

Communications Officer, Modern Energy Cooking Services Programme

Full-time, fixed term, starting as soon as possible and ending on 30th September 2023

Job Ref: REQ220656

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.

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 FCDO, 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, encouraging people to move away from biomass, charcoal or coal fuelled cooking and to embrace modern, cleaner, healthier fuels such as electricity and LPG.

This post is for a second Communications Officer to join the MECS programme. The post holder will work with the existing Communications Officer and the Partnerships Manager (also a new role) to play a critical role in achieving the narrative change needed, both on a programmatic level (e.g. through high-level policy influence) and by working with our in-country partners to identify what a change in narrative looks like in different contexts. MECS is aiming to drive impact and change at scale, it's not just about paraphrasing our research into a shorter document.

Job Description

Job Grade: Administrative Services, Grade 5

Job Purpose

The role of the Communications Officer is to raise the profile of the MECS programme through targeted communications tailored to a wide range of audience groups and leading on our ambition to change the narrative around clean cooking. It will be a varied and at times challenging role requiring the post-holder to work with limited supervision. The post-holder will also work in close collaboration with the existing MECS Programme Management team (the Principal Investigator, the Research Co-ordinator (Co-I), Programme Manager and Challenge Fund Manager. The post holder may be required to travel to work with partners across the UK and overseas.

Job Duties

- Work with the existing Communications Officer to implement a strategic communications plan for the MECS programme,
- Organise the collection and analysis of all relevant data to perform complex and robust evaluation of the strategic communications plan.
- Work with the Partnerships Manager to develop stakeholder engagement strategies for key stakeholder types e.g. government/politicians (at national and localised levels e.g. county level), large multi-national NGOs and other development bodies, utilities, bilateral and multi-lateral donors and philanthropic organisations.
- Organise the collection and analysis of all relevant data to monitor and measure the impact and outcomes of stakeholder engagement and communications activity, providing regular updates to support the programme's reporting requirements
- Through comprehensive horizon scanning across the clean cooking sector and beyond (6-12 months into the future), identify opportunities for the MECS programme to expand its reach into areas/events where academic research may not typically be present, linking these opportunities to the stakeholder engagement strategies and strategic communications plan.
- Develop and maintain a MECS events calendar, ensuring that programme colleagues have adequate comms materials and up to date research information for dissemination at these events.
- Contribute innovative communications ideas/find solutions to complex problems, presenting recommendations to the programme management team for implementation.
- Respond efficiently and effectively to requests from senior leadership, prioritising workload as necessary
- Be the first point of contact for all MECS related comms enquiries.
- Organise and run regular programme webinars on a range of topics, identifying suitable speakers and encouraging engagement.
- Support the Partnerships Manager in working with MECS partner organisations from around the world to enhance their communications capacity and support them in translating research into clear and impactful messaging in line with the strategic communications plan and stakeholder engagement strategies.
- Understand and implement relevant legislation (e.g. IPR, data protection).
- Provide training and support to other team members on comms-related activities
- Maintain the MECS website (e.g. content, blog posts).
- Create and send out the monthly MECS newsletter and programme related press-releases.
- On a quarterly basis, write the communications metrics/engagement chapter for the donor progress report (including data analysis).
- Manage the publication of MECS outputs (from draft through peer review and final editing before release).
- Contribute to the MECS social media presence, including Twitter and LinkedIn
- Contribute to developing a presence on other appropriate social media channels
- Support in the planning and management of programme events, either in the UK or overseas.
- Liaise with the university comms and marketing teams as appropriate.

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 Programme Manager

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	Related professional experience	1,2,3	
	Experience of stakeholder engagement	1,2,3	
	Experience of working with a wide range of people/stakeholders from different organisations	1,2,3	
	Experience of managing data collection and completing complex analysis	1,2,3	
	Experience of horizon scanning and planning activities	1,2,3	
	Experience of writing reports suitable for senior management and external funding bodies	1,3	
	Experience in providing training to colleagues	1,3	
	Experience in creating externally facing communications materials	1,2,3	
	Experience in organising and running webinars or other online engagement activities	1, 2, 3	
	Experience in managing the publication of outputs (from draft through peer review and final edit).	1, 2, 3	
	Skills and abilities	Excellent oral communication skills	1,3
		Ability to analyze data/trends and present recommendations to senior management	1,2,3
Competence in IT skills and Internet usage		1,3	
Website and social media management		1,3	
Knowledge of relevant laws and legislation governing digital publishing		1,3	

	Ability to work as part of a team and to collaborate with others	1,3
	Ability to manage own workload and manage multiple priorities, working to tight deadlines and reacting to rapidly changing situations.	1,3
	Excellent attention to detail.	1,3
Training	Show commitment to maintaining up-to-date knowledge on emerging digital technologies.	1,3
	A willingness to undertake further training as appropriate and to adopt new procedures as and when required.	1,3
Qualifications	A level education or equivalent.	1
	GCSE Grade C or equivalent in English and Mathematics.	1
Other	Willingness to travel on behalf of the project including overseas	1,3

Desirable Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Experience of working in international development settings with partners from multiple countries	1,3
	Experience of working in or with the clean cooking sector	1,3
	Experience of working on a large programme/initiative (either in terms of budget or scale of reach)	1,3
	Experience of communicating research and programme findings to external (non-academic) partners	1,3
	Experience in planning and managing events	1,3
	Experience in helping colleagues prepare for speaking events	1,3
Skills and abilities	Ability to present complex information in a straightforward, accessible manner	1,3

Conditions of Service

The position is full-time but part-time would be considered. It is fixed term starting as soon as possible and ending on 30 September 2023. Salary will be on Administrative Services Grade 5 £25,627-£30,497, pro rata if part time, at a starting salary to be confirmed on offer of appointment.

The university is committed to allowing its employees to work dynamically with a combination of working on campus and remotely, where possible. This role has been identified as a role that could work dynamically and if successful your manager will discuss these informal arrangements with you. Please note there is a general expectation that the successful candidate will spend the majority of time working on campus. (further information is available [here](#)).

The appointment will be subject to the University's Terms and Conditions of Employment.

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/>