	Communication skills and ability to work with people from different social backgrounds	1,3
	Communication skills appropriate to present research findings at conferences, partner meetings and training workshops	1,3
	Excellent IT skills	1,3
	Ability to lead a team and to collaborate with others in a collegial manner	1,3
	Ability to work across different locations / environments	1,2,3
	Ability to develop creative ways for presenting research analysis and findings	1,2,3
Training	A willingness to undertake further training as appropriate and to adopt new procedures as and when required	1,3
Qualifications	PhD in a relevant field	1,3
Other	Commitment to observing the University's Equal Opportunities policy at all times.	1,3
	Willingness to travel on behalf of the project including overseas	1,3

Desirable Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Significant experience of work in or in collaboration with the end-users of research	1,2,3
Skills and abilities	Substantial skills in programme planning and strategic development	1,3
Qualifications	Technical background in clean cooking demonstrated through either qualifications or field experience	1

Conditions of Service

The position is **full-time** and **fixed-term** for 36 months. The successful candidate will be expected to start no later than 1 August 2020, and term length may be reduced due to funding restrictions. Salary will be on Specialist and Supporting Academic, Grade 7 (£41,526 - £49,553 per annum), at a starting salary to be confirmed on offer of appointment.

The appointment will be subject to the University's Terms and Conditions of Employment for Grade 6 and above staff, details of which can be found [here](#).

The University is committed to enabling staff to maintain a healthy work-home balance and has a number of family-friendly policies which can be found [here](#).

The University offers a wide range of employee benefits which can be found [here](#).

We also offer an on-campus nursery with subsidised places, subsidised places at local holiday clubs and a childcare voucher scheme (further details are available at: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/a-z/childcare-information---page.html>)

In addition, the University is supportive, wherever possible, of flexible working arrangements. We also strive to create a culture that supports equality and celebrates diversity throughout the campus. The University holds a Bronze Athena SWAN award which recognises the importance of support for women at all stages of their academic career. For further information on Athena SWAN see <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/athena-swan/>