



Lessons from the USES Research Programme

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UK Low Carbon Energy for Development Network (LCEDN)

- Community building (UK Energy and development research).
- Multi-disciplinary.
- Multi-sectoral.
- Information portal.
- Catalysing International Collaborations.



<http://www.lcedn.com>



Background to USES



- Emerged out of Discussions between RCUK, DFID, DECC and other stakeholders in 2011/12
- £12 million programme launched in Summer 2012
- Key Aims:
 - Improved understanding of clean energy options and opportunities for developing countries
 - Improved understanding of the social, market and political economy aspects of scaling sustainable energy access for poor people
 - Strengthened developing country research capacity on clean energy.
 - Improved access to practical and policy-relevant knowledge on the challenges and opportunities for sustainable energy solutions in developing countries.
- Successful applicants invited to a sandpit in Nairobi in December 2012.
- 13 Projects initiated during 2013/14.

Tackling the Challenges

Understanding Sustainable Energy Solutions Programme (EPSRC/DFID/DECC)

- 13 projects.
- Multi-country.
- Multi-sectoral.
- Multi-disciplinary.
- Capacity building etc.



EPSRC

Engineering and Physical Sciences
Research Council



Department
for International
Development

Individual

Countries Involved in the Projects:

UK, CANADA, US.

KENYA, MALAWI, UGANDA, SIERRA LEONE,
SOUTH AFRICA, ZAMBIA, ETHIOPIA, GHANA,
LESOTHO, RWANDA, TANZANIA.

THAILAND, PHILIPPINES, INDIA, BANGLADESH
LAOSA, VIETNAM, MYANMAR, CAMBODIA,

CHINA

RE4FOOD

Energy Efficient Rural Food Processing Utilising Renewable
Energy to Improve Rural Livelihoods

ESCU Box

Smart monitoring, billing and control for pro-poor access to
energy services

LCT

Low Cost Technologies

Challenges of developing new technologies – rice straw, cooling for agriculture, smart communication technologies, eCook

Policy Challenges – Local Governance (Cities) and Political Decentralization, national policy frameworks (green growth, building regulations etc.)

Community mobilization - productive uses, nano-grids.

Social barriers – spread of cookstoves.

Industrial Uses – Agro-industry, thermal energy services

Challenges





The Barriers Project Video

Positive Lessons from Reviewing USES

1. Projects progressing well against targets – material, engagement, follow-up etc.
2. *“Partners demonstrated in-depth understanding of each other’s roles and responsibilities and recognition of the value in knowledge-sharing.”* – Importance of Co-Design.
3. Some examples of partnerships which seem to be working really well (e.g. co-supervision of students; quick responses by UK coordinators to questions raised by partners and joint search for solutions; some elements of technical training)
4. Communication: One example of a really well-developed online platform for uploading working papers etc. and potential for intra-team communication.
5. Learning lessons about Fair-Contracting – building capacity in partners – Southern roles in leading, authoring etc.

Key Challenges

1. Different expectations of research and non-research partners (and of Northern and Southern universities).
2. Different languages and intentions of Engineers and Social Scientists and between RCUK and DFID.
3. Some examples where UK partners have expressed frustration with capacity/focus of Southern partners: *“difficulties engaging Southern partners” “unresponsive partners in the South” “lack of motivation from partners.”*
4. Other examples where there has been dissatisfaction with management/coordination role of the UK partner: e.g. (paucity of face-to-face meetings (and problems with electronic alternatives); lack of clarity over requirements/coordination or lack of understanding of constraints facing Southern partners; e.g. implications of delayed payments

Key Challenges

1. Cultural differences in communication can cause problems in how feedback and critique was received and dealt with
2. BUT inventive solutions in some cases – e.g. additional separately funded visits; identification and delivery of training.
3. Ensuring Sufficient PI time budgeted for in managing these complex projects.
4. Requests for greater collaboration across the USES project teams beyond the project leads, particularly where they are working in the same country. Particularly in terms of shared approaches towards engaging key partners, local DFID offices etc.

Tackling the Challenges

USES Network.

- Bringing together the 13 project teams to learn from each other.
- Funded by DFID and EPSRC.
- Organising sessions at major conferences
- Key Themes: *Research and Impact; Stakeholder Engagement; Building Sustainability into project Finance; Investing in longer-term Research Relationships; Fairness and Capacity in Research.*

USES Network



research impact
turning research into action



Some Recommendations from our Partners:

- Manage expectations at the onset between partners and establish respect for deadlines
- The relationships between NGOs, companies and academic institutions need to be nurtured
- Longer term e.g. 3-5 year projects stand better chance of creating impact and level of sustainability
- Hidden costs of stakeholder participation in meetings/workshops/events. This can affect project budgets + needs to be addressed at the project design stage
- Establishing a network through a project has good sustainability implications. However, plan for the resource to support it beyond the life of the project

1. Get involved in the LCEDN?
 1. KNOWLEDGE: Access information about latest publications, ongoing projects and new funding opportunities
 2. INTERACT: Get involved in discussions, webinars, write blogs for the website
 3. NETWORK: Use our connections: Locate expertise, look for partners and initiate projects
 4. INNOVATE: Explore multi-disciplinary collaboration, discuss new methodologies etc.

2. How do I get involved?
 1. Join via the website (plus sign up for email announcements from the site) – <http://www.lcedn.com>
 2. Follow us on twitter - @uklcedn
 3. Like us on Facebook – <http://www.facebook.com/lcedn123>

Conclusions