Modern Energy Cooking Services-Electric Cooking Outreach (MECS-ECO)
December 2019

FAQs
(Frequently Asked Questions)

Notes

Please ensure you have read:
- Background Research – A Review of Current Thinking document
- MECS-ECO Guidance Document
- the MECS-ECO Grant Specification document
- the FAQs

These documents will answer many of your questions that enable you to complete the Grant Application Form.

This text will be made available in full on Loughborough University's website. The text may be freely downloaded and translated by individuals or organisations for conversion into other accessible formats. If you have other needs in this regard, please contact Loughborough University at mecs@lboro.ac.uk.

Answers to FAQs

1   How much funding is available?

The December 2019 MECS-ECO competition will include two separate competitions. These will be: -

- A targeted call for researchers to '**Community Scale Up Efficient Electrical Cooking Applicance Use'.** Budget of up to GBP60,000 per project for between 1-6 different projects (by different applicants) subject to quality of applications. Projects that bring an element of matched funding will be more preferentially reviewed. Projects will be for a duration of 12 months;

- A targeted theme to consultants for '**Market Assessments for Electric Cooking Appliances'**. 30% match funding for a budget of up to GBP20,000 per project for between 1-6 different projects (by different applicants) subject to quality of applications – giving a total project budget of £26,000). Projects will be for a maximum duration of 6 months;

2   When does the competition open and close?

The competition is being launched on 11th December 2019 and closes at 23:59 hours GMT on 26th January 2020.

3   Can I apply for more than one theme?

The themes are sufficiently different that we do not expect applications to both themes. However, if you wish to apply to both streams you must ensure you have the resources available to complete both projects successfully.

4   When will payment be made?

Payment will be made following submission of relevant documentation. For **Theme One,** this will be:

- 30% after contract signing
- 20% at reporting stage one,
- 20% at reporting stage two
- 30% at final report.

  For **Theme Two:**
- 30% at reporting stage one (6 weeks after the project starts)
- 40% at midpoint report
- 30% at end of report

Payment will be made subject to the submission, and approval, of a progress report as set out in the Grant Disbursement Agreement.

If the Grant Recipient fails to comply with any of the conditions of the Grant set out in the Grant Disbursement Agreement and Supporting Funding Agreement, Loughborough University may reduce, suspend, or withhold Grant payments.

5   When can you claim the first payment?

Under Theme one the first payment will be issued on signing of the contract. Under Theme Two, first payment will be issued on receipt and approval of the first progress report.

The quality of your work will be judged by the MECS ECO management team who will provide you with the expertise and support throughout your project duration. They will have to confirm they are satisfied with progress made and only then you will be allowed to invoice Loughborough University.

6   Can we add some profit margin?

No. The Grant is paid to research a concept or technology, not provide profit. These are mid-stage Grants to help to provide implementation plans and business models. Therefore, the only claim that can be made is for costs incurred in the research of this concept.

7   What can I include in the project finances?

Please use the following categories of costs in your application (as noted in Q6 of the application form):

Cost Items (insert/ delete rows as required) (Successful applicants will need to use these figures in the budget column of the Statement of Grant Usage Form) *(excluding VAT)	Budget £
Name of Employee 1 John Smith daily rate £ 250 X 10 days	£2500
Name of Employee 2_____ daily rate £	
Name of Employee 3_____ daily rate £	
Name of Employee 4_____ daily rate £	
Consultancy/Sub-contracting charges	
Material cost	
Equipment cost e.g. testing equipment	
Laboratory/testing costs	
Other Expenses (please specify)	
TOTAL COSTS	

8   What are the rules on VAT?

VAT should not be added to any invoices for Grant payments.

Grant payments fall outside the scope of VAT as this is deemed as income from non-business activities and you do not return anything for this funding. If you expect to pay VAT during the delivery of the research, (e.g. for consultancy/sub-contracting charges, material costs and other expenses), and **you are unable to recover VAT from HMRC or other national revenue authority, you must ensure that the cost of these VAT payments is included in question 6 of your Grant Application Form.**

Any VAT payment during delivery of research that is not recoverable from HMRC or other national revenue authority and not identified in question 6 of the Grant Application Form will not be paid by Loughborough University.

To clarify, if you will be liable for any VAT costs, these must be costed into the project at the start.

9   Should overheads be included in the salary rates or shown separately?

Salary rates should already include some overhead costs and therefore there should be no need to add further overheads.

