



## BRAINSTORMING FORUM FOR GRADUATES

12 January 2015 at 11am

Burrell's Field, Grange Road, Trinity College CB2 1TQ

### INVITATION

Graduates in science, technology, engineering, humanities and social sciences are invited to apply for one of an initial 20 places at a New Year Forum sponsored by the Malaysian Commonwealth Studies Centre and the Winton Programme for the Physics of Sustainability.

The purpose of the Forum is to bring together graduates in Cambridge from different disciplines to help identify practical applications of research including promising innovations for effective and affordable solutions at the village level, novel ideas by which local entrepreneurship can serve to deliver solutions for societal change, and insights into the framework conditions required to bring about change in villages without access to electricity (off-grid).

The **Smart Villages** Initiative<sup>1</sup> is concerned with how to establish 'smart villages' through entrepreneurship that brings modern energy services to the billion-plus people who live in villages which are not connected to the main electricity-distribution network in order to catalyse development and so tackle one of the major global challenges of the 21st Century. Special attention will be given to countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

<sup>1</sup>Annex 1 and Smart Villages Entrepreneurship; [www.e4sv.org](http://www.e4sv.org).

After an introduction to the challenges and opportunities for energy provision to off-grid villages, small-group brainstorming sessions will explore how these challenges may be addressed and opportunities realised. Ideas will be pitched to a panel of international experts from Europe, Canada and India.

A Forum Reception and Dinner will be held at Trinity College when information will be provided about follow-up opportunities (eg links to potential mentors, bursaries, investors and businesses).

### HOW TO APPLY

To apply, graduates are invited to complete the application form and submit it with a current CV to Sandy Evans at [sandy@e4sv.org](mailto:sandy@e4sv.org). Closing date is **10 December 2014** and successful applicants will be advised by 18 December 2014.





## ANNEX 1 - The Smart Villages Initiative<sup>2</sup>

The concept of the 'smart village' is that modern energy access acts as a catalyst for development – education, health, food security, productive enterprise, environment and participatory democracy. As such, energy access can provide a much needed driver for sustainable economic development and growth for a major (circa 2 billion people), but neglected, sector of the world's economy.

Over the next three years international experts in natural and social science, engineering, and the humanities will be brought together with local and regional stakeholders (entrepreneurs, villagers, NGO's, financiers and policy makers etc.) in a series of six in-country workshops to develop insightful, bottom-up views of the challenges of village energy provision for development, and how they can be overcome. By working collaboratively with key stakeholders in developing countries the smart villages initiative will ensure that it is firmly rooted in addressing real-world issues, and achieves effective uptake and impact.

The focus will be on off-grid villages where local solutions are cheaper than national grid extension. A key aim of the smart villages project is to identify the framework conditions necessary to foster entrepreneurial initiatives to meet the off-grid energy challenge, and which ensure that government and donor funding achieves maximum leverage of private sector investment. An underlying premise of the smart villages concept is that activities to enable energy access need to be integrated with other development initiatives, taking a community level approach, to maximise social benefit and development impact.

A primary outcome will be to inform policy making and initiatives on energy for development at global, regional and national levels. For the European Union attention will be directed towards policy makers in the Directorate General (DG) Development and Cooperation, and also Directorates in Energy, Climate Action, and Research and Innovation. For individual countries it will be their parallel agents, at a regional level, bodies such as the African Union and the East Africa Community and their equivalents in other regions, and at a global level, the relevant UN bodies and other organisations such as the World Bank. Further outcomes will be to stimulate local and regional progress in the topic.

The study will be undertaken collaboratively with national academies and networks of academies informing national, regional and international policy makers and funding agencies. Workshops in Africa, Southeast Asia, India, and Latin America will commence in June 2014: each will involve around 50 people over three days. The provisional schedule for the workshops is as follows: June 2014 Tanzania/East Africa; January 2015 Malaysia/Southeast Asia; September 2015 India/ South Asia; November 2015 Bolivia/South America; April 2016 Ghana/West Africa; November 2016 Mexico/Central America and Caribbean

Each workshop will be followed up by a programme of engagement and dissemination activities. Innovation competitions for entrepreneurs will be used to identify new and innovative ideas. Final workshops in Brussels and a developing country (provisionally in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia) will bring together participants from the previous workshops with experts, policy makers, funding agencies and thought leaders. The purpose will be to draw key conclusions from the study and formulate advice to policy makers and other key stakeholders on strengthening the provision of sustainable energy off-grid.

Following a scoping study in 2012, a preparatory phase has been undertaken to identify relevant research expertise and to make connections with the policy, NGO and major corporate sectors. It has included a 'Forward Look' workshop held in Cambridge in January 2014 to identify potential game changing technology developments over the next 10-15 years, and a very successful pilot workshop held in Arusha, Tanzania in June 2014 to examine the transformative effects of renewable energy in off-grid villages.

<sup>2</sup>Funded by the Malaysian Commonwealth Studies Centre at Cambridge (MCSC), Cambridge Malaysian Education and Development Trust (CMEDT), the European Academies Science Advisory Council ([www.easac.eu](http://www.easac.eu)) and the Templeton World Charity Foundation (TWCF). Drs John Holmes and Bernie Jones (co-Project Leaders, Oxford); Professor Sir Brian Heap (Senior Adviser, Cambridge); Anil Seal (Executive Director, MCSC/CMEDT, Cambridge).