



In **SMART VILLAGES** access to sustainable energy services acts as a catalyst for development, enabling the provision of good education and healthcare, access to clean water, sanitation and nutrition, the growth of productive enterprises to boost incomes, and enhanced security, gender equality and democratic engagement.

SMART VILLAGES

The Challenge

Unfortunately it is a fact that, in the world today, a staggering **1.3 billion** people have no access to electricity. In addition, **3 billion** are still cooking on dangerous and inefficient stoves. Many of them live in remote rural village communities. Until such communities have access to modern energy services, little progress can be made to develop their economies and improve their lives.

New thinking for off-grid communities worldwide



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Our Aim

The Smart Villages Initiative aims to provide policy makers, donors and development agencies concerned with rural energy access with new insights into the real barriers to energy access in villages in developing countries – technological, financial and political – and how they can be overcome. We have chosen to focus on remote off-grid villages, where local solutions (home- or institution-based systems, and mini-grids) are both more realistic and cheaper than national grid extension.

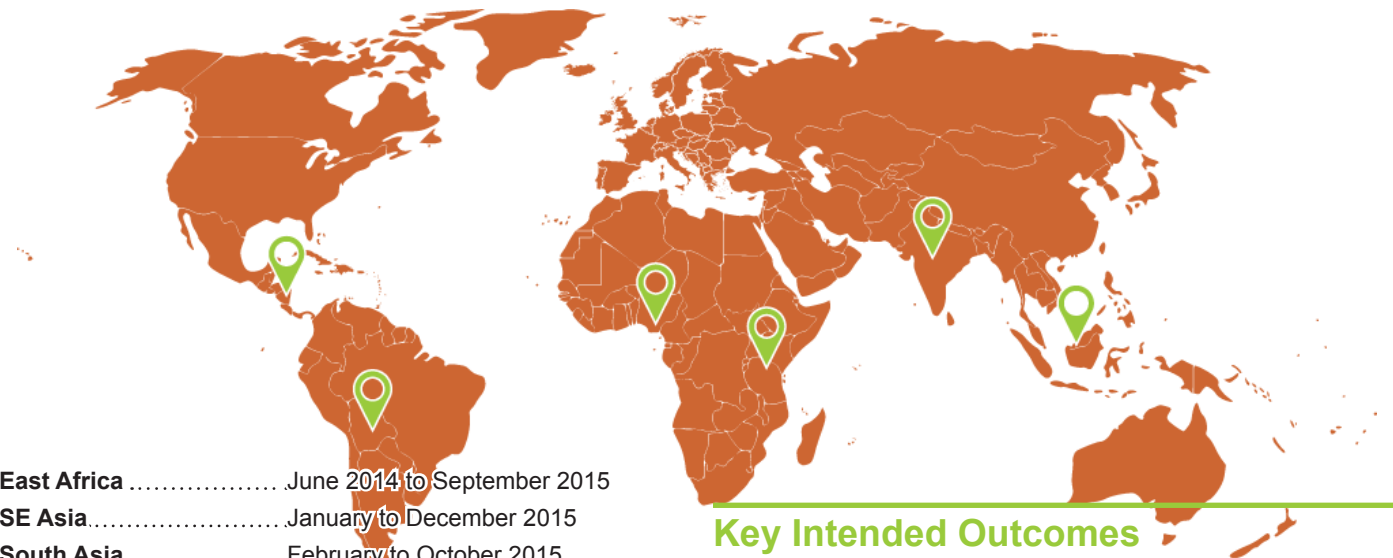
Our Approach

Over a three year period commencing in 2014, we are holding workshops and follow-up engagement activities in six regions (East and West Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and Central and South America). These activities bring together a diverse set of players – scientists and engineers, entrepreneurs, villagers and civil society organisations, NGO's, financiers, policy makers and regulators – who are actively involved in addressing the challenges of village energy for development.

The Smart Villages Programme

In each of the six regions a major international workshop brings together the diverse set of players from across the region, providing an open and stimulating environment conducive to generating new insights into how to tackle the challenges of village energy access for development. Follow-up activities include briefing meetings for policy makers, innovation competitions to

generate new ideas, training courses and further workshops. A final event in each region draws together lessons learned in conjunction with policy makers, donors and development agencies, and considers next steps. Crosscutting activities include developing supporting materials and ensuring that lessons are learned, and connections made, across the regions.



East Africa	June 2014 to September 2015
SE Asia	January to December 2015
South Asia	February to October 2015
South America	February to December 2016
West Africa	April 2016 to March 2017
Central America*	November 2016 to March 2017

* Two final workshops – provisionally in Brussels for the European Union and Addis Ababa for the UN and other global institutions – will draw together lessons learned from the project as a whole.

The Team

The Smart Villages team, based at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford in the UK, has been established by the Cambridge Malaysian Education and Development Trust (CMEDT). Key partners in the project are the national science academies and their networks, together with Practical Action and The Energy Resources Institute (TERI), two organisations with wide experience of implementing village energy projects. Funding is being provided by CMEDT and the Templeton World Charity Foundation. A high-level steering group provides expert guidance.

Key Intended Outcomes

In addition to providing the first overall survey of the off-grid sector in the developing world, the Smart Villages Initiative will provide policy makers unique insights on how to:

- Create the framework conditions necessary for entrepreneurs to meet the off-grid energy challenge.
- Ensure that government and donor funding achieve maximum leverage of private sector investment.
- Integrate energy access with other development initiatives.
- Take a community level approach, to maximise social benefit and development impact.
- Catalyse rapid progression through the various levels of energy access.

It is our goal that these outcomes will result in better informed policies and more effective initiatives at national, regional and global levels to progress village energy for development, and to support the UN's goal of sustainable energy for all by 2030.