10   What salary rates should we use?

The salary rates must be justified and appropriate, and not higher than market values. Rates will be judged on the staff level of expertise, where they are located and compared to market rates. The panel will assess whether the number of staff days on offer will deliver the proposed project and whether the number of total staff days offered signifies value for money.

11   If I am successful as an applicant, what documents do I submit to ensure payment of the Grant?

1. You must deliver the project as per the proposal.

2. This must be supported by a satisfactory Statement of Grant Usage Form and supporting evidence of financial documents such as receipts and invoices.

3. We need to see how many days the staff worked. Please keep records of the exact hours staff have worked in case we need to request more documentation due to an extended audit.

4. An invoice will need to be submitted on successful review of your progress report.

12   Do I need to keep receipts of my expenses?

Yes, you will need to submit relevant receipts/ invoices for expenses as evidence of project costs at the end of your project. You should retain all originals in case of an audit.

As a Grant Recipient, you will be required to explain costs incurred including staff time and supply receipts as outlined above.

13 Which documents do I need to enter the competition?

To enter the competition, you must submit your Grant Application Form in the first instance. Do NOT add a password on the document.

If you cannot submit the application, please contact mecs@lboro.ac.uk for alternate document format options.

You must have read the Background Research, Guidance, Grant Specification and Grant Disbursement Agreement document prior to submission of your application.

14 When do I submit the Due Diligence form?

If your project is successful, you will be asked to submit your Due Diligence Questionnaire, along with all supporting documentation. This must be submitted within 10 working days of the email being sent requesting this information. Failure to do so will result in a disqualified application.

15 Do I need to send further documentation?

All relevant documentation should be submitted with your application and, especially, Due Diligence form.

16 What are MECS's expectations on the deliverables?

The final report produced upon completion of the project should be no more than **20 pages** long. This excludes references or data tabulation annexes. Any significant literature reviews should be added as appendices with a summary as part of the project. The report should be in plain English. Payment of the Grant will be on condition of a high quality final report.

You should ensure that reports are written and presented to a professional standard and are suitable for non-specialists with all acronyms and unavoidable technical language clearly explained.

The final report will need approval from the MECS management team. This means that when you deliver the final draft version of the report, MECS programme team will let experts review this. The reviewer(s) may request you to make some adjustments to the report to make it more suitable for the audience.

A template for this report will be sent to successful applicants.

17   What is the position on IPR? How do I deliver a quality report to the MECS team for publishing and protect the IPR on my research?

Please refer to Section 4 in the Guidance document the IPR section in the Grant Disbursement Agreement *(paragraphs 61-62)*.

Intellectual property in all material (including, but not limited to, reports, data and designs, whether or not electronically stored) produced by the Partner or its personnel, members or representatives in the course of this Arrangement ("the Material") will be the property of the Partner.

In signing this Arrangement, the Partner hereby grants to DFID a worldwide, non-exclusive irrevocable and royalty-free licence to use all the Material, where "use" shall mean, without limitation, the reproduction, publication and sub-licence of all the Material and the intellectual property therein, including the reproduction and sale of the Material and products incorporating the same, for use by any person or for sale or other dealing anywhere in the world.

In signing this Agreement, the Downstream Partner hereby grants to the Partner and to DFID a worldwide, non-exclusive irrevocable and royalty-free licence to use all the Material, where "use" shall mean, without limitation, the reproduction and publication for UK Government purposes as well as academic teaching and research.

If you have IPR concerns, please produce a confidential version of the report (for MECS internal circulation only) as well as a public version.

18. Are there any pre-registration requirements for the scheme?

No. To ensure you receive all the relevant information about MECS Challenge Funds, it is recommended that you Register Your Interest to the MECS online community to receive more information on future competitions. Applicants can download the competition documents from Loughborough University's website here. Applicants are required to email a copy of their completed Grant Application Form to mecs@lboro.ac.uk by 23.59 hours GMT on 26th January 2020.

19. How can I find out more information about the competition?

By attending one of two webinars planned on:

- Friday 20th December @ 9.30am GMT
- Tuesday 7th January 2020 @ 8am GMT

In the webinars, the experts and the project manager will explain the competition details. This will be a great opportunity to ask questions and get tips on how to deliver a quality Grant Application Form.

20. If we did not attend the webinars, does this put us at a disadvantage?

No. Recordings of the webinars shall be available on the Loughborough website by 23rd December 2019. Any questions you may have can be sent to mecs@lboro.ac.uk

21. Will unsuccessful applicants receive feedback?

We will provide high-level feedback an overall score and some suggestions for improvement to all applicants.

22. When should the project start?

The project will start at the end of March or early April 2020. Project kick off meetings are expected to take place shortly after the project starts.

23. When does the project work have to be completed by?

The majority of the project work will need to be completed within 6 or 12 months, depending on the theme. Please see section 7 of the Guidance document for further details.

24. Is this competition a one-off?

No. This is the third competition under the MECS programme, more will be launched over the lifetime of the programme (from 2018-2023).

25. Within Theme One, what do you mean by commercially available efficient electric cooking appliances? Must it be within the target country or globally (i.e.import)?

The appliance should be available commercially but may not yet be available in the country(ies) where the pilot will take place. Therefore, the applicant may want to import a specific appliance for the purposes of the Theme One activities. If this is the case, the applicant is responsible for all permissions and expenses related to that importation. In the longer term, the pilot should be pointing to possibilities at scale, and a more secure and regularised supply chain will need to be in place, but for the purposes of the pilot we will accept a one off importation and that securing the supply chain may be a future necessary action. That said, suitable provision for the maintenance and repair for the pilot appliances must be made so that households are not left with broken and unworkable devices. Similarly, we hope that the pilot may provide evidence of the suitability of electricity for cooking, and in that sense may lead in the longer term to appropriate lobbying of government for an enabling environment (e.g. appropriate customs and import tariffs, retail outlets for the supply chain) if the applicant themselves is not taking this to scale.

26. Within Theme Two, is the market assessment only of EPCs or for any MECS complaint device?

The market assessment should be of an efficient electric cooking appliance or appliances that may be suitable for the target market. We

will prefer focused and targeted market assessments but will consider all MECS compliant devices.

27. What scale is this assessment to be carried out at: national, county, local?

The scale can be determined by the applicant. We note that decentralised governance and localisation of markets may make county or even local assessments viable and valid. However, we note that the assessment should include the sustainability of the supply chain and therefore should not be solely an assessment of consumer demand.

28. How will we differentiate between applicants?

We will consider the proven record of the applicant and the targeted market. Where we have more than one applicant targeting a particular market, we will score the track record of the applicant, the range of factors presented as key factors for the market assessment, the type of appliance or appliances being considered and some key features of the target market (i.e. poverty, gender, vulnerability and disability).

29. My company is based in Europe, Canada or the USA, can I enter?

Yes. Loughborough University would be happy to consider an application (Grant Application Form) from a company based anywhere in the world. However, the beneficiary country must be a country supported by DfID.

30. What are the DFID supported countries?

Afghanistan**, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo (Democratic Republic of the), Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt (Arab Republic of), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia**, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Tanzania (United Republic of), The Occupied Palestinian Territories, Togo, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (República Bolivariana de), Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

*Syria is excluded from the list.

** Not eligible for a Small Charities Challenge Fund grant

31. Can I partner an organisation in a country that is supported by DFID?

Yes, entries from partnerships are welcomed and encouraged. Organisations working in partnerships should only submit a single application and a lead applicant needs to be specified.

Loughborough University is keen to support collaborations between organisations from different parts of the world for knowledge sharing and skills building in a country supported by DfID.

32. Can an organisation be in a partnership with a university?

Yes, entries from partnerships of all types of organisations are welcome. This would be on a single Grant Application Form and the partners would have to decide which organisation would be the lead applicant.

33. How big does a company have to be to apply?

Companies of any size can apply. We welcome start-ups, small, medium enterprises (SMEs), research institutions, universities, not-for-profit organisations and consultancies; all types of organisations.

34. Must a company applying for Grant support have a trading history, or would a start-up company be eligible?

A start-up company is eligible to apply. The main conditions of this initiative are that the project must be innovative and focused on matters that are relevant to the two themes (see question 1) and relevant to a country that is supported by DFID (see question 28).

35. Is my personal data protected under GDPR?

Please see the Loughborough University [Data Privacy Policy](#) for further information.

36. How do I deliver a quality Grant Application Form?

You must have a disruptive innovative idea that is likely to deliver a significant impact in a country supported by DFID. Then, refer to the Guidance Document (especially the Criteria), the Specification Document and the FAQs and answer the questions in the Grant Application Form in simple English